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Towards a Postmodern Methodology for Pastoral Counseling

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INTRODUCTION

REFERRING TO RATIONALITY WITHIN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, RICHARD OSMER states that "the science and theology debate is yet to be fully taken up in practical theology" (1995:21). He believes that there is widespread consensus that we stand at the end of the era in which practical theology took shape, since new and much richer understandings of rationality have begun to emerge. These statements might come as a surprise to a discipline such as pastoral theology, for pastoral theology may want to claim interdisciplinary activity as integral to its self-understanding. The clinical application of pastoral theology, pastoral counseling, can hardly be envisioned without the use of psychological insights (Patton 1990:851).

If Osmer's statements have value, and I believe they do, serious questions can be raised regarding pastoral theology and pastoral counseling's interdisciplinary nature. What understanding of rationality lies within current pastoral theological methodologies? What is the nature of the "science and theology debate" that is currently operable within practical theology? More specifically, what rationality currently operates within pastoral counseling? What reasons may be given to view the current interdisciplinary methodology and practice of pastoral counseling (or practical theology) as troublesome? I believe that pastoral theology and the practice of pastoral counseling seem to be almost oblivious to postmodern rationality as a source of critique and affirmation of current interdisciplinary activity. In this essay, I want to address this very vacuity by examining Calvin O. Schrag's understanding of postmodern rationality.

A preliminary working definition of the constructs "rationality" and "the postmodern or postmodernism" is central to this essay. It is important to

mention that both terms are difficult to define and different scholars will provide diverse definitions. In his work *Rationality in Science, Religion and Everyday Life*, Mikael Stenmark makes the distinction between realistic (possible, responsible) and idealized (impossible, irresponsible) models of rationality (Stenmark 1995:5–6). The difference between the two rationalities mentioned is expressed in the axiom of reasonable demand: one cannot reasonably demand of a person what a person cannot (possibly) do. For Stenmark, scientific forms of rationality are "too idealized" and utopian to apply them to actual human beings. He opts for a realistic model of rationality, taking into account the beliefs, actions and evaluations of human beings. Stenmark's argument moves away from epistemic beliefs (or epistemic foundations) as rational, "self-evident propositions that are true, and whose truth is clear to anyone who properly understands them" (Brown 1988:40). I believe that such models of idealized rationality are common to pastoral theology and pastoral care and counseling. This essay accepts a *realistic understanding* of rationality. The shift away from epistemic foundations places the focus on the agents of rationality and an emphasis on communicative praxis.

Jean-Francois Lyotard, the well-known scholar of postmodernism, describes postmodernism as being part of modernism, but which unlike modernism, refuses to invoke "the unrepresentable as presentation itself, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible" (1992:12,15). Both Stenmark (utopian rationality) and Lyotard (nostalgia) want to move away from the impossible toward the possible, a move from idealistic rationality to realistic rationality. In this move, Lyotard states that the postmodern acts as an extension of the modern and not as something existing separate from the modern. Hence, there is a to-and-fro movement between the modern and the postmodern.

Although Lyotard and Stenmark seem to agree as to the nature of postmodernity, postmodernism is not a unified philosophy. Calvin O. Schrag mentions that anyone attempting to provide a sketch of postmodernism has to contend with "a somewhat curious diversity of portraits" (Schrag 1992:13). He points out that in the many discussions of postmodernism, the vocabulary often shifts from "the post-modern" to "postmodernity" to "postmodernism" without clear distinctions of what, if anything, is at stake in such shifts. Schrag also states that within the diversity of portraits (of postmodernism) that exist, two central attitudes, one deconstructive and one constructive, can be identified. Schrag opts for a constructive approach

to postmodern rationality, believing that discernment and decisions are possible while being postmodern.

Consistent with the postmodern emphasis on contextuality, the constructs mentioned cannot be fully defined without considering a specific context. Another factor, which complicates any attempt at providing a definition for postmodernism, is postmodernity's interdisciplinary nature. Postmodernism provides postmodern architecture, postmodern art, postmodern literature, postmodern politics, postmodern theology, postmodern science, postmodern culture studies, postmodern philosophy, and more. Can postmodern pastoral counseling be added to this list? This essay views postmodernism as a cultural attitude or a certain perspective, and an assemblage of discursive practices that can take many forms. Postmodernism has no single philosopher as its founder, nor does any school of scholars faithful to the doctrines of postmodernism exist. As John E. Thiel states it: "At most, one can speak of a commitment to a style of philosophizing shared by a number of thinkers, and often in very different ways" (Thiel 1994:1).

In the first section of this essay, I will discuss two central aspects of postmodern rationality. The two aspects (and they are not the only two) are a move away from the idealization of metanarratives (identified by Jean-Francois Lyotard) and the importance of discernment (described by Harold Brown). The two aspects mentioned "join hands" where discernment takes place within communities to produce local narratives.

In the second section, I will identify two pastoral counseling methodologies that place the emphasis on pastoral counseling's bipolar or bilingual nature to describe the interdisciplinary activity. Both models address the interdisciplinary question inherent to pastoral counseling by using epistemic foundations. The pastoral theological models of the Dutch scholar Gerben Heitink and the American scholar, Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, are examples of European (Continental) and American thought within the Reformed tradition. Although Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger offer quite diverse perspectives on how to address the interdisciplinary nature of pastoral counseling, similarities between their models, such as a bipolar structure, will be identified.

In the third section of this essay, I will discuss Calvin O. Schrag's model of transversal reasoning. Schrag offers a model of rationality that takes the critique of postmodern rationality seriously without falling into rampant deconstruction and pluralism. I will argue that Schrag's understanding of transversal rationality has implications for a postmodern methodology for

pastoral counseling. The "lenses" through which two current pastoral methodologies will examined at are their use of epistemic foundations, the models' use of and functioning as metanarratives, and their view of discernment.

THE POSTMODERN CRITIQUE OF METANARRATIVES AND THE CENTRALITY OF DISCERNMENT

The construct *metanarratives* received much prominence in Jean-Francois Lyotard's work, *The Postmodern Condition*. Lyotard identified certain metanarratives that marked modernity: the progressive emancipation of reason, freedom, and labor, as well as the enrichment of all humanity through the progress of capitalist technoscience. Another modern metanarrative Lyotard identified that is important for Christian theology is the metanarrative of Christianity, understood as the salvation of creatures through conversion of souls to the Christian narrative of love (1984:xxxiv).

For Lyotard, metanarratives are not myths in the sense of fables that would be mythical. However, like myths, metanarratives have the function of legitimating social and political institutions and practices, laws, ethics and ways of thinking. Unlike myths, metanarratives find legitimacy in the realization of an "Idea." This "Idea," be it freedom, socialism, or Christian love, has legitimating value because it is seen as being universal in nature, guiding all of human reality. However, postmodernity challenges the "Idea." Schrag quotes Lyotard as stating that "I would argue that the project of modernity (the realization of universality) has not been forsaken or forgotten but destroyed, liquidated" (1992:24). Lyotard believes that technoscience is the sustaining metanarrative within the modern paradigm. The victory of technoscience gives the impression of completing modernity, although it also means the destruction of modernity. A person's mastery over the objects generated by contemporary science and technology does not bring greater freedom, more public education, or even greater distribution of wealth, but rather the contrary.

Within the postmodern society, no metanarratives can be used with a legitimizing function. For Lyotard, the challenge of postmodernity has to do with the fostering of an attitude that he describes in terms of "an incredulity toward metanarratives," a "sensitivity to differences," "tolerat[ing] the incommensurable," learning to live with "the inventor's paralogy," and "waging a war on totality" (1984:xxiv). The postmodern challenge calls us to live with local (contextual) narratives where meaning and reference are not situated in epistemology (or beliefs as metanarratives), but rather in communicative praxis (hermeneutics) and in rational agents.

Thinking in terms of incredulity, disbelief and skepticism toward metanarratives might be foreign to pastoral counseling. However, the postmodern challenge to pastoral counseling is to move away from legitimating metanarratives. This is especially important in interdisciplinary dialogue where metanarratives may be "despised" for being remnants of modernity (Schrag 1992:24). The use of metanarratives as epistemic foundations within pastoral counseling will be discussed in the next section. It will suffice here to state that the postmodern challenge to rationality does not leave the metanarratives within pastoral counseling untouched.

The second characteristic of postmodernism that I would like to identify is the centrality of *discernment* within postmodernism. Harold Brown calls upon the importance of judgment or discernment as an integral part of rationality in his work, *Rationality*. He defines judgment as "the ability to evaluate a situation, assess evidence, and come to a reasonable decision without following rules" (1988:137). Judgment involves decisions which are based on prior knowledge gained, and which are not arbitrary, although decisions are reached without following rules.

Brown identifies three important characteristics of (postmodern) judgment. They are: 1) judgments are not made by following rules; 2) judgments are fallible; and 3) judgments are made by individuals who are in command of an appropriate body of information that is relevant to the judgment in question (1988:138). Maintaining the relationship between the modern and the postmodern, Brown says that rules still exist and that rules are still used, but in a different way. Judgment comes into play especially where a decision needs to be made between a number of competing rules, or alternatively where familiar rules fail.

Brown warns against the danger of viewing fallible judgments as "baseless." With this warning he challenges deconstructive postmodernism. Brown states that:

> If we give up this demand [of indubitability] the concept of judgment provides the basis for a new look at the problem of [epistemic] foundations, for we do indeed stop epistemic regresses, even though we do not do so because we have reached a firm foundation. Rather, we stop either because we judge that we need go no further in the present context, or because we have reached the point at which we have been trained

to stop. This leaves us with a starting point, but a tentative and fallible one that is open to reconsideration under appropriate circumstances (1988:144–5).

Judgment is not a form of dogmatism. There is no incompatibility between accepting a set of fallible claims for substantial periods of time, and being prepared to reconsider them when there are relevant reasons to do so. This reconsideration will be a matter of professional judgment by those who have mastered the relevant body of information. The information used for judgment consists of background information as well as a body of information relevant to the case at hand. As expertise in an area is needed to be informed, not everyone can exercise reasonable judgment on every topic. Further more, expertise does not guarantee success, as errors may occur and experts may disagree. Where experts disagree, a person must live with the diversity of opinions (the inventor's paralogy). Brown's interpretation of discernment indicates an understanding of rationality that moves away from the classical understanding of rationality which stated that only infallible methods are of any cognitive significance.

The importance of judgment within postmodern rationality supports Stenmark's view that rationality is no longer an issue of conceptual analysis, a matter of logic or a set of beliefs. Rationality is not an issue of propositions, beliefs or theories, something a property may have or lack, but an issue of discernment strategies and thus a human characteristic (Stenmark 1995:41). Discernment is a skill that can be acquired through training or experience (as practical wisdom), and something that can (and should) be cultivated in the pursuit of knowledge. Discernment and judgment are skills that challenge the rule-governed nature of modern rationality.

The shift of rationality away from theoretical propositions to an activity of persons introduces an important element that plays an integral role in not only discernment, but also in the establishment of knowledge. This element is the *power-knowledge relationship*. Michel Foucault's politics of power provides a portrait of a power-knowledge nexus that pervades personal and social existence. For Foucault, the human subject, with its strategies for achieving knowledge, is a product of power. Foucault summarizes the importance of the power-knowledge relation in the following words:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it be-

cause it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformation (1977:27–8).

Discernment takes into account that the power-knowledge relationship, denied by modern rationality and modern rationality's focus on propositions and beliefs, is an integral part of all knowledge. No discernment can take place without power relations being involved, and no proposition exists without it being formed in a specific power relation. By identifying the relationship between power and knowledge, Foucault introduces an aspect central to any discernment process as power is situated not only in knowledge but also in the agent of knowledge.

The importance of judgment or discernment for pastoral counseling is clear in that pastoral counseling cannot take place without discernment. Judgment is even more complex within pastoral counseling where theological insights as well as psychological insights determine the discernment strategies. The importance of the power-knowledge relationship also challenges pastoral theology and pastoral counseling, working within the framework of "divine authority," to take the power-knowledge relationship seriously. After the introduction of two pastoral theologies, the importance of a move away from metanarratives and the centrality of discernment within postmodern rationality will be reviewed as a method for pastoral counseling.

TWO MODERN APPROACHES IN PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING

In this second section, I will briefly discuss two models of pastoral counseling. I will argue that both models depend upon specific beliefs and propositions, used as metanarratives, to guide their interdisciplinary activity. In addition, both models limit discernment almost exclusively to a pre-theoretical level, i.e., the

following of the "rules" set by the epistemic beliefs. The first model to be discussed is the bipolar model of the Dutch pastoral theologian Gerben Heitink and the second is the "bilingual" model of Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger.

Gerben Heitink's Bipolar Model

As already mentioned, interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and psychology is intrinsic to pastoral theology and pastoral counseling. In his work *Pastoraat als Hulpverlening* (1977), the Dutch pastoral theologian Gerben Heitink views interdisciplinary activity in terms of a broad understanding of bipolarity. Interdisciplinary dialogue takes place between "theology and the empirical, between theology and psychology, between revelation and experience, between faith and religion, between pastoral counseling and psychotherapy" (1977:80).[1] Within the pastoral setting, the bipolarity is emphasized as the pastoral counselor with her unique identity enters a relationship with another person.

Heitink works with the presupposition that pastoral care is a service that is beneficial and helpful to people in the form of care and assistance. He wants to strengthen the pastoral identity of the pastoral counselor as he distinguishes between pastoral counseling and three other "helping professions," namely, the medical profession, social work and psychology. These professions share similarities, including their dependence upon communication (between a trained professional and another person) and establishing a relationship with another person. However, Heitink believes that the different disciplines represent fundamentally diverse natures, and therefore each discipline experiences tension relating to the other "helping disciplines." Heitink accepts the bipolarity within pastoral counseling but stresses the uniqueness of the pastoral identity. He finds the unique character in the pastor's connection to the gospel and the church of Christ (worship, catechism and pastoral care), and in viewing faith and life questions in light of the gospel and in association with the church of Christ (1977:151). Heitink defines "in light of the gospel" as refering to God's grace and mercy, to God's concern for humanity, and to God's soteriological acts. It also refers to the coming of the Kingdom. Heitink has a wide-ranging understanding of "faith and life questions" which may have a personal, relational, sociocultural, developmental, psychological, or faith content (1977:155).

Heitink thus views pastoral counseling as a unique profession to be distinguished from other "helping professions" because it uses very specific epistemic foundations. "Whereas each helping profession needs to define its own identity, this is all the more important for pastoral counseling whose identity extends from *faith a priori* which is not verifiable nor can count on general acceptance" (Heitink 1977:79–80, emphasis added). The faith a priori distinguishes pastoral counseling from the other "helping professions." The unique nature of pastoral counseling is determined by its grounding in epistemic foundations.

Drawing on these epistemic foundations, Heitink defines pastoral counseling in terms of a "a pastor becoming engaged in a helping relation with other persons in order to seek with them, in light of the gospel and in fellowship with the church of Christ, a way to address their life-and-faith questions" (1977:75). The bipolarity between the pastor, who acts according to revelation and faith a priori, and the person seeking assistance while living within experience, is apparent. Heitink's model is a model of Reformed pastoral counseling and is used especially in the Netherlands and in South Africa.

Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's "Bilingual" Approach

Whereas Heitink embraces the bipolarity inherent to pastoral counseling, Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger proposes a very different model for pastoral counseling. She draws upon the theology of Karl Barth and his interpretation of the Chalcedonian tradition to assimilate the bipolarity within pastoral counseling. It is important to state that the interest of this essay is not in Van Deusen Hunsinger's use of Barthian theology *per se*. The focus, however, is on her use of a metanarrative and religious a priori (the Chalcedonian pattern), as well as her understanding of discernment within interdisciplinary activity.

In examining the theological legacy of Karl Barth and his relevancy for pastoral counseling as a ministry of the church, Van Deusen Hunsinger arrives at the person of Jesus Christ and the Chalcedonian pattern in her book *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (1995). According to Van Deusen Hunsinger, Barth's theology, "grounded solely in God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, offers pastoral counselors a perspective

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[1] Heitink's book has not been translated into English. The author did all translations.

that is significantly distinguished from psychological modes of thought" (1995:12). Van Deusen Hunsinger acknowledges that the use of Barth as a theologian that promotes interdisciplinary dialogue may sound strange at first, but states that Barth's

> …consistent concern to delimit the boundaries of theology, differentiating it from fields not based on God's self-revelation, makes Barth a promising conversation partner not only for the dialogue that is truly interdisciplinary, but also for pastoral counseling as a bilingual form of ministry (1995:13).

Van Deusen Hunsinger's model draws upon Barth's interpretation of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and his interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). Chalcedon argued for the divine and human natures of Christ, which were related without separation or division and without confusion or change. Barth's interpretation of Chalcedon led him to state that conceptual priority should be assigned to the divine over the human nature. The Chalcedonian pattern thus describes the Person of Christ (the Divine nature of Christ and Christ's human nature) as "indissoluble differentiation" (related without confusion or change), "inseparable unity" (related without separation or division) and "indestructible order" (with asymmetrical order) (1995:65).

Drawing on the revelation of God through Christ, Van Deusen Hunsinger's use of epistemic foundations and a metanarrative is self-evident. She states: "The knowledge of God as received by faith is understood to be secondary and derivative in the sense that it rests on the foundation of God's own self-knowledge" (1995:119). Such "foundational language" is quite common in Van Deusen Hunsinger's work, evidenced by the following statements: "Barth is concerned to find a way to ground human knowledge of God in God alone" (1995:113); and "Barth's premise thus follows the order of being rather than an order of becoming. God as He is in Himself thereby becomes the ground of any true statements we might make about God as God is in relation to us" (1995:117).

Van Deusen Hunsinger moves from a theoretical (or even pre-theoretical level) to practical application by arguing that the Chalcedonian pattern provides methodological clarity for the interdisciplinary relationship between theology and psychology. Translated into the interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and psychology, the same pattern identified in the person of Christ—described as without confusion or change, without separation or division, and with asymmetrical order—prevails. A pastoral counselor using this method would thus be "bilingual," able to communicate not only in theological "language," but also in the "language" of psychology. Pastoral competency is found in the ability to communicate effectively in the two "languages." These "languages" are never fused into one "language" and (conceptual) priority is given to the theological "language" (the asymmetrical order).

Each discipline can thus define its boundaries to secure its integrity and continue to investigate subject matter according to its nature. Interdisciplinary activity, due to conceptual priority, implies that different disciplines remain untouched by each other, and therefore "bilingualism" can be used by Van Deusen Hunsinger as a metaphor to describe her methodology. Integration of the two "languages" takes place within the person of the counselor, although Van Deusen Hunsinger does not describe just how such integration takes place.

Van Deusen Hunsinger's bilingual model draws upon very specific theological beliefs, namely, those of Reformed theology as illuminated Karl Barth, to guide interdisciplinary dialogue in a pastoral setting. Those epistemic beliefs operate on a theoretical level as well as in praxis (the clinical setting). Important to Van Deusen Hunsinger is that the bilingual nature of the pastoral counselor must be maintained, which implies that the epistemic beliefs chosen are also understood as guiding principles within the clinical setting. The epistemic beliefs seem to be beyond criticism.

Within the scope of this essay it is impossible to give justice to two models. However, I do believe that I have sufficiently described the two models to identify their use of epistemic foundations, the role discernment takes within the theories, and how these two elements inform their respective methodologies and theologies. Although Van Deusen Hunsinger and Heitink offer diverse models of pastoral counseling and have different notions of pastoral theology, they both rely on the revelation of God (in Christ and in Scripture) to inform their theologies. Both models also find themselves within a neo-orthodox understanding of theology, a theology described by Nancey Murphy as "a dead end," leading theology into a "crisis" (1990:15). The crisis arises because neo-orthodoxy leaves unanswered the question whether "we know with the required certainty what we take to be revelation is indeed the word of God?"

Murphy's concern introduces critical questions of critique against the models of Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger. How do we know that what we take to be revelation is indeed the word of God? Who decides on the "required certainty," or whose understanding of "church" and "gospel" will be used? In addition, how should contradicting theological interpretations be interpreted? This is certainly a challenge postmodernism would direct at both scholars. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the theologies and methodologies of Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger in light of the criteria discussed in the first section.

Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger Revisited

Postmodern rationality may pose several questions to the models of Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger: Why resort to the use of unverifiable a priori (epistemic) foundations in establishing a methodology for pastoral counseling? Whose definition of "church" and "gospel" will govern the pastoral counseling? Why does the personal/pastoral identity of the pastoral counselor need the guardianship (or security) of a priori foundations? In the postmodern context, with its contempt for metanarratives, how should metanarratives such as "the gospel" and Barth's understanding of revelation be evaluated? Can there be unrestrained interdisciplinary dialogue within the "confines" of "asymmetrical order," even if it is only conceptual priority? Where does the pastoral counselor as a discerning (rational) agent come into play in these models? Is discernment, defined by terms such as "bilingualism" and "bipolarity," suffcient to define interdisciplinary interpretation?

In assessing the two models discussed from a postmodern perspective, these and many more concerns can be raised. I would like to mention two aspects that are worth further investigation. The first is that both models are dependent upon epistemic foundations that act as *metanarratives*. The second aspect is the models' deficient (and possibly naïve) understanding of *discernment*.

Both Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger use epistemic foundations on which they build their models, though Van Deusen Hunsinger is much clearer about how the epistemic foundations guide interdisciplinary dialogue. Heitink presupposes interdisciplinary dialogue in which theology stays aware of its unique character. This said, the epistemic foundation for Heitink is the church of Christ and Scripture while for Van Deusen Hunsinger it is the revelation of Jesus Christ explicated by the Chalcedonian

dynamic. Epistemic foundations act as self-evident beliefs and are seen as being beyond any doubt, as they portray not only a universal character, but also guide interdisciplinary activity. The Chalcedonian pattern, used as an epistemic foundation, may even be seen as inflexible and infallible. The epistemic foundations are used in the arguments of both Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger as sources of justification, legitimization and even motivation. As such, the epistemic beliefs function as metanarratives.

A metaphor that may be used to disclose further the use of metanarratives in the models of Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger, is Willard Quine's *myth of the museum* (Thiel 1994:18–20). Quine describes the use of epistemic beliefs using the analogy of a museum. In this analogy, a conceptual scheme (such as "Chalcedon" or "the church" and "in light of the gospel") is imaged as a museum in which the words and meanings are exhibits. The walls of this museum are not defined by any individual's mental experience since a conceptual scheme is a public trust (or even Godly trust?) rather than private property. Like standing exhibits in a museum, meanings in the conceptual scheme are seen as part of the permanent collection with independent reality and a value of their own. Having this independent reality, they receive labels to identify them so that people can discuss them as they walk by.

In Quine's analogy, there are as many sets of labels as there are languages. However, irrespective of the languages or set of labels used, *the myth of the museum* presupposes words that, like museum exhibits, possess objectivity capable of appreciation, contemplation, and criticism. *The myth* distributes its epistemic foundationalism throughout the idea of a conceptual scheme in which meanings are thought to have a mental life of their own apart from their use and applicability in language. Susan Haack defines foundationalism as justified beliefs that are "basic; a basic belief is justified independently of the support of any other belief. All other justified beliefs are derived; a derived belief is justified via the support, direct or indirect, of a basic belief or basic beliefs" (1996:14). "The church" or the "Chalcedonian pattern" have objectivity beyond human (contextual) interpretation, and thus act as self-evident truths. However, *the myth of the museum* challenges such a belief.

Within *the myth*, theories are readily conceived of as universal explanations. Theorizing is successful when its explanations do justice to the conceptual scheme used. For the models discussed, pastoral counseling would be true to its "nature" only if a situation is viewed in light of the church and the gospel, or when bilingualism with asymmetry is honored. Failure in interdisciplinary activity is never ascribed to the theory used, as it has sound

foundations. Rather, failure according to Heitink or Van Deusen Hunsinger reflects an inadequate understanding of the gospel and the church, or the pastoral counselor not being bilingual enough. This would necessarily imply that a rational agent does not comprehend the definitions as Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger understand them.

It is this very dynamic that exposes the *myth of the museum* in pastoral counseling. *The myth* identifies the objective nature of metanarratives, which is challenged by postmodern rationality. Postmodern rationality views meaning as being provincial or contextual (local) and not universal or transcendental. Meaning is a function of discernment and of context, and immanent within both. There are no context-free (or even person-free) theories. From a postmodern perspective both Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger's models can be placed within the *myth of the museum*.

Pastoral counseling's *myth of the museum* has *discernment* inseparably linked with the conceptual theory that would guide interdisciplinary dialogue. As the brief description of discernment in the first section indicated, movement away from metanarratives (and *the myth*) implies a central role for discernment. Staying congruent to the "two languages" (Van Deusen Hunsinger) or even interpreting a situation in "light of the gospel" (Heitink) functions on a pre-theoretical level and does not honor the intricacies, such as power relations, self-consciousness and language use of discernment. Foundationalist theories find knowledge and insight in the epistemic foundations used and not in the rational agent.

The questions mentioned in the first paragraph of this section receive even more importance if the power-knowledge relationship is accepted as a central concern for the discerning agent. Since Foucault indicated that power could produce knowledge, how is the Chalcedonian dynamic and the specific interpretation of church and gospel influenced by the discerning agent(s)? Can religious a priori, often seen as objective truths, guide contextual situations without being influenced by rational agents at all?

These questions identify a postmodern critique of the models of discernment used by Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger. The use of universal religious a priori (metanarratives) influences the very nature of pastoral counseling and the decisions made within the counseling setting. Could it be that such a use of religious a priori actually inhibits pastoral theology from entering interdisciplinary dialogue? Using metanarratives may not even be sufficient for intra-disciplinary discussions (within theology) due to the variety of theologies prevalent today. Postmodern discernment places the emphasis on comprehension, intervention and manipulation, or in short, on reasoning strategies. These reasoning strategies call for a rationality located in the rational agent and not in rational foundations or beliefs. Both Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger are silent on the reasoning strategies they use but are clear as to the rational foundations they use.

Positively, both Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger offer an insight that would be important within a postmodern methodology for pastoral counseling. This can be described in terms of the "unique" character of pastoral counseling (Heitink) or "without confusion or change" (Van Deusen Hunsinger). Both scholars indicate that pastoral counseling should be distinguished from other disciplines such as psychology. The "languages" of theology and psychology should not be conflated into a single "language." This distinction is congruent with the postmodern call for local narratives, where theology and psychology would each imply a different (local) narrative. A fusion of theology and psychology into a single entity would not honor either discipline and would invite postmodernism's critique.

I further agree with Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger that pastoral theology and pastoral counseling need to claim their authority. Within a postmodern approach to pastoral counseling this remains true as well. However, theology can claim its authority as a discipline in a manner that would not elicit postmodernism's critique of metanarratives. A methodology for pastoral counseling is needed that would move away from metanarratives as a source of validation, while accepting the challenge of responsible discernment. Additionally, this methodology should guard the unique identity of pastoral counseling while placing emphasis on the rational agent and not on rational beliefs. While not having pastoral counseling in mind, Calvin O. Schrag proposes such a model of interdisciplinary activity. He accepts the postmodern challenge toward rationality, honors the integrity of different disciplines within an interdisciplinary setting, and offers *transversal reasoning* as a methodology of interdisciplinary activity.

CALVIN O. SCHRAG'S TRANSVERSAL REASONING AND PASTORAL COUNSELING

In his book, *The Resources of Rationality: A Response to the Postmodern Challenge* (1992), Calvin O. Schrag searches for a philosophical position between modernism and postmodernism. His concept of *transversal rationality*, to be defined in the following paragraphs, offers a method of interdisciplinary

activity that is truly postmodern as it takes postmodern critique seriously, but also continues the relationship with tradition and modernity. Transversal rationality strengthens pastoral theology in intra-theological discussion and pastoral counseling in interdisciplinary dialogue. It honors the concerns of Heitink and Van Deusen Hunsinger, namely, that different disciplines cannot be fused and that pastoral counseling has a unique character.

The central thesis of transversal rationality is that it is characterized by three phases of communicative praxis. Transversal reasoning operates "in and through the transversal play of discourse and action, word and deed, speaking and writing, hearing and reading," through critique, articulation and disclosure (Schrag 1992:9).

As a philosopher, Schrag views the central task of philosophy as being twofold in nature: philosophy should cultivate reason while acting as its caretaker. Schrag accepts this responsibility as he draws on postmodern philosophy in commenting on reason while guarding rationality at the same time. He portrays a critical but constructive attitude, constantly searching for ways to overcome polarities and deconstruction. For Schrag, transversal reasoning takes place within the tension field between the modern and the postmodern, and he argues for maintaining the tension.

Schrag finds the postmodern challenge directed at reason difficult to comprehend as postmodernism is neither a single theory nor a set of doctrines. Postmodernity communicates a sociopolitical ethos or mind-set that can be seen in art, literature, science, politics, philosophy, theology, etc. Accepting Jean-Francois Lyotard's understanding of the postmodern, Schrag identifies a to-and-fro movement between the modern and the postmodern (1992:7). For Schrag, modern rationality has been problematized by postmodernity, and transversal reasoning is an attempt to solve the uncontrolled pluralism of postmodernity, something that contradicts Schrag's constructive and "in-between" nature.

To explicate transversal reasoning's "in-between" nature, Schrag examines how reason has been understood throughout history. This leaves him with an image of rationality as "the despised logos" (1992:17). Traditionally the logos informed the grammar and self-understanding of knowledge and played a central role in Greek philosophy, the medieval period and the modern period. It has a pervasive and ubiquitous character and views the human mind as rational insofar as it participates in the rational structure of the cosmos. The pervasive character of the logos (rationality) is apparent in modernity's shift from the ontological nature of knowledge to scientific ra-

tionality. Within modernity, rationality is defined as logic: method, measurement, effective control and prediction. Through this shift to logic, scientific (with technical) reason is universalized.

Schrag's use of postmodern scholars such as Lyotard, Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault further enhances the despised nature of the logos. Using these scholars, Schrag concludes that local, small narratives, intertwined with issues of power and desire, should replace metanarratives. Deleuze and Guattari call for "nomad science" to replace "royal science" that would use metanarratives. Nomadology and postmodernism react against the epistemological paradigm of modernity with its unimpeachable foundations of knowledge and epistemological certainty. Building on a phrase from Richard Rorty, the "poverty of epistemology," Schrag moves away from an epistemology of foundations to hermeneutics (1992:24).

Postmodernism's attack on reason leaves no secure space in which meaning can be found and references made. This said, Schrag believes that there is a "safe place between the modern and the postmodern, where the logos falls to neither logic nor illogic, where reason rules but does not tyrannize, and where we enjoy the temperate gains of the postmodern without suffering its extremes" (Bottum 1994:379). This place is the transversal sphere. Schrag thus supports the postmodern attack on reason insofar as it identifies the ahistorical universalism of modernity, but denies postmodernism's "rhapsodic play of différance and rampant pluralism" (1992:9).

Schrag states that epistemologists, who use epistemological foundations in their reasoning, do not consider the dependence of meaning and reference upon discursive contexts and the role of the addresser/addressee interaction. Meaning and reference are not established once and for all, as the postmodern attack against metanarratives does not leave meaning and reference untouched. Under the postmodern attack on reason, meaning and reference fall into plurality and paralogy. It is thus no surprise that Lyotard emphasizes a postmodern society of heterogeneity, multiplicity, dissensus and incommensurability.

Schrag's discussion of postmodernism and historicism identifies postmodernism as the radicalization and retrenchment of modernity and not as a period that follows modernity (1992:45). Within the new historicism of postmodernism, the past and future are devalued, and the present is reshaped into a short-lived "present-becoming." Although the past is devalued, Schrag follows Alisdair MacIntyre in that a break with tradition is impossible, as no thought and action can be traditionless (1992:48). Tradition re-

mains important although constructs and meaning may be deconstructed. It may just be that incommensurability, conflict of perspectives, paralogy and dissensus do not have the final word. The communicative practices of our historical inheritance may provide possibilities for rational critique, articulation and disclosure, as these are geared to an understanding of shared experiences, evaluation and emancipation. Discourse and discernment are thus of central concern if tradition remains important to rationality.

In response to a modern view of discernment (as theory-grounded critique) that depends upon rules, Schrag resituates critique within the space of communicative practices and the dynamics of our lifeworld involvement (1992:59). Schrag coins this critique "praxial critique," as it does not depend on foundations and does not search for certainty. The critique is inseparable from the practices and projects of the various communities of investigators and interpreters as they attempt to communicate meaning. Thought and action, two central characteristics of discernment, are constantly seen against the backdrop of changing and historically determined conditions. Praxis, to be distinguished from practice (as the application of contextless theory), encompasses a variety of social practices in personal and public existence. Praxis "refigures social practices as performances of meaning, [and] displays intentionality that exhibit their own insight, comprehension and sense-constitution" (1992:59). The theory/practice bifurcation still exists within praxial critique, but practice is not helpless without theory.

Praxial critique, as a method of discernment, infuses social practices such as the human sciences. Especially within the human sciences, praxial critique as discernment overcomes methodologism. It is systematic in nature without falling into the finality and totality of system building searching for absolute certainty. Using Habermas's "communicative reason" that refutes subject-centered reason, and the Wittgensteinian perspective of the communality of reason, Schrag wants to keep the relationship (and tension) between rationality and community. He does this by identifying a transversal interplay between the claims of reason and the claims of the community as these "intersect, lie across each other, [and] converge without becoming coincident" (1992:63). Transversal interplay takes place within communicative practice and the dialectical action of participation and distanciation.

Participation and distanciation are important moments as no discernment is possible without pre-judgments, habits and skills that inform a person's participation in the communal world. Participation and

distanciation describe an attitude toward intellectual heritage or tradition. Within any discipline, Schrag envisions a person embracing tradition while critically distancing himself or herself from that very same tradition. Distanciation is especially important as without it participation leads to traditionalism and conservatism. As Schrag identified participation and distanciation as central to the discernment process, rationality—infused by hermeneutics—is forced to come to terms with the consequences of interpretation. The central metaphors used to describe these consequences of hermeneutics are "a hermeneutics of nostalgia" versus a "hermeneutics of affirmation" (1992:68).

The two metaphors of affirmation and nostalgia are irreconcilable, yet Schrag argues for both as attitudes to describe an investigator's relationship to knowledge. Staying within the "in-between" tension, Schrag refuses to accept a context neutral concept of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics for Schrag implies an interactional and communicative praxis where the rational requirements for discernment, formed by the dialectic of participation (nostalgia) and distanciation (affirmation), remain in force. In this affirmative approach to rationality, transversal hermeneutics replace universal hermeneutics as a source for rationality. Tradition and knowledge can be used (participation) only if there is critical discernment (distanciation) of that very tradition.

Transversal rationality's emphasis on interpretation and hermeneutics introduces matters of discourse and language. Schrag is confronted with postmodernity's lack of taking non-discursive dispositions and practices into consideration as exhibiting articulatory functions, and thus playing a central role in any discernment process. Non-discursive practices may be the time and space of the action, mood, desire, bodily and institutional inscriptions, power relations, etc. Transversal rationality reclaims the articulatory power of a person's nondiscursive involvements of the lifeworld because actions, desires, emotions and gestural comportment are also ways of understanding and articulating the self and the world. Schrag defines rationality in a way that accepts nondiscursive involvements of the lifeworld in terms of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *chronotope* (1992:83). The chronotope is the assimilated time and space of our socio-historical existence, reaching into the worlds of perception, action, desire and institutional associations. The chronotopal configuration as a time-space assimilation houses a heteroglossia of voices that speak of times and places under varying circumstances. As a plural-

ity of discourses the chronotope stays dialogical as the discourse remains linked to different contexts: scientific, legal, moral, economic, aesthetic, and religious.

Within a conjugated space-time frame of the chronotopal horizon, narrative becomes important as an element inherent to human experience and action. Schrag warns against the danger (for postmodernity) of turning narratives into another metanarrative or narratology. He finds narrative emplotment as integrating, binding together, and assimilating a multiplicity of discourses articulating knowledge. The meaning of narratives lies for Schrag in hermeneutics and communicative praxis, forcing the importance of interpretation. Interpretation is the articulation of the forms of life as they become manifest in discourse and action positioned against the background history of social and institutional practices. This forms the lifeworld that forms an integral part of interpretation, discernment and disclosure (1992:103). Disclosing is uncovering, unmasking, and opening up, a responsibility assisting in moving from reality to the lifeworld. As Schrag sees disclosure, it cannot be understood without taking into consideration the lifeworld, the perception, the non-discursive practices and actions of the person doing the disclosure. Disclosure is intimately connected to rhetoric.

Rhetoric is seen as the interweaving of discernment, deliberation and action, making disclosure possible (Schrag 1992:117). Without rhetoric, (transversal) rationality is not possible. Schrag argues for the refiguring of rhetoric into communicative rhetoric that takes into consideration the notion that rhetoric takes place within power structures that alienate and rupture, but also create and produce knowledge in a community. Rhetoric is not rule-governed but requires "good reasons" to validate claims. The knowledge generated through rhetoric is fallible and probable, and no universalization can be done with rhetoric's communicative products. Rhetoric also persuades the acceptance of local narratives through critical participation and distanciation. Schrag's rhetoric implies that the critical appropriation of tradition as discernment is never traditionless.

For Schrag, rhetoric discloses that which must be seen and heard. Agreeing with Habermas, Schrag believes that the disclosure rhetoric fosters can take place across different genres. The acceptance that the genres are different and cannot collapse into each other is important (1992:142). Schrag identifies this as a danger within postmodernism in that no appropriation of history takes place.

Transversal rationality thus operates in no specific genre and promotes interdisciplinary dialogue in many different disciplines. For Schrag, the use of the transversal metaphor

> exhibits interrelated senses of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and converging without achieving coincidence. By way of complex maneuvers of borrowing and conjugation, metaphorical play and refiguration, the various disciplines make use of these interrelated senses ensconced within transversality to understand and explain geometrical space, events in nature, anatomical structures, physiological processes, human behavior, and cultural and historical configurations. It is thus that transversality, most generally construed, provides a window to the wider world of thought and action (1992:149).

Transversality has no single meaning of unity, as each discipline operates in its own field of inquiry. Transversal rationality never transcends human experience nor is it inherent to experience; it is transversal to various forms of personal and social forms of life. It operates between these various forms of life to critique, articulate and disclose them without achieving a coincidence with any particular form of discourse, thought or action. The integrity of the "otherness" of various disciplines is maintained as transversal rationality falls out as a convergence without coincidence, an interplay without synthesis, an appropriation without totalization, and an unification that allows for difference. It is thus no surprise that Schrag offers Lyotard's "translation" as a synonym for transversal reasoning. Lyotard submits that translation requires pertinences that are "transversal to languages" (Schrag 1992:153). In translating from one language to another, one needs phrase regiments and genres of discourse in the one language that has analogues in the other. This requires the discernment of pertinences that lie across the two languages, which are somehow analogous, exhibiting a "sameness-within-difference."

It is difficult to explicate Schrag's highly philosophical argument. Forming a clear understanding of transversal rationality is not an easy task. Schrag provides an example of the social contextualization of transversal reasoning that he borrows from Félix Guattari, who describes transversal rationality in a psychiatric hospital. Within this multidisciplinary setting, psychiatrists, medical doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, families and patients may form part of a patient care conference where all disciplines and people present discern the best care plan for the patient. A peculiar network

of groups and subgroups, types of expertise, lines of authority and concerned parties need to be taken into consideration. There is also an emotional "investment" (as a non-discursive practice) by the conversation partners that will inform the decision making process. "The exercise of decision making, with its multiple rationales, is transversal to the different groups and various social roles that make up the institutional complex" (Schrag 1992:162). Each discipline plays a role in the discernment process by bringing its unique contribution, thus reaching a disclosure that is in the best interests of the parties involved.

Moving from this example of transversal reasoning to the pastoral care setting is helpful in establishing a concept of transversal reasoning for pastoral counseling. In pastoral counseling, theological and psychological insights are used as the pastoral counselor searches for disclosure through discernment. The benefits of transversal reasoning for pastoral counseling and pastoral theology are multiple, but I would like to mention some challenges transversal reasoning directs at pastoral counseling:

· Transversal rationality offers pastoral theology a rationality that is situated between modernity and postmodernity, accepting the challenges of a postmodern rationality.

· Pastoral theology can move beyond the use of metanarratives and rules, using local narratives—i.e. narratives that would make sense to the person being counseled—and discernment processes.

· Transversal reasoning offers pastoral theology a methodology that is truly interdisciplinary and which may be honored by many disciplines. The methodology can also be used in intra-theological discussions, especially in a discipline such as practical theology where Christian education, homiletics and pastoral theology have diverse subject matter and orientations.

· Transversal rationality calls any specific discipline beyond its own boundaries, not to be threatened by "the other," as transversal rationality is inherently interdisciplinary in nature. Transversal rationality thereby invites theology to interact with philosophy of science or psychology and to enter *dialogue* with these and other disciplines.

· Transversal reasoning challenges pastoral counseling and pastoral theology to consider the pastoral counselor as a rational agent within the discernment process. With its focus on non-discursive practices, transversal reasoning accepts the challenge that people's experiences (in a lifeworld) do influence discernment processes. Knowing without the rational agent (and thus experience) is impossible. Within the discernment process various

theological traditions and psychological schools of thought can be used. This allows for great diversity, creativity and personal choice within the pastoral practice. Transversal reasoning offers feminist theology the opportunity to inform the pastoral practice. Eco-theology can also inform the pastoral practice by incorporating nature as an object of healing. Transversal reasoning offers liberation theology, black theology, and many other theologies the opportunity of having a central voice as these theologies inform pastoral counseling and pastoral theology. Transversal reasoning, of course, also allows for theologians such as Tillich, Barth, Bonhoeffer, and others to inform this process. The postmodern challenge to the use of metanarratives will remain regardless of the theology (and psychology) used.

· Lastly, transversal reasoning implies a back-and-forth movement between the different disciplines, so that theology may be influenced not only by the interdisciplinary activity itself, but also by the other disciplines within the interdisciplinary dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Stanton Jones, in his paper, "A Constructive Relationship for Religion with the Science and Profession of Psychology: Perhaps the Boldest Model Yet," states that whenever psychology formally interacts with theology, it has typically been in one of three classic modalities (Jones 1994:184). The three methods of interaction Jones identifies are psychology of religion, psychology supplying useful psychological information to guide the practice of pastoral care, and psychological theories used to revise, supplant, dismiss, redefine, or reinterpret established religious traditions. For Jones, all three methods are unidirectional, with psychology being unaffected in any substantive way by any interaction. None of the unidirectional interactions views theology as a peer or a partner. Jones, therefore, argues for a different relationship between psychology and theology based on mutuality and respect.

Unidirectional interaction, where one discipline informs the interdisciplinary methodology and much more, also typifies theology's interaction with psychology. Traditionally, theology informs the interdisciplinary practice of pastoral care and counseling. Two examples of unidirectional models were discussed in this essay. Unidirectional models are usually found where theology uses epistemic foundations that lie outside the inquiry of all

non-theological communities of inquiry in order to inform its methodology.

Calvin O. Schrag's model of transversal rationality breaks the unidirectional nature and interaction of theology with psychology through acceptance of the postmodern challenge. The critique of moving away from metanarratives or rational discernment is not just a critique directed at theology, but also to psychology. Within transversal rationality, with its interdisciplinary dialogue, different sciences become equal dialogue partners. This of course implies that theology can be informed by psychology and vice versa, as no single discipline has (conceptual or practical) superiority over the other. Discernment is possible, but deprived, if all available disciplines are not involved in the discernment process.

In this essay, I discussed a communicative model of rationality as a model to describe the interdisciplinary activity of pastoral counseling. It offers a model of rationality that is realistic (vs. utopian), making discernment—which is embedded in background beliefs, traditions, discursive and non-discursive involvements, and the person of the pastoral counselor—a realistic possibility. Schrag offers pastoral counseling a communicative model of rationality that locates rationality in the rational agent and not in propositions or beliefs. Regarding such a communicative model for practical theology, Richard R. Osmer states that

> Looking at rationality as a form of communication means that you do not have to say everything all at once. There is time later for further explanation and defense in response to the challenges and insights of others. Let us, then, begin a process of communication that is not intended to end here, but to be the first step in an unfolding conversation (1997:72).

Schrag's model of transversal reasoning offers many opportunities for further discussion. It challenges pastoral counseling to embrace a communicative model of rationality that accepts the challenges of postmodern philosophy (of science), moving beyond the use of metanarratives and realizing the importance of discernment within a person as a rational agent. Acknowledging that an impartial view of the models discussed in this essay is impossible, I hope this essay will elicit "further explanation and defense in response to the challenges and insights of others."

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The Aporia of Existence

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KARL BARTH ARGUED THAT GOD'S INCARNATION IN JESUS CHRIST left an indelible imprint in human history comparable to a meteor impacting on the surface of the earth, leaving behind nothing but a vast crater (Barth 1922:5). It is in this crater that human beings must consequently exist. They are able to perceive the reality of life within this *Hohlraum* below, but they cannot conceive the edge of the chasm created by this explosion, let alone that which lies beyond the border above. Hence, God's enfleshment in Jesus of Nazareth occasioned for human beings a double bind: on the one hand, human beings must live a life of real homelessness in this world; on the other hand, they are given a promise of a coming Kingdom, where God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thus, the existence of human beings takes on a nomadic characteristic fueled by an eschatological or apocalyptic longing,[1] a longing that Karl Barth identified in his second edition of *Der Römerbrief* as the "dialectic of life,"[2] which this essay will refer to as the *aporia of human existence.*

As the Word was made flesh, Jesus Christ changed human history forever by "upsetting the balance" (Johnson 1997:1) between heaven and earth. Thus, it becomes the task of the theologian to stand in the midst of the crater below, in the aporia of human existence, reaching for the border. It is a task to

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[1] "Homeless in this world, not yet at home in the next, we human beings are wanderers between two worlds. But precisely as wanderers, we are also children of God in Christ. The mystery of our life is *God's* mystery. Moved by Him, we must sigh, be ashamed of ourselves, be shocked and die. Moved by Him, we may be joyful and courageous, hope and live. *He* is the Origin. Therefore, we persist in the movement and call: 'Hallowed be Thy name! Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!'" (Barth in McCormack 1995:xx).

[2] "What is in view here is the common human experience of the contradictory nature of human existence… " (McCormack 1995:12). McCormack evaluates Barth's thought in this respect as "Dialectical Theology in the Shadow of a Consistent Eschatology."