Spiritual Care in Historical Perspective:
Martin Luther as a Case Study in Christian Sustaining, Healing, Reconciling, and Guiding

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ABSTRACT

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SPIRITUAL CARE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: MARTIN LUTHER AS A CASE STUDY IN CHRISTIAN SUSTAINING, HEALING, RECONCILING, AND GUIDING

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  This study used a historic model of Christian sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding to investigate Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care. The specific purposes for this historical case study were to: (a) assist in the recovery of the tradition of Christian spiritual care as it has been exercised in the past, and (b) assist pastoral care givers and professional counselors to become more spiritually aware and skillful by deriving modern implications from these recovered resources.

  A model of Christian spiritual care that has substantial historical support and encompasses a variety of Christian faith traditions was selected and used as a probe into the theory and practice of one historical practitioner. Sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding provided a perspective or historical map for viewing spiritual care. These four tasks were applied to Martin Luther's letters of spiritual counsel and table talks to identify theological perspectives and operational tasks Luther employed to: (a) help hurting people to endure and transcend irretrievable loss (sustaining), b) restore debilitated people to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare (healing), (c) reestablish broken relationships between people and God and between people and people (reconciling), and (d) assist perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul (guiding).

  Four principal conclusions were reached concerning how professional counselors and pastoral care givers may become more spiritually aware and skillful. They can: (a) sustain clients during spiritual despondency by assisting them to experience spiritual security through developing a faith perspective on their suffering, (b) heal clients' spiritual disabilities in order to promote spiritual maturity by encouraging a greater spiritual awareness of the purpose of suffering, (c) reconcile clients' spiritual disharmonies by empowering them to understand and live according to their spiritual identities, and (d) guide clients during spiritual perplexity by aiding them to make wise and loving decisions based upon their spiritual priorities.

SPIRITUAL CARE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:
MARTIN LUTHER AS A CASE STUDY IN CHRISTIAN
SUSTAINING, HEALING, RECONCILING, AND GUIDING

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(See References for Details)

LC   *Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters*. 2 Vols. (1913/1918). Edited by P. Smith and C. M. Jacobs.

LL   *Life and Letters of Martin Luther*. (1911). Edited by P. Smith.

LSA   *Luther as Spiritual Adviser*. (1893/1894). Edited by A. Nebe. Translated by C. A. Hay.

LSC   *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*. (1955). Edited by G. Tappert.

LW   *Luther's Works*. American Edition. 55 Vols. (1963). Edited by J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann.

These abbreviations are used in the dissertation whenever Martin Luther is quoted from one of the collected editions of his works. In the reference list, these works are listed under the name of the editor, except in the case of *Luther's Works* (LW), which are listed under Luther's name. Additional descriptions of these works are provided in chapter one.

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUALITY: EMERGING ISSUES AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Need for the Study

Spirituality: An Emerging Issue in Professional Counseling

Spirituality is an emerging area of interest for professional counselors (Burke & Miranti, 1995). There also appears to be a growing awareness of the need for increased competence in treating religious issues (Genia, 1994). In 1981, Allen and Yarian expressed the viewpoint that spiritual health was an area of elemental weakness in the counseling profession because it was unexplored territory that the profession had so far avoided for lack of a clear conceptual definition. In more recent years, counselors have been challenged to become more attuned and responsive to their clients' religious values (Bergin, 1991; Worthington, 1991). Along with this challenge, a body of literature is emerging to help secular therapists understand and work with religiously committed clients (Burke & Miranti, 1995; Kelly, 1995).

Spirituality is increasingly becoming an issue of concern for American Counseling Association (ACA) members and for programs approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) (Pate & Bondi, 1992). Kelly (1994) sent 500 surveys to heads of counselor education programs and more than 350 responded. He reported that more than 44% of counselor educators felt that religiosity and spirituality were very important training issues. Based upon his research, Kelly also asserted that although many counselor educators believe that religious and spiritual issues are important in counseling, most counselor education programs give little or no consideration to religious and spiritual issues. He suggested that a gap exists between the recognition of the importance of these issues and the fact that religious and spiritual issues are not included in curriculum and supervision.

Some have proposed that as a result of this gap, many therapists do not feel competent to address religious and spiritual issues with clients (Holden, Watts, & Brookshire, 1991; Shafranske & Maloney, 1990a, 1990b). Genia (1994) believed that this lack of confidence was due partly to the fact that secular psychotherapists received limited, if any, formal religious training, education in the psychology of religion, or preparation for dealing with religious issues in clinical practice. According to Morrissey (1995), due to this lack of training, many counselors say that clients' religious and spiritual aspects are being overlooked.

Studies of religiously committed clients would seem to bear out this concern about the omission of client religiosity. A religiously committed client is "one who is actively involved with organized religion and for whom religious beliefs and values are important" (Genia, 1994, p. 395). These religiously committed individuals, especially those from theologically conservative groups, are often concerned that their beliefs will be misunderstood or criticized by secular psychotherapists, and they are anxious about seeing secular counselors due to their concerns with counselors' belief systems (Worthington, 1986).

Misja (1992) found that religiously committed Christians are not as apt as are secular counselors to view problems as solely psychological and that a discomfort may arise when there is a distinct separation between the psychological and the spiritual. In researching religiously committed Christians' orientation toward psychotherapy, Taetzsch (1986) found that clients evidenced a strong preference for psychologists who shared their faith.

McLatchie and Draguns (1984) conducted a study dealing with the attitude toward professional counseling held by religiously committed Christians. They found that members of this group were not disinclined to seek professional help but viewed their emotional problems as having spiritual roots which required spiritual attention. The study also showed that this population was very concerned with the mental health professional's value system and view of God. Many felt that secular psychologists would be inclined to change clients' value systems. As a result, these theological conservatives showed a strong preference for professionals who shared their belief and value system.

Kunst (1993) identified attitudes among church-attending Protestant Christians toward various mental health interventions. Her data indicated that conservative religiosity was negatively correlated with attitudes favorable toward traditional non-church psychological interventions and positively correlated with attitudes favorable toward church interventions (Bible study, prayer, pastoral counseling, worship, church growth-groups, and Christian educational workshops).

Shafranske and Maloney (1990b) expressed the view that the therapeutic encounter between the secular counselor and the religiously committed client may exclude or inadequately address a significant part of the client's experience. They stated that this issue posed a challenge for the secular mental health profession that should prompt the profession to:

> Discern its responsibility to understand further the impact religious and spiritual variables have on the mental health of individuals and to provide educational training, and research opportunities in psychotherapy and religious orientation (p. 230).

The preceding research indicates both a need for increased effectiveness in the area of counseling and spirituality and an ongoing hesitancy to address these issues in training and counseling. Various explanations have been suggested for this hesitancy by counselors to deal with client spirituality: (a) lack of religious knowledge, (b) failure to understand their own spirituality, and (c) fear of ethical implications (Morrissey, 1995). Pate and Bondi (1992) suggested that the fear of ethical implications might be minimized if spirituality were addressed as part of multiculturalism with an understanding of the role played by spirituality in the lives of clients.

> Counselor education students need to be taught the importance of religious beliefs in the lives of many of their clients. The CACREP standard that requires recognition of client diversity should be addressed by the inclusion of religious and spiritual values in the multicultural component of the counselor education curriculum. We recognize the necessity to stress other influential cultural elements and social issues in this aspect of the curriculum, but examples and material that demonstrate the relevance of religion in the counseling process should also be included (p. 112).

Pate and Bondi (1992) recommended that religious beliefs be seen as an aspect of clients' cultural background and should be considered an important part of multicultural awareness in the counselor education curriculum. They believed that "religious values and their importance to clients should be presented as an essential element of all counselor education programs" (p. 108). They asserted that if counselors are to guard the individual rights of the client (as expressed in the 1988 Ethical Standards of the American Association for Counseling and Development), then they must learn during their professional education to respect the importance of spirituality and religion in the lives of clients and how to incorporate that respect into their practice.

> We suggest, however, that both ethnic minority group members and majority group members bring meaningful differences in their religious beliefs and values to counseling. Those differences are in some instances related to group membership and in other instances related to individual experiences. The United States is such a religiously diverse society that any group characterization is impossible. What is possible, is for counselors to learn that part of the cultural development of many of their clients has involved religion; thus, to omit this aspect of their clients' lives from counseling is to omit a significant part of the identity of those they are attempting to serve (p. 112).

Several researchers (Bishop, 1992; Burke & Miranti, 1995; Coughlin, 1992; Kelly, 1995; Morrissey, 1995; Pedersen, 1990) concurred with Pate and Bondi's (1992) assessments that: (a) spirituality is a major component of culture, and (b) the best framework for dealing with spirituality is in the context of multicultural counselor training. Morrissey (1995) quoted Bishop encouraging counselors to take a cross-cultural approach to spirituality because "religion and spirituality are unpalatable, but cultural diversity is palatable" (p.1). Morrissey also noted Bishop's view that the cross-cultural perspective "can be a way for students and faculty to approach it without being turned off" (p.1).

Burke and Miranti (1995) summarized much of the current thinking on the issue of counseling and spirituality. They suggested that the challenge is not whether the issue of spirituality should be addressed, but how it can best be addressed by well-prepared and sensitive professionals. They invited the counseling profession to become more spiritually aware and skillful and to see religion as a part of culture. Burke and Miranti also identified the need for a model that could give clear definitions of religion and spirituality and present case studies on spirituality.

Spirituality: Historical Resources for Pastoral Care

The Christian clergy has also raised the need for a model of spirituality which can provide case studies in spiritual care (Butman, 1993; Hiltner, 1958; Oates, 1962; Oden 1983; Powlison, 1994). Just as spirituality is an emerging area of interest for professional counselors, the history of spirituality as a model for current spiritual care is an emerging area of interest for pastoral counselors (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Habermas, 1993; McNeil, 1951; Oden, 1993; Peterson, 1989, 1993; Willard, 1988). These authors have suggested that the current issue of counseling and spirituality might gain from a renewed exposure to the history of Christian soul care and spiritual direction.

Church historians like Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), Lane (1984), and McNeil (1951) have proposed that the Christian church has consistently practiced the arts of soul care and spiritual direction. Clebsch and Jaekle highlighted this point in the introduction to their study of the history of pastoral care.

> The Christian ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, has been exercised on innumerable occasions and in every conceivable human circumstance, as it has aimed to relieve a plethora of perplexities besetting persons of every class and condition and mentality. Pastors rude and barely plucked from paganism, pastors sophisticated in the theory and practice of their profession, and pastors at every stage of adeptness between these extremes, have sought and wrought to help troubled people overcome their troubles. To view pastoral care in historical perspective is to survey a vast endeavor, to appreciate a noble profession, and to receive a grand tradition (p. 1).

Kemp (1947) noted that there has never been a time or a place where people did not seek out their religious leaders for personal help, advice, guidance, counsel, assurance, forgiveness, and comfort. He then outlined the vast history of the Christian pastor as physician of the soul.

Though this history seems clear, there is evidence that the practice of pastoral soul care and spiritual direction is a forgotten art (Peterson, 1993). Modern pastoral care givers appear to be ignorant of the contributions of the Christian church in the areas of soul care and spiritual direction (Edwards, 1980). Eugene Peterson (1989), pastor and seminary professor, developed this thesis when he explained that, until about a century ago, pastoral work was synonymous with soul care. He defined both of these as "the Scripture-directed, prayer-shaped care that is devoted to persons singly or in groups, in settings sacred and profane" (p. 57). He concluded that pastors in this century focus on "running a church" (administration) and have abandoned their historic call to pastoral soul care.

Others like Edwards (1980), Foster (1988), Leech (1985), and Willard (1988) concurred with Peterson (1989). They have called for a restoration of pastoral care, a reclaiming of the gift of spiritual direction, and a vocational reformation in how pastors do their work. These writers have called for a rediscovery of the pastoral work of the cure of souls. They suggested that historic models of pastoral care be studied for their implications for pastoral ministry today. They recommended an examination of how Christianity in general and pastors in particular dealt with spiritual and emotional issues prior to the advent of modern psychology. What has been the shape of pastoral soul care and how have pastors dealt with issues of Christian spirituality and spiritual direction?

Edwards (1980), writing from an Episcopal background, believed that the study of Christian care would benefit both the pastoral and the professional counselor.

> I believe there is a great wisdom to be shared out of Christian experience that, if true, is in some way a treasure for all people. Spiritual guidance out of a Christian tradition at its best is not meant to be a narrow "in-house" affair (though it often has been treated as such), but a personal

bridge to the Ground of all human life, one holding a particular broad lineage of experience and interpretation of that Ground (p. 8).

Edwards suggested the raising up of soul care and spiritual direction in Christian tradition not just as a contribution for committed Christians, but "as an offering, a bridge, a 'way in' to our shared holy Ground available for all people yearning to touch that Ground more firmly" (p. 8).

This renewed interest in historic Christian care seems fueled, at least in part, by a realization that modern culture may have lost its historical groundings (Oden, 1993; Pedersen, 1988). In particular, a growing number of authors have suggested that current models of counseling and care have lost their historic awareness (Benner, 1988; Collins, 1994; Jones, 1993; McGrath, 1993; Moon, 1994; Peterson, 1993).

Writing from the vantage point of a professional counselor and educator, Pedersen (1988) wrote that:

We lack a sufficient awareness of the ways in which people solved their psychological problems in the last thousands of years . . . . We are perceived to lack a respect for traditional time-tested ways in which a particular culture has dealt with personal problems in preference for the latest trends or findings in counseling (p. 43).

Pedersen's concern seems shared by many pastors and Christian authors. Oden (1993), speaking of Christian society, explained that too often Christians conceptualize pastoral models without the aid of the historic voices of the Church. Some Christians, Oden stated, are only willing to listen to their own voice or the voice of contemporaries in the dialogue. He concluded that "Christians have usually been losers when they have neglected the consensual writers of their own history and tradition" (p. 7).

Speaking specifically of Protestant pastors, Oates (1962) noted that Protestants "tend to start over from scratch every three or four generations" (p. 11). Therefore, Protestants do not adequately consolidate the communal wisdom of the centuries because of their "antipathy for tradition" (p. 11). As a result, Protestants "have accrued less capital in the form of proverbs, manuals of church discipline, canonical laws" and assistance from "the theology of the church" (p. 11).

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) presented their own explanation for this lack of contact with the history of Christian pastoral care.

Faced with the urgency for some system by which to conceptualize the human condition and to deal with the modern grandeurs and terrors of the human spirit, theoreticians of the cure of souls have too readily adopted the leading academic psychologies. Having no pastoral theology to inform our psychology or even to identify the cure of souls as a mode of human helping, we have allowed psychoanalytic thought, for example, to dominate the vocabulary of the spirit (p. xii).

Archibald Hart, Dean of the Fuller School of Psychology, added:

A lot of Christian psychology is theologically bankrupt. We haven't struggled with the great themes of the Christian gospel. We've been pragmatic. We try to help people with their emotions, but we don't have a theology of emotions (cited in Stafford, 1993, p. 26).

Butman's (1993) thoughts on the relationship between history and current practice is an effective summary of the preceding authors.

Counseling is a culturally-defined activity that tends to exist in a historical vacuum. But the psychological and spiritual care of persons was important long before the development of so called "modern" methods. We would be wise to look back and to let the richness of the pastoral care tradition more deeply inform and influence contemporary Christian counseling (p. 20)   .

These Christian authors and pastors are calling for an exploration of spirituality from the vantage point of historic models of soul care and spiritual direction. As a result, the pastoral care movement is immersed in a growing exploration of the history of spiritual care. At the same time, professional counseling is involved in a growing exploration of spirituality in which educators are calling for training models to prepare counselors to deal with spirituality and the religiously committed client.

<p align="center">The Purpose of the Study</p>

This dissertation seeks to bridge professional counselors' current interest in spirituality and pastoral care givers' current call for renewed study of the history of Christian spiritual care. This study uses a historic model of Christian sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding to investigate Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care. The specific purposes for this historical case study are: (a) to assist in the recovery of the tradition of Christian spiritual care as it has been exercised in the past, and (b) to assist pastoral care givers and professional counselors to become more spiritually aware and skillful by deriving modern implications from these recovered resources.

Others have suggested and attempted a similar bridging of history and current practice. Moore (1992) proposed that a root problem of modern society was that "we have lost our wisdom about the soul" (p. xi). In response, Moore studied the writings of "our Renaissance and Romantic ancestors" because "we are in just such a renaissance of our own, a rebirth of ancient wisdom and practice accommodated to our own situation" (p. xvi).

Additional researchers (Edwards, 1980; Jones, 1982; Lane, 1984; Leech, 1977, 1985; Willard, 1988) examined the history of spiritual direction as a basis for modern soul care. Lane noted that one of the problems confronting current pastoral ministry is "how to balance the changing with the changeless, how to balance the demands of contemporaneity with the treasures of the past" (p. 1). He attempted to "formulate a spirituality which is at once vital for our time and solidly grounded in the best traditions of the past" (p. 2). Edwards proposed to "reclaim the classic strengths of spiritual friendship for the communities to which we belong and adapt them to our historical moment" (p. 20).

Still others have proposed the examination of the past ministry of Christian lay people and pastors. Oates (1962) called for modern counselors and pastors to enter:

> into durable fellowship with the theological, historical, and biblical disciplines by calling upon the wisdom and pastoral comradeship of laymen at the operational level of the life of the churches, and by drawing upon the poetic-prophetic experience of Christian pastors in other eras (p. 18).

Hiltner (1958) proposed that such inquiries into historic Christian spiritual care could yield important matters in past practice and theory being neglected in modern work. He also believed that historical case studies could alert modern practitioners to currently forgotten but time-tested modes for meeting people's spiritual needs.

The Method of the Study

This historical case study uses a model of Christian spiritual care to conceptually analyze the theories and methods of one historical practitioner. Hiltner's (1958) historiographical research model served as a prototype for the methodological approach used in this dissertation. His model, and the historiographical works of Brown (1987), Collingwood (1946), Gardiner (1992), Himmelfarb (1987), and Stake (1988) suggested the following ten-step conceptual analysis research process: (a) select a historical model as a probe, (b) formulate research questions from the operational definitions derived from the model, (c) select a historical practitioner to be analyzed, (d) examine cultural, personal, and theological shaping factors, (e) select the documents (evidence) to be probed, (f) conceptually analyze and categorize the documents using the operational definitions, (g) catalog each categorized document by context, recipient, issue addressed, theoretical perspective, and methodological approach, (h) identify, summarize, and outline central themes, (i) present and narrate illustrative vignettes, and (j) offer analogous implications.

Selection of a Historical Model as a Probe

Various means are available for tapping the richness of historical pastoral care resources. Kemp (1947) and McNeil (1951) used a historical survey method to summarize the work of assorted pastors in differing time periods. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) studied abstracts of writings on pastoral soul care and spiritual direction.

A third procedure for studying the history of pastoral care involves the selection of a model used as a probe into the ministry of a practitioner. Boisen (1937) demonstrated this approach through his studies of John Bunyan and George Fox. Hiltner (1958) did likewise through his analysis of the work of Ichabod Spencer, a pastor of the nineteenth century. Hiltner based his research into the resources of historic Christian care on a perspective (a model) and a predecessor (an individual practitioner). He began his study by probing the shape of pastoral care throughout history.

The Need for a Unifying Theory

Hiltner (1958) held that in order to recapture the essence of historic resources there was a need for a unifying theory that could provide a way to examine modern contributions and relate them critically and explicitly to the theology and history of Christian pastoral care. He saw such a model as a precisely defined perspective useful for elucidating various aspects of extremely complex activities. Hiltner labeled his model the shepherding perspective. "The content of pastoral theology, it has already been argued, comes from theological reflection upon pastoral operations seen from the shepherding perspective" (p. 55). Hiltner studied and systematically organized what pastors had done throughout history to shepherd or care for souls in order to "inquire into some significant orders of shepherding data from the past" (p. 70).

Through his study of the history of pastoral theology, Hiltner (1958) chose a model of soul care and spiritual direction that included the pastoral work of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. He saw this model as a construction of what operations had taken place in pastoral care over the centuries, as identified by various church historians. Hiltner concluded that an effective way to use this structure would be to ask theological and practical questions of specific pastoral operations (such as writings and accounts of dealings with parishioners) from the ministry of antecedent pastors. He asserted that this would be a means whereby a sense of identification could be made between current and past practice. His suppositions behind the choice of a perspective and a predecessor are revealed in the following assessment.

> At this point the reader may well ask why we are devoting such attention to a man who wrote entirely about his work with individuals and families, since the operations of the minister and the church do not stop there. That is correct, for they do not stop there. But we do have to start in some particular place, and there is much merit in beginning with the more easily analyzable situations. All the operations are relational in nature. By starting with, in effect, the study of one-to-one relationships, we may more easily reach principles that, to be sure, must also be tested by study of other orders of relationships (p. 84).

Hiltner further proposed that the use of a historical perspective and predecessor might reveal where modern soul care was utilizing time-tested methods and where current spiritual direction has omitted and neglected matters of importance from past practice. Other church historians have supported Hiltner's strategy. Oates (1962) asserted that the challenge of "historical rootage" might be met if models could be developed which were rooted deeply enough in historical schemes or paradigms (models) of pastoral care. Such models, Oates proposed, would be the means for tapping the potential within the great traditions of religion so that "an eternal focus could emerge which might survive the ravages of time" (p. 18).

Likewise, Oden (1983) advised that the search for pastoral roots might best emerge within the framework of a central tradition or working model of what pastors have done throughout history. He proposed the study of such models from the vantage points of Scripture, tradition, reason, and pastoral experience (studying how individual pastors "perform" the various functions in a given historic model).

Edwards (1980) supported the necessity of studying historic care from the standpoint of a model by noting that every person approaches the transcendent out of some particular framework. The value of a model, according to Edwards, is that it makes explicit the already implicit framework.

The Breadth of the Four Tasks

The approach chosen in this dissertation is not the only way to organize historic pastoral care. However, chapter two does demonstrate that the suggested model encompasses Evangelical, mainline Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic faith traditions. The paradigm of soul care (sustaining and healing) and spiritual direction (reconciling and guiding) does represent a breadth of vision and comprehensiveness of perspective under which various approaches might be subsumed (Collins, 1990). Oden (1983) suggested that the four tasks "try to absorb and work seriously with a wide variety of confessional and denominational viewpoints on ministry" (p. 10) and try to "reasonably bring all these voices into a centric, historically sensitive integration, with special attention to historical consensus" (p. 10). The framework of the four tasks of pastoral care (sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding) provides a perspective or a historical way of viewing and thinking about pastoral care. It is one way to systematically organize what pastors have done throughout church history to care for people.

The use of the four tasks is not an attempt to cloak the complexity of pastoral care. Obviously, the enormous corpus of documents on pastoring over the last 2000 years defy all efforts at complete comprehension (McNeil, 1951). Rather than viewing the four tasks as comprehensive, they can be viewed as one map—a map useful for exploring some portions of this great corpus of communal wisdom (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). The primary intentions of this historical map are to assist in the recovery of a sense of the richness and variety of Christian pastoral care as it has been exercised in the past and to derive possible implications from these recovered riches for the modern practice of counseling and spirituality. Following Hiltner's (1958) proposal, the current study used these four tasks as probes through which one pastor's operations were studied.

Formulation of Research Questions

Martin Luther's pastoral care was examined by subjecting his letters of spiritual counsel, table talks, devotional writings, and theological discourses to analysis using the four probes of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. These four tasks were applied to Luther's writings and accounts of his pastoral care in order to detect specific theories and methods he used in his pastoral care.

Using precise definitions of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding, four research questions were formulated to investigate Luther's theoretical perspectives and operational tasks. A fifth research question sought to use Martin Luther's theory and methodology of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding to derive implications for the modern theory and practices of pastoral care and professional counseling.

1. What theories and methodologies did Luther employ to help hurting people to endure and transcend irretrievable loss (sustaining)?

2. What theories and methodologies did Luther employ to restore debilitated people to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare (healing)?
3. What theories and methodologies did Luther employ to reestablish broken relationships between people and God and between people and people (reconciling)?
4. What theories and methodologies did Luther employ to assist perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul (guiding)?
5. What implications can be drawn for modern spiritual care by using a model of historic spiritual care to investigate Martin Luther's soul care and spiritual direction?

Selection of a Historical Practitioner

The explicit framework used in this dissertation involves a perspective and a person. The method involved the study of one predecessor/practitioner (Martin Luther) examined through the lens of a model/perspective (sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding) of historic soul care and spiritual direction.

The appropriate practitioner must have been a Christian pastor involved in soul care and spiritual direction, and he or she must have left a legacy to explore (Hiltner, 1958). Given these criteria, numerous pastors from church history could have been chosen as the focal point of this study. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), Kemp (1947), and McNeil (1951) each highlighted various Christian pastors who were actively engaged in the ministry of soul care and spiritual direction. A small sampling of these individuals include: Clement of Alexander, Tertullian, St. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Pope Gregory the Great, Luther, Bucer, Zwingli, Calvin, Taylor, Walsh, Knox, Hooker, Baxter, Edwards, and Whitefield.

Additionally, numerous non-pastoral religious figures from Christianity or religious leaders from other faiths could be chosen by those wanting to use a similar research method but coming from a different vantage point. McNeil (1951) studied spiritual guides in Old Testament Israel; philosophers in ancient Greece; and spiritual directors in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam. Edwards (1980), Jones (1982), and Leech (1977, 1985) all provided extensive overviews of various Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican lay spiritual directors.

Of the possible pastoral candidates who met the criteria, Martin Luther was chosen. Luther was a Christian pastor who was actively involved in soul care and spiritual direction. Luther wrote voluminously in the area of soul care and spiritual direction and his extant writings are vast. His *Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (LW, Vols. 48-50) and *Table Talks* (LW, Vol. 54) provide first-hand descriptions of his pastoral operations. The vividness, extensiveness, and comprehensiveness of these works were the primary reasons that Luther was selected.

Historical assessments also support the extent to which Luther functioned as a pastoral care giver. Leech (1977), writing from an Anglican perspective, noted that Protestant spiritual direction had not received as much notice as Catholic soul care. However, Leech highlighted Luther as a significant exception to this viewpoint. "Luther was certainly accustomed to exercise a ministry of personal direction both by word of mouth and by letter. Thus in an early letter to George Spenlein, a fellow student, he urged him to reveal 'the condition of thy soul'" (p. 85).

Oberman (1989) reflected upon Luther's ability to transform theology into practical pastoral care.

It is crucial to realize that Luther became a reformer who was widely heard and understood by transforming the abstract question of a just God into an existential quest that concerned the whole human being, encompassing thought and action, soul and body, love and suffering . . . . The upheavals in Luther's soul, which he described as hellish torments, had far-reaching consequences. The Reformer went his own perilous way, not only as a biblical theologian but also as a psychologically experienced minister (pp. 151, 179).

Becker (1969) repeated the common observation that one of the principal motivations for Luther's reforming activity was his pastoral concern.

In the complex professional identity which was his, as theologian, exegete, translator, pamphleteer, social activist, politician, that of parish priest was certainly one of the central elements. Because of a growing conviction that the modern ministry of pastoral care must recover as well as establish its own unique role, distinct from psychotherapist or social worker or community organizer, I have felt that an examination of Luther's pastoral care, as one of the sources of our ministry, is in order (pp. 136-137).

McNeil (1951) declared that "in matters concerning the cure of souls the German Reformation had its inception" (p. 163). He proposed that Luther's guidance of souls serves as a balanced model for pastoral care. Kemp (1947) also emphasized Luther's pastoral care ministry. "Although Luther is remembered chiefly as a reformer, his pastoral ministry was far more extensive than is commonly recognized" (p. 40). Tappert (1955) explained that:

Martin Luther (1483-1546) is usually thought of as a world-shaking figure who defied papacy and empire to introduce a reformation in the teaching, worship, organization, and life of the Church and to leave a lasting impression on Western civilization. It is sometimes forgotten that he was also—and above all else—a pastor and shepherd of souls (p. 13).

Nebe (1893/1894), in the preface to his work on Luther as a spiritual counselor, wrote:

It is hoped that the following presentation of the leader of the Reformation as an untitled pastor, with all of Germany for his parish, may not only serve to bring out into clearer view the wonderful versatility of the great man, and furnish a needed correction in the prevailing estimate of his character, but may also indicate to some a much-neglected field of Christian activity in our own age in which temptations are varied in form and multiplied in power, and in which the occupants of pulpit and pew too often plead the pressure of official duties, absolutely trifling compared with those of Luther, as exempting from the primary obligations of Christian brotherhood (p. iii).

Luther was also considered a transitional or "bridge" figure in church history (Oberman, 1989). His initial upbringing and training in the Catholic Church gave his approach to soul care the flavor of the ancient Catholic way, while the "newer Protestant way" (McNeil, 1951, p. 23) which he initiated, gave his writings a Protestant quality. Thus his writings could be considered representative of how both Catholics and Protestants approached the four areas of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding (Posset, 1990; Schmiel, 1983).

Luther was also selected because of the possibility of doing original research. As mentioned above, many authors noted Luther's focus on pastoral care and some mentioned his use of the four areas of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding (see chapter two). But no authors specifically explored Luther's pastoral care in terms of his theoretical and methodological approach to sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding.

Examination of Cultural, Personal, and Theological Shaping Factors

Brown (1987) and Collingwood (1946) explained the necessity of understanding historical practitioners in their situation as they envisioned it. Brown emphasized examining cultural, personal, and theological factors identified by historical figures to have shaped their theory and practice. Luther identified spiritual trials (LW, Vol. 54, p. 50) and theological beliefs (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46) as two great shaping factors. Appendix B examines these two foundational areas which helped to fashion Luther's soul care.

Selection of Documents to Be Probed

The Research Benefit of Letters

As noted, Luther carried on an extensive counseling ministry by letter. Smith and Jacobs (1918) explained the virtue of the epistle or letter as a means for gaining insight into Luther's pastoral care. "The epistle, in particular, enjoys the double advantage of being written, like the public document, on the spot, and of revealing, like the memoir, the real inward attitude of an actor in the drama" (p. 5). Gaston (1989) confirmed this thought. ". . . the letters are rather remarkable examples of pastoral ministry by the pen. They are not 'generic words of encouragement,' but individual, incisive remarks to persons whose personalities, needs and concerns were known to their correspondent" (p. 9).

Hiltner (1958) proposed that studying what was actually written and said enabled critical examination of modern ways of pastoral care and counseling. Historic records potentially "reveal the concrete nature of shepherding acts and operations" (p. 71) and allow for penetration into the whole situation.

Luther's Letters, Table Talks, Devotional Writings, and Theological Discourses

Even prior to the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses, Luther was a prolific writer. In a letter

written to John Lang on October 26, 1516, insight can be gleaned into the daily routine of Luther's life and into the size of his correspondence.

> Greetings, I nearly need two copyists or secretaries. All day long I do almost nothing else than write letters; therefore I am sometimes not aware of whether or not I constantly repeat myself, but you will see. I am a preacher at the monastery, I am a reader during mealtimes, I am asked daily to preach in the city church, I have to supervise the study, I am a vicar (and that means I am eleven times prior), I am caretaker of the fish (pond) at Leitzkau, I represent the people of Herzberg at the court in Torgau, I lecture on Paul, and I am assembling (materials for) a commentary on the Psalms. As I have already mentioned, the greater part of my time is filled with the job of letter writing (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 27-28).

On numerous occasions, Luther commented about the volume of letters he was writing. In 1525 he wrote to John Briessman stating, "Therefore I am writing to you only briefly, since I am loaded down with so much that has to be written" (LW, Vol. 49, p. 122). In 1543 he wrote to Wenceslas Link that ". . . I am overwhelmed with writing letters and books . . ." (LW, Vol. 50, p. 242).

Luther felt very strongly about the benefit of and need for letters of consolation and encouragement both for others and for himself. Late in his life, Luther admonished his friend and co-worker, Philip Melanchthon, for failing to write him letters of encouragement.

> In my last letter, my Philip, I wrote that we were annoyed because you people had let the messenger return to us empty-handed, although there are so many of you, and all are usually eager to write. And now you have also let the second messenger return empty-handed, first the messenger of Apel, and now the carrier of the venison from Coburg. I cannot think enough (about this, asking myself) whether you people are so negligent or (are in some way) indignant; for you must know that we here in the wilderness, as in a dry land, are longing for letters from you people from which we may learn of all your affairs (LW, Vol. 49, pp. 316-317).

Within a few years of Luther's death, the first collection of his letters of spiritual counsel was gathered and published and almost every generation since then has seen the publication of at least one new collection. Krodel (in LW, Vol. 48, 1963) noted that approximately 2580 of Luther's letters still exist. Tappert (1955) stated that, including dedicatory epistles, prefaces, opinions and open letters, about 3000 of Luther's letters are available, and that we know from allusions elsewhere that he wrote many more. As a rule, they were written by hand rather than dictated and that they were written in Latin when addressed to the learned and in German when addressed to the unlearned (Tappert, 1955).

In this dissertation, several key sources of Luther's letters are used. The reference list may be consulted for full bibliographical details. The fifty-five volume American edition of Luther's Works (LW, 1963) is one primary source. This edition translated Luther's work into English from the monumental Weimar edition (WA, 1883). Tappert's (1955) collation of Luther's work entitled, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (LSC), was also translated from the Weimar edition. Nebe

(1893/1894) collected letters depicting Luther as a spiritual adviser in the volume *Luther As Spiritual Advisor* (LSA). These letters were quoted extensively. Smith (1911) also collated Luther's letters and translated them into English in his work, *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (LL). Smith and Jacobs (1918) translated and edited Luther's writings in their work, *Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters* (LC). Some secondary sources were used, in particular, research works that focus on Luther's pastoral care and quote from his letters of spiritual counsel and from his table talks.

In this dissertation, when Luther is quoted from a collected edition of his works the following information will be provided: an abbreviation of the title of the collected edition, the volume number where applicable, and the page number where the quote is found in the collected edition. A list of these abbreviations can be found in the front matter of the dissertation. When one of Luther's books or other writings is quoted from a modern translation of that book, the title of the book will be given along with two dates, the date Luther wrote the work and the date of the modern publication.

Closely related to Luther's letters are his table talks. The Reformer sometimes read his correspondence to friends and students gathered about his table. At other times he discussed subjects brought to his attention by correspondents or by those seated with him (Oberman, 1989). Between 1524 and 1546, a number of his friends and students made notes of such table conversations and later transcribed them.

Tappert (1967), in the introduction to volume 54 of LW, gave a fuller description of this setting.

In Luther's household the day began at sunrise, and the principal meal of the day was eaten about ten o'clock in the morning. About five o'clock in the   afternoon supper was served, and this meal was often shared by exiled   clergymen, escaped nuns, government officials, visitors from abroad, and colleagues of Luther in the university who frequently stopped in (p. ix).

Tappert (1967) explained that many of these table talks are of such a nature that they "might satisfy the spiritual hunger and thirst of readers and might furnish them with instruction and consolation" (p. xiv). In this dissertation, those table talks that contain examples of pastoral counsel were reviewed.

 In this dissertation, LW, volume 54, was the primary source of table talk quotations. Additionally, some of the previously mentioned works contained table talk materials as well as letters; they, too, are cited where appropriate. The focus was on those table talks that recorded written records of his spiritual counsel. These provide the reader with numerous examples of exactly what Luther said and did with people in distress.

Luther also exercised his pastoral vocation through his devotional writings (LW, Vol. 42, p. xi). In them, "Luther provided the kind of guidance and food for thought which the seriously ill can dwell upon for profit" (LW, Vol. 42, p. xv). Luther's devotional writing entitled "The Fourteen Consolations: For Those Who Labor and Are Heavy-Laden" (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-166), was extensively analyzed because Luther stated that it outlined the main themes of his spiritual care (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123).

Several of Luther's theological writings were analyzed for their explications of Luther's

theoretical perspectives. These included Luther's *Commentary on Romans* (1954/1516), *The Bondage of the Will* (1957/1525), and *Commentary on Galatians* (1988/1535). Luther stated that these three works contained material essential for understanding the theological basis for his pastoral care (LW, Vol. 48, p. 66).

Examination of Luther's Works

Every one of Luther's 325 letters contained in the three volumes of *Luther's Letters* (LW, Vol. 48, 1963; LW, Vol. 49, 1972; LW, Vol. 50, 1975) were examined, as were all of Luther's 195 letters contained in *Luther's Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Tappert, 1955). Each of Luther's 235 letters contained in *Luther As Spiritual Advisor* (Nebe, 1894) were studied, as were each of his 214 letters contained in *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (Smith, 1911). Every one of the 875 letters contained in both volumes of *Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters* (Smith & Jacob, 1918) were also probed.

Each of the 671 table talks recorded in *Table Talk* (LW, Vol. 54, 1967) were analyzed. All of Luther's twenty-one devotional writings contained in *Luther's Devotional Writings* (LW, Vol. 43, 1968; LW, Vol. 42, 1969) were inspected. Luther's *Commentary on Romans* (1954/1516), *The Bondage of the Will* (1957/1525), and *Commentary on Galatians* (1988/1535) were each examined in their entirety.

Conceptual Analysis and Categorization of the Documents

Conceptual analysis "uses operational definitions to determine the presence and magnitude of items identified for historical research" (Brown, 1987). The precisely defined perspectives contained in the first four research questions were laid over Luther's spiritual care as a grid to draw out his specific pastoral operations and to detect the presence of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and/or guiding in Luther's works. Documents were categorized as sustaining interactions, healing interactions, reconciling interactions, and guiding interactions, respectively, or identified as unrelated to spiritual care.

Cataloging Each Categorized Document

Each categorized document was cataloged by context, recipient, and issue addressed. Each document was then culled for insight into Luther's theory and practice so that his theoretical perspectives and operational tasks could be clarified. Such analysis yielded lists that described exactly what Luther did (methods) and why (theories) as he either sustained, healed, reconciled, or guided people.

Identifying, Summarizing, and Outlining Central Themes

Collingwood (1947) suggested that historical researchers begin by getting acquainted with their subject's particular historical actions and thoughts and then proceed to understand those actions and

thoughts by "seeing how they fall into general types and how these general types are interrelated. It is by understanding such interrelated themes that we understand the things and events to which they apply" (pp. 205-206). Hiltner (1958) followed this practice by establishing keys he found in Spencer's spiritual care documents. Hiltner identified these central themes through the principles of quantity—how frequently they appeared in Spencer's writings, and by the principle of quality—Spencer's self-report that certain methods and theories were of central importance in his treatment.

Once categorized and cataloged, Luther's letters, table talks, devotional writings, and theological discourses were repeatedly reviewed to identify, summarize, and outline central themes based upon Hiltner's (1958) principles of quantity and quality. Patterns emerged as Luther was observed to emphasize certain beliefs and practices. For example, in assisting people in bereavement, Luther would consistently begin with expressions of the appropriateness of their sorrow (giving them permission to grieve in a society that at times would not give such permission). He followed this with expressions of deeply shared grief.

Luther himself was helpful in categorizing themes. In his work, *The Fourteen Consolations* (LW, Vol. 42), Luther stated two main themes in his pastoral care with seven sub-points under each theme. These fourteen themes are related to the four tasks in chapters three through six. Such themes and patterns were collated and organized into outlines that identified specific pastoral care interventions Luther used to sustain, heal, reconcile, and guide people.

Presentation and Narration of Illustrative Vignettes

Hiltner (1958) presented illustrative vignettes from Spencer's work with clients. In these vignettes, Hiltner provided background information, summary paraphrases of what Spencer thought, said, and did, and narrative passages from Spencer's work. Hiltner also furnished a running commentary on Spencer's spiritual care and supplied summaries of his research findings. This presentation model is followed in chapters three, four, five, and six.

Offer of Analogous Implications

Brown (1987) asserted that a primary goal of historical research was to identify present situations analogous to past ones and then to offer recommendations and implications from the past for the present. Collingwood (1946) believed that scientific history, as opposed to romantic history or positivistic history, always suggested relationship and implications. Hiltner (1958) concluded his work with a lengthy discussion of the implications of Spencer's model to modern pastoral care and professional counseling. Analogous implications from Luther's practice of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding are provided in chapter seven.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter one describes the need for the study by presenting spirituality as an emerging issue in professional counseling and as a historical resource for pastoral care. The chapter also includes a

statement of the purpose of the study and a description of the methodology used.

Chapter two provides an extensive literature review of the historical model of Christian soul care and spiritual direction used to probe Luther's pastoral care. This chapter serves as a foundation for understanding the specific way in which Luther's model is analyzed. It gives the reader a clear picture of Christian pastoral care from one historical perspective. Understanding this material will allow future researchers to explore how others (in various faith systems) utilized the four areas of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding to provide soul care and spiritual direction.

Chapters three, four, five, and six present the general and specific findings of the study. Each chapter analyzes Luther's theory and practice of soul care through one of the four probes of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding respectively.

Chapter seven synthesizes the study. The heritage of historic pastoral care, as evidenced in Luther's words and writings, is analyzed and integrated. Analogous implications for the current art of pastoral care and professional counseling are provided. Discussion is furnished, limitations of the study indicated, and suggestions for further research are made.

Appendix A provides a time-line of Luther's life and culture. Appendix B emphasizes two factors which Luther declared to be foundational to his pastoral care: Luther's personal religious struggles ("anfechtungen") and his theology. Appendix C shares an example of one current attempt to integrate historical pastoral care with modern counseling and spirituality.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are of key terms used throughout the body of this work. Some terms are omitted from this list because they are highlighted elsewhere. Many of these terms are redefined as Luther's usage of these concepts is developed. These initial definitions are provided at this point to allow the reader and the writer to share a common vocabulary.

Pastoral Care: This is any form of personal ministry to individuals, families, and communities performed by religious persons (ordained or lay) and by their communities of faith, who understand and guide their caring efforts out of a theological perspective rooted in a tradition of faith (Oden, 1983). It is the pastoral guidance of souls by prayer, counseling, grace, the power of God, and the Word of God, used to diagnose the condition of the soul with its graces and ills and to assist it into the way of growth (Mills, 1990).

Religious Counseling: Genia (1994) stated that religious counseling "is predicated on the ideals of a particular organized religion" (p. 395). She saw religious counselors as attempting to help their clients attain healthy emotional and religious functioning "as defined by a shared theological framework" and as active in "promoting a particular religious worldview" (p. 395).

Soul: The soul is the essence of the human being. It is the unitive center, the seat of relationship with God (Kellemen, 1985). It refers to the spiritual side of human existence. Soul indicates the life principle that animates the body and the individuality of the person as expressed in desire, thought,

will, and emotion. The soul is the seat of human activity and the source of moral judgment (Muller, 1990). The soul is related to the body, but it is not a mere expression or function of the body. "It is capable of vast ranges of experience and susceptible of disorder and anguish; but it is indestructible and endowed with possibilities of blessedness within and beyond the order of time" (McNeil, 1951, p. vii).

Soul Care: This term is commonly used interchangeably with pastoral care. It derives from the Latin "cura" which has a predominant meaning of "care" and a secondary meaning of "healing." "Anima" is the Latin term for soul (McNeil, 1951). It is used to translate the Hebrew "nephesh" (soul, life force, person, breath, longing) and the Greek "psyche" (soul, person) (Kellemen, 1985). Soul care then is the concern for and healing of that aspect of humankind which has to do with ultimate meaning and spiritual relationships (the relationship of the human spirit to the Spirit of God) (Leech, 1977).

Care and Cure of the Soul: This phrase derives from a Latin expression "cura animarum" (McNeil, 1951, p. vii). As typically used in the literature, the phrase focuses upon the tasks involved in the care of a person. Care of souls is the traditional term used for pastoral care. It involves the sustaining and curative treatment of persons in those matters reaching beyond the requirements of the purely biological and to the well-being of the immaterial or spiritual (Meiburg, 1990). Holifield (1983) saw the care and cure of the soul as the preoccupation with the welfare of the individual. The ancient term "cure of souls" pictured meeting human pain with compassion and human guilt with grace and forgiveness (Meiburg, 1990).

Physician of the Soul: The term comes from the Greek "iatros tes psuches" (used first by and of Socrates) (McNeil, 1951). The Greek means "healer of the soul." These Greek syllables have been recast to form the modern word "psychiatrist," however, the word does not picture the modern medical psychiatrist. Rather, the physician of the soul throughout secular and Church history has been the wise person who understood the sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding of the soul—of the essence of the human personality (Hiltner, 1958). The physician of the soul is the person gifted to diagnose the condition of the soul with its graces and ills and assist it in the ways of growth (McNeil, 1951).

Spirituality: Spirituality is a constituent of human nature which seeks relations with the ground and purpose of existence, however conceived (Wakefield, 1983). Chandler, Holdan, and Kolander (1992) sought to conceptualize spirituality based in psychology. They defined spirituality as, "pertaining to the innate capacity to and tendency to seek to transcend one's current locus of centricity, which transcendence involves increased knowledge and love" (p. 169). Genia (1994) defined spirituality as "a general sensitivity to moral, ethical, humanitarian, and existential issues" (p. 395).

Christian Spirituality: French-Catholic in origin, it has come to be used in the Catholic,

Orthodox, and Protestant traditions (Wakefield, 1983). It refers to one's whole relationship to God mediated through His Son, humankind's Savior, Jesus Christ (Lovelace, 1979). In Lovelace's view, Jesus Christ is the bridge spanning the relationship between humanity and God. Christian spirituality involves both the individual's interior communion with God through Jesus Christ and his or her outer life which flows out from God in Christ to relationships with others. Thus it involves both one's created longing for the "Holy" (the Creator Who transcends humankind) and one's desire for communion with other human beings (Wakefield, 1983). Christian spirituality is always rooted in the experience of Jesus Who was filled with love for the Father and for people (Lane, 1984). It is the story of the human heart's longing for sanctity and a way of holiness before God which is an individual's possession in Christ through the Holy Spirit (Alexander, 1988).

Evangelical Spirituality: McGrath (1993) described several historical components of evangelical spirituality. Evangelical spirituality insists on grounding "in the bedrock of gospel truth" (p. 21). It centers on and contemplates the saving work of Christ using scriptural imagery to nourish the imagination and "delve deep into a knowledge that humbles and delights" (p. 21). It seeks to develop disciplines in the spiritual life—not as an end in itself, but as a means of strengthening the Holy Spirit's energizing control of our lives" (p. 21). It values the living role model of the person who has made Christ central to his or her life.

Evangelical spirituality emphasizes grace, viewing it as acceptance by God which comes from being freely forgiven because of faith in Christ's death for sin (Colson, 1992). Justification is highlighted in evangelical spirituality and is viewed as the decision by God to declare the rebellious person as "not guilty" and as "without any record of wrong doing" on the basis of the totally guilt free Christ having paid the penalty of guilt when He died on the Cross (Stott, 1986).

Wood (1989) defined evangelical spirituality as:

> The response of the human spirit when activated by the Spirit of God . . . it is not to be regarded simply as an effort of man to reach out to God. It is rather the outcome of God's initiative in reaching out to man in grace and enablement. (p. 311)

Spiritual Direction: Spiritual direction is "the art of guiding souls within the household of faith through the vicissitudes of life lived in a fallen world" (Moon, 1994, p. 390). The pastoral guidance of souls involves the pastor as a mature Christian in a ministry in which one seeks to diagnose the conditions of the soul with its graces and ills so as to assist a person in the ways of growth. It is an interpersonal relationship designed to aid spiritual growth (Benner, 1988). Barry and Connolly (1982) defined spiritual direction as, "helping a person directly with his or her relationship with God. Answering the question, who is God for me, and who am I for Him?" (p. 5).

Religiously Committed: Religiously committed individuals attempt to base their entire approach to life on their religion (Larsen & Larsen, 1993). Their relationship to their God is a major source of strength and comfort to them (Hall, 1992). The religiously committed are dedicated to living out the tenets of their faith (Misja, 1992). They are typically actively involved in meeting with others of like

faith and are motivated by the desire to please the God they worship (Larsen & Larsen, 1993). They have a deep faith and trust in God, are passionate about their faith, and tend to share their faith out of love (Hall, 1992). The religiously committed attempt to live out honestly what they claim to believe, take time to think and pray about matters, attend religious instruction classes, and live out their faith with enthusiasm (Larsen & Larsen, 1993). Genia (1994) viewed the religiously committed person as "one who is actively involved with organized religion and for whom religious beliefs and values are important" (p. 395).

Summary

This chapter introduced the relevance of the study: the emerging interest in spirituality in the counseling profession and in the history of spirituality in the pastoral profession. These interests have led to an invitation to both professions to become more spiritually aware, skilled, and to see religion as a part of culture.

A route to increased spiritual awareness was proposed. A study of the history of pastoral care could lead to beneficial contributions to the modern practice of professional counseling and pastoral care. A historic model of soul care and spiritual direction was suggested as a probe through which one could study the specific operations of a pastoral predecessor. The suggested investigation examines the theories and methodologies associated with the four tasks of traditional Christian soul care and spiritual direction. Martin Luther's works, as probed through the grid of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding, are used as a case study to illustrate additional ways for professional counselors and pastoral care givers to become more spiritually aware and skilled.

CHAPTER 2

SPIRITUAL CARE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Church historians who have studied the history of soul care and spiritual direction have identified four common themes (sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding) running throughout the history of Christian pastoral care (Aden, 1990; Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Didascalia, c. 225/1903; Hiltner, 1958; McNeil, 1951; Mills, 1990; Schieler, 1905; and Tappert, 1955). Using these four motifs, they created a profile of historic pastoral care depicted according to the framework of soul care (sustaining and healing) and spiritual direction (reconciling and guiding).

This paradigm is used throughout the dissertation as a tool to probe Luther's pastoral care and serves as the lens through which Luther is examined. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review of this historical model. This review sketches the history of the identification of the four functions of pastoral care and furnishes a detailed description of the model as proposed by church historians.

A History of the Four Functions of Pastoral Care

As early as the third century, pastoral care was seen as embodying the four tasks of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding (*Didascalia Apostolorum*, c. 225/1903). Few contemporary descriptions of the inner life of the Christian congregation during the first three centuries have been preserved. Because of this, special interest and influence is attached to the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. A major portion of the work is a treatise on the office and pastoral function of the bishop or presbyter. Four analogies are set forth in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* by which to understand the character and duty of the chief minister of pastoral care. The bishop is to be a shepherd who sustains by partaking of the suffering of the flock, a physician who heals by mending the wounds of the patient, a judge who reconciles relationships by providing discerning rulings, and a parent who guides by giving parent-like direction to the young in the faith. Reflecting on these concepts, Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) noted that:

> Thus the pastoral office, even as early as the third century, was seen as consisting of the four functions of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. The far-reaching influence of this early analysis of pastoral care can be measured by reference to modern writings on the subject (p. 103).

Edwards (1980), writing from an Episcopalian background about Catholic and Eastern Orthodox spiritual direction, explained that St. Anthony of Egypt, in the fourth century, was one of the early pioneers of spiritual direction. According to Edwards, St. Anthony's soul care involved comforting and sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding.

Schieler (1905) wrote a prominent Roman Catholic treatise which followed these four areas of

sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. He asserted that the confessor must be a judge to hear the person's confession (reconciling) and must act the part of the shepherd (sustaining), the physician (healing), and a father (guiding).

Seward Hiltner, a leading figure in the pastoral theology movement of the 1940s and 1950s, attempted to base his pastoral theology on a historical study of shepherding. In his work, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (1958), he traced a model of soul care and spiritual direction from early writings to modern times. He found that the German phrase "seelsorge" (shepherd, pastor) provided a foundation for outlining the history of pastoral care.

Others followed his lead in this matter. Becker (1969) delineated two broad classifications from the concept of the pastor as "seelsorger." The first category was that of "fur die Seele sorgen" which means to care for souls, to be concerned for souls (soul care). The second category was that of "die Seele weiden" which means to guide souls, to tend to their direction and condition (spiritual direction). Ivarsson (1962) proposed a very similar breakdown. He used the two categories of soul care and spiritual direction while also describing the use of these pastoral functions both with individuals and the entire congregation. Lake (1966) advanced an analysis of historical Christian care in which soul care dealt with suffering, while spiritual direction treated sin. He summarized his breakdown when he explained that "pastoral care is defective unless it can deal thoroughly both with these evils we have suffered as well as with the sins we have committed" (p. 21).

Hiltner (1958) discussed six themes in the history of pastoral care which he combined into four core areas. The six themes were discipline, comfort, edification, healing, sustaining, and guiding. Edification and guiding he combined into the guiding function; comfort and sustaining he combined into the sustaining function; healing he maintained as a separate category; and discipline Hiltner saw as the reconciling and purifying function of the pastor with the congregation. This fourth function of discipline/reconciling he chose to highlight as that which a pastor does in the service of the entire congregation, rather than as that which a pastor does with an individual. Hiltner (1958) defined these four areas from a historical perspective. Healing historically expressed the relationship between pastor and people as the pastor binds up the wounds of the individual. Hiltner identified sustaining as the relationship between pastor and people where the pastor comforts and upholds an individual, standing with that person in suffering even if that situation cannot be altered except perhaps by a change in the person's attitude. Hiltner saw guiding as the relationship between pastor and people in which a pastor helps an individual to find direction when that help has been sought out by the person. He saw discipline or reconciling as the relationship between pastor and people in which the purity of the entire congregation's relationship to God is the priority. Hiltner believed that all these functions were needed to do justice to the full dimensions of the shepherding perspective viewed historically.

Hiltner (1958) identified Martin Bucer as one of the first Protestant ministers to systematically structure the ministry. Bucer was a follower of Martin Luther who wrote a pastoral care manual called *On The True Cure of Souls* (1538/1950). Bucer's systemization contained the categories of sustaining (to strengthen weak Christians), healing (to strengthen sickly Christians), reconciling (to draw to Christ those who are alienated), and guiding (to preserve Christians who are whole and strong, and urge them forward in all good).

In 1947 Charles F. Kemp wrote *Physicians of the Soul: A History of Pastoral Counseling*. He affirmed that there had apparently never been a time or a place where individuals did not seek out religious leaders for personal help for the following: sustaining comfort, guidance and counsel, reconciliation through forgiveness and assurance, and healing or spiritual health. He traced this process from the Old Testament to Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament, from the early Church to the Medieval Church, and from the Reformation to his own day.

Kemp viewed physicians of the soul as those who were concerned both with soul care and spiritual direction. They were guides and counselors (spiritual direction) and soul physicians (soul care). His terms for these two roles which encompass the four tasks were: physician of the soul and spiritual adviser.

In 1951 John T. McNeil published *A History of the Cure of Souls* in which he traced the art of soul care throughout history and various cultures. McNeil believed that soul care—sustaining and restoring (healing)—was underscored during those times and in those societies where concern for the individual was the higher value. He felt that spiritual direction—reconciliation and counsel (guidance)—was emphasized in those societies and during those times when concern for the group was the higher value.

McNeil (1951) saw an example of spiritual direction in Israel from the time of David to Ezra (c. 786 to 586 B.C.). During this time the higher value was the group or society. Therefore, Jewish society emphasized spiritual direction that guided the community into reconciled relationship with the God of the community. In ancient Greece, on the other hand, the higher value was the individual. The moral philosophers became physicians of the soul who probed the mind in order to heal (sustain, comfort, strengthen, and console) the afflicted soul.

McNeil (1951) observed in Jesus the convergence of these two forces and understood Jesus to be concerned both for the welfare of the individual and of the group. Thus Jesus was both physician of the soul and spiritual counselor. McNeil believed that the soul was healed by a trustful faith in God and that the individual and community were guided by a trustful faith in the Word of God.

McNeil (1951) summarized the entire New Testament period when he noted that "lying deep in the experience and culture of the early Christian communities are the closely related practices of mutual edification (aedificatio mutua) and fraternal correction (correptio fraterna)" (p. 85). The design of the church was to create an atmosphere in which the intimate exchange of spiritual help and the mutual guidance of souls would be a normal feature of Christian behavior.

Throughout the rest of his historical survey, McNeil (1951) continued to spotlight the twin concepts of mutual edification and fraternal correction. Mutual edification involved the care of souls through the provision of consolation, support, comfort, and healing. Fraternal correction included the direction of souls through the provision of discipline, reconciliation, confession, guidance, and counsel.

Kolb (1983) studied the work of Conrad Porta. In the generation after Luther's death, Porta compiled a textbook on pastoral theology that consisted largely of quotations from Luther's works. Porta's purpose was to organize Luther's insights into an easily usable form for the young pastors of the 1580s. Kolb proposed that Porta apprehended the breadth and depth of Luther's pastoral care by identifying four primary categories, namely, healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling.

Begalke (1980) wrote a doctoral dissertation on the theological foundation behind Luther's pastoral care. His study of the history of pastoral care identified the same four themes of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. Begalke commented that "certainly in Luther's pastoral care, we will discover all four of these functions" (p. 10).

Collins (1990) outlined the history of evangelical pastoral care. He explained that "like other believers, evangelical care givers have long been involved in the four pastoral functions of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling" (p. 373).

Experts who have studied the history of pastoral care have consistently seen two historical themes and four historical functions. Throughout Church history they traced the twin themes of soul care and spiritual direction and they identified the four-fold function of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding.

Though there could be many ways of outlining historical pastoral care, the framework suggested in this chapter certainly has strong historical support. In fact, Burck and Hunter (1990), in their study of pastoral theology, commented that sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding are "terms that have become standard in American pastoral care" (p. 869).

A Fuller Description of the Four Functions of Pastoral Care

Sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding serve as the research model or tool for analyzing Luther's approach to pastoral care. Fuller descriptions and definitions of these concepts have been suggested by Aden, 1990; Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Didascalia, c. 225/1903; Hiltner, 1958; McNeil, 1951; Mills, 1990; Schieler, 1905; Tappert, 1955; and others. Clebsch and Jaekle's definitions and outlines will be used as a framework for a literature review examining these fuller descriptions of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding.

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) stated that pastoral care or the cure of souls involved "helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns" (p. 4). Kenneth Leech (1977), writing from an Anglican background, asserted that Clebsch and Jaekle's definition had become the standard definition for pastoral care and counseling. Leech supported his contention with the observation that the Association for Pastoral Care and Counseling had adopted this definition into their constitution.

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) further defined seven aspects (representative persons, troubled persons, meaningful troubles, sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding) of their definitions. These seven definitions were seen by the authors as keys by which the history of Christian pastoral care might be unlocked to yield its rich treasure.

Representative Persons

Pastoral care was seen by Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) as a ministry performed by representative Christian persons "who either de jure or de facto bring to bear upon human troubles the resources, the wisdom and the authority of Christian faith and life" (p. 4). These representative persons may or

may not hold specific offices or titles, but they must in some way possess and exercise the resources of the Christian faith, the wisdom distilled from Christian experiences, and the authority of a company of Christian believers.

Becker (1969) used the term "symbolic person" (p. 146) rather than representative person. A symbolic person was one who symbolized, for the care-receiver, a public official who had been placed in a responsible office by God and who, in this capacity, speaks for God. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) did not see the necessity of specific office or title. Becker both agreed and disagreed. He sensed that every Christian must stand ready in "his ministry of consolation to proclaim the Gospel to his troubled brother" (pp. 146-147). But he felt that "this is peculiarly true of the pastor who has a special call from the congregation to serve God" (p. 147).

Mills (1990) felt that the idea of a representative person could embrace both lay and clergy roles.

> Designating this care as pastoral may refer either to the person of the religious leader or to the motivation and attitude characterizing the caregiver. In the first instance, pastoral care refers to ordained or acknowledged religious leaders who bring the resources, wisdom, and authority of the religious community to bear on human distress. But pastoral care may also be understood to be provided by any representative of the religious community who is perceived to stand for or reflect the values and commitments of the group (p. 836).

Jones (1982) promoted the idea that some form of the Christian confession of faith becomes an essential ingredient in the helping act, for the spiritual director is taken to be a representative person who confesses Christian faith and brings Christian meaning to bear upon human troubles. Spiritual directors represent the wisdom, resources, and authority of the Christian faith as that faith helps troubled people. Jones emphasized the need for both parties to maintain an "acknowledged faith commitment . . . in an atmosphere of reverence and awe" (p. 48).

Troubled Persons

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) explained that the "ministry of pastoral care is directed to troubled persons and is aimed at supporting and helping them as individual persons" (p. 5). Before pastoral care can begin, some person must apprehend that he or she is involved in a troubling situation. Pastoral care begins when an individual:

> recognizes or feels that his trouble is insolvable in the context of his own private resources, and when he becomes willing, however subconsciously, to carry his hurt and confusion to a person who represents to him, however vaguely, the resources and wisdom and authority of religion (p. 5).

Recognizing a spiritual need and asking for help are prerequisites for spiritual direction (Jones, 1982). He perceived that heightened awareness of emptiness and incapacitation were like hinges on a door swinging open to allow the entrance of the spiritual director.

Meaningful Troubles

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) defined meaningful troubles.

Pastoral care calls forth questions and issues of deepest meaning and highest concern, for it is exercised at a depth where the meaning of life and faith is involved on the part of the helper as well as on the part of the one helped (p. 6).

The specific posture of soul care is called into being when the troubled person senses, however dimly, the need to work out a problem with specific reference to his or her ultimate concerns, and wishes to bring those concerns into engagement with Christian affirmations (Kraus, 1984).

Kraus (1984) defined meaningful troubles from the pastoral perspective of the "seelsorger" (soul care giver). "The 'seelsorger' must speak from the Word of God. He addresses all human need from God's point of view. The 'seelsorger' confronts the suffering soul with the living God, the Christ, via His living, dynamic Word" (p. 155).

Leech (1977) wrote that, from his Christian perspective, meaningful troubles could be given meaningful care only when they were connected to a theological vision which saw God as the core to healing. He taught that care which avoided this God-centered foundation was not deeply rooted in the classic Christian tradition.

The Pastoral Care Function of Sustaining

Definitions of Sustaining

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) suggested this definition for sustaining:

Helping a hurting person to endure and to transcend a circumstance in which restoration to his former condition or recuperation from his malady is either impossible or so remote as to seem improbable. The sustaining function normally employs the means of compassionate commiseration. But it goes beyond mere resignation to affirmation as it attempts to achieve spiritual growth through endurance of unwanted or harmful or dangerous experiences (p. 9).

Lake (1966) wrote that sustaining was "wise pilotage" for souls in danger of floundering in inner doubt, distress, and darkness (p. xxvii). He saw sustaining as fundamental to pastoral care and involving encouragement through human contact in which the suffering person is pointed to God and returns to engage the world with a new basis for living.

Aden (1990) combined comfort and sustaining in his definition. He penned the idea that comforting and sustaining were to "console and strengthen; to stand alongside to lend support and encouragement when the situation cannot be changed, at least not immediately; to carry on a ministry of sustenance as long as circumstances preclude healing" (p. 193).

A similar, yet expanded, definition is given by Hiltner (1958). "Sustaining means 'comforting' in the original sense of 'with courage,' upholding or standing with one who suffers even if the

situation cannot be altered except perhaps by change in the person's attitude" (p. 69). In this view, the purpose of sustaining is to enhearten the person to find courage to face the difficulties of life.

The Epochs of Sustaining

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) perceived that each of the four tasks of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding were highlighted in different ways in different eras. Societal trends called for certain responses from representative religious persons. In their work, Clebsch and Jaekle included exhibits from the various eras or epochs of Church history.

Mills (1990) developed this episodic view further when he wrote that pastoral care was rooted in the historical, political, and social fabric of a given time and place. He felt that throughout Church history, two factors (theology and culture) shaped the epochs of pastoral care.

> Thus christological, soteriological, and ecclesiological convictions define our sense of obligation for each other and to some degree determine what constitutes helping. Even so, the political climate, cultural values and ideals, economic factors, and various forms of secular knowledge enter to determine in part the shape and intent of pastoral care (p. 837).

Theological beliefs and cultural developments combined to promote different accents throughout the epochs of Church history.

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) believed sustaining was emphasized during the epoch of "primitive Christianity" (A.D. 30 to 100). The early church expectantly awaited the imminent return of Christ and believed the world was moving swiftly toward its end, so sustaining souls "through the vicissitudes of life in this evil world" (p. 10) became the focus of pastoral care. Individual problems were conceived as circumstances to be endured briefly until the cataclysmic vindication of the hopes of the faithful. The pervasive attitude to be sustained was: "wait for the coming of the Lord." As an example of this focus, Clebsch and Jaekle include an exhibit from the *Second Epistle of Clement* (c. 150?/1912) concerning enduring the end of the world. A small, but illustrative, segment of this work follows.

> Wherefore, brethren, let us forsake our sojourning in this world, and do the will of him who called us, and let us not fear to go forth from this world, for the Lord said, "Ye shall be lambs in the midst of wolves," and Peter answered and said to him, "If then the wolves tear the lambs?" Jesus said to Peter, "Let the lambs have no fear of those that slay you, and can do nothing more to you, but fear him who after your death hath power over body and soul, to cast them into the flames of hell." And be well assured, brethren, that our sojourning in this world in the flesh is a little thing and lasts a short time, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, and brings us rest, in the kingdom which is to come and in everlasting life (p. 133).

Mills (1990) believed that the sustaining emphasis continued all the way to the end of the classical period (A.D. 313). Examples of this sustaining emphasis included Cyprian, who wrote treatises to support those undergoing persecution which reminded them that Christ was the

companion of the soldier in flight, hardship, and death. Others such as Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, and Ambrose addressed letters to individual Christians for sympathy and consolation.

The Enlightenment period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also stressed sustaining (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Souls were to be sustained as they passed through the treacherous pitfalls of a threatening, wicked, and secular world.

An example of this emphasis is found in the works of Richard Baxter (1615-1691). His book, *The Reformed Pastor* (1656/1956), schooled generation after generation of helping practitioners in the cure of souls (McNeil, 1951). He taught that believers needed to focus on the world to come and needed to know that their chief happiness was not in this world. He set as his aim "showing men the certainty and excellency of the promised felicity, and the perfect blessedness in the life to come, compared with the vanities of this present life" (Baxter, p. 48). He also asserted that "the wrong way must be disgraced, the evil of all sin must be manifested, and the danger that it hath brought us into, and the hurt it hath already done us, must be discovered so that individuals might rely on God's promises and gifts alone" (Baxter, p. 49).

Sustaining Developed

A central characteristic of sustaining is its theological core. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) surveyed the history of Christian belief relative to sustaining and found the belief, among other beliefs, that the entire trend of history is a downward trend away from realizing human destiny. A cataclysmic divine act alone will reverse this trend. Beyond destruction in this life lays another indestructible life. Mills (1990) proposed a similar conceptualization. "Despite its diversity, the New Testament reflects a view of Christian life rooted in an inner transformation resulting from faith in Christ as God and as the inaugurator of a new age" (p. 837).

According to Mills (1990), sustaining is needed when one encounters experiences that drive the individual headlong away from what one perceives to be human fulfillment. Crisis events come and sustaining provides the strength to mobilize resources to meet such a crisis with creative energy. A crisis can be nearly anything: bereavement, social or economic loss, new responsibilities, loss or threat of loss of health, illness, or sudden success. Sustaining becomes operative in any situation where the sense dominates that life is running downhill (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964).

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) listed four aspects of sustaining: preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption. Each of these requires individual explanation.

Preservation explained.

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) defined preservation as sustaining that sought to maintain a troubled person's situation with as little loss as possible. Aden (1990) described preservation as "holding the line against other threats, further loss, or excessive retreat" and as "the line drawn in the sand of the soul which finds a stopping place against a full retreat" (p. 77). In preservation, grieving is encouraged. Conversely, retreat, denial, and hopelessness are all discouraged. Distraught persons experiencing a life plunging away from fulfillment need to be preserved from personal destruction by calling a halt to the process of overwhelming misery (Hiltner, 1958).

Jeremy Taylor's (1613-1637) work, *Making the Most of Sickness* (1650/1839), is an example of the process of preservation. He gives helps and hints concerning how the sufferer can refuse to retreat in the midst of suffering.

Every man, when shot with an arrow from God's quiver, must then draw in all the auxiliaries of reason, and know, that then is the time to try his strength, and to reduce the words of his religion into action . . . . Let him set his heart firm upon this resolution; "I must bear it inevitably, and I will, by God's grace, do it nobly" (p. 445).

Consolation explained.

Preservation evolves into and intermeshes with consolation. Consolation is seen as the offer of hope, which is the belief that actual losses cannot nullify the person's opportunity to achieve his or her destiny under God (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964).

Hiltner (1958) proposed that consolation allows full mourning and grief because only then can one benefit from well-timed consolidation. Consolation serves to relieve one's sense of misery by bringing the sufferer into an understanding that he or she still belongs to the company of those with a living hope. Consolation provides comfort which connotes that even in suffering one is known by God, belongs to God, and is loved by God. Hiltner presented Psalm 23 as a classic example of Christian consolation. Though one walks through the valley of the shadow of death, there is no need to fear evil. For the Lord is present to comfort, lead, and prepare a table in the presence of the enemy.

Aden (1990) described consolation as comfort, strength, and encouragement in the face of trouble that is overcome not in external changes but in the depths of the human soul. Consolation helps to relieve a disconsolate person from a sense of misery, even while acknowledging that the damaging or robbing experience that initiated the disconsolation remains irreparable in and of itself.

Whereas preservation finds a stopping point for regressive movement, consolation relieves the sense of misery that began and increased during those regressive moments (Aden, 1990). Together consolation and preservation embrace the loss by stopping regression and by providing hope.

Consolidation explained.

Hiltner (1958) believed that life could be embraced only after loss had been embraced. Consolidation incorporates the remaining resources available to the sufferer by building a platform from which to face up to a deprived life. The relief from misery brought by consolation allows for a regrouping of remaining resources despite the loss. A new mobilization of previously untapped resources begins and the suffering is put into new perspective. The totality of the life of the deprived person is highlighted and a "pulling together again" (p. 56) can commence.

The physician of the soul empowers the troubled person to select out of a seeming totality of woe, some foundation for reconstructing life. The actual loss can be seen for what it is—a partial loss. The actual deprivation can be faced and embraced. The spiritual director yearns to set the loss within the totality of life and thus enable the deprived person to accept that his or her deprived life is

the only life left for him or her to live (Edwards, 1980).

Redemption explained.

Aden (1990) advanced the theory that redemption was the final stage of sustaining. In this stage, faith is stretched, the loss is embraced, and life is embraced. The "redeemed" person now sets out to achieve whatever historical fulfillment might be wrested from life in the face of this irretrievable deprivation. This empowers the person to begin to build a life that now pursues its fulfillment and destiny on a new or renewed basis. Although the loss is not restored, hope is. This hope, according to Aden, is the recovery of a positive approach to life even when complete restoration to the status quo is impossible.

Aden (1990) presented black pastoral care as a classic example of sustaining by redemption.

> Because black people have lived under slavery and oppression, a ministry of sustaining, which combines both consolation and admonition, both present and eschatological hopes, has been a dominant form of black pastoral care and counseling on both a congregational and a clerical level. Through a variety of means—prayer meetings, church fellowship, Negro spirituals, the rite of baptism, and an optimistic theological worldview—the black church has sustained and given courage to its people. By its depth and breadth black pastoral care is the epitome of the ministry of sustaining in situations of prolonged suffering (p. 195).

The Pastoral Care Function of Healing

Definitions of Healing

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) defined healing as:

> That function in which a representative Christian person helps a debilitated person to be restored to a condition of wholeness, on the assumption that this restoration achieves also a new level of spiritual insight and welfare. Pastoral healing, thus involves recuperation from a specific ill, but it is distinguished by the fact that it regards cures as advancements in the soul's ability to reckon on illness and health as experiences fraught with spiritual significance. Pastoral healing may take place by means of the impartation or application of curative agents and actions, or by means of the elicitation of spiritual attitudes and actions from the person seeking to be healed (pp. 8-9).

This definition suggests two types of healing: healing by curative agents and healing by curative attitudes. Healing by curative agents emphasizes actual physical cures where there is a restoration to personal wholeness in terms of physical recuperation. Curative attitudes stretch an individual to a higher level of spiritual awareness and maturity.

Graham (1990) emphasized both the process and holistic nature of healing. "Healing is the process of being restored to bodily wholeness, and emotional well-being, mental functioning, and

spiritual aliveness. Christian modes of healing have always distinguished themselves by achieving a spiritual advance in connection with the healing process" (p. 497).

The Epochs of Healing

For the first three centuries of the early church, the ministry of healing was made central in the worship and mission of the church (Graham, 1990). Graham suggested that beginning in the fourth century the emphasis in the Church began to change. Healing moved to the background as reconciliation moved to the forefront.

Healing was prominent in Medieval Christianity where it was known as sacramental healing (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). The power of divine grace was believed to heal inherent and accidental deformities of human existence. Pastors imparted this healing by means of objective, sacramental embodiments of grace. They dispensed divine medicine for spiritual and physical health. Ritual rites of passage were prominent and viewed as medicine for the soul: baptism, confirmation, holy matrimony, extreme unction, penance, and mass. Spiritual diseases were diagnosed and specific spiritual remedies were prescribed. The term "physician of the soul" (Graham, 1990, p. 498) is appropriate in this context.

Healing Developed

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) expressed the view that restoration is a possibility—it is not guaranteed—but God is able to restore. God is able to overcome impairments by restoring a person to physical or personal wholeness either by actual recovery of loss or by leading the person to advance beyond the previous condition. This is a physical or personal mending or restoring which integrates the person on a higher spiritual level. It is a forward gain over some previous condition where new depth to life is found by drawing upon one's resources in Christ and the Christian community.

According to Lake (1966), healing suggests a crisis of need. It is necessary when one realizes the fragility of life and of human frailty. At this threshold of awareness a door of opportunity opens. When evil intrudes into the usual rhythm of life, people are brought to the verge of defenselessness and disintegration. Healing can advance a person to a higher spiritual level. Lake explained that "the nature of the help God gives through His Church is to make what cannot be removed, creatively bearable" (p. xxv). The crisis of need leads to a courageous bearing, and more, to a "creative use of the pain and loss that cannot be cured. There is a strength that is made perfect in weakness" (p. xxv).

In historical pastoral care, sickness has meaning. It is not simply a painful debilitating event to be wished away. Rather, it is seen as an opportunity to better understand suffering from Christ's perspective. Lake (1966) summarized this viewpoint. "There is no human experience which cannot be put on to the anvil of a lively relationship with God and man, and battered into a meaningful shape" (p. 97).

The Pastoral Function of Reconciling

Definitions of Reconciling

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) saw the pastoral care function of reconciling as that ministry which:

Seeks to re-establish broken relationships between man and fellow man and between man and God. Broadly speaking each of these horizontal and vertical relationships has been understood as inescapably involving the other. Reconciling employs two emphatic modes of operation, which we call forgiveness and discipline (p. 9).

In their description of forgiveness, the authors included confession and absolution. Forgiveness aimed to amend a life alienated from God by sin (either real or imagined, either true guilt or false guilt) and to reestablish a right relationship with God. They envisioned discipline as placing alienated persons into situations in which good relationships might be established. Historically, discipline has been a means by which a congregation encourages alienated members to reconcile.

Another conceptualization of reconciliation sees it as "pastoral acts that 'call back together' the estranged. Broad usage recognizes reconciling as the establishment of harmony with one's world, one's destiny, or oneself" (Burck, 1990, p. 1047). Like Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), Burck depicted reconciliation as operating through both forgiveness and discipline. "Forgiveness restores relationships through proclamation, confession-absolution, and the like, and discipline reviews behavior and places persons in situations that can lead to restored relationship" (pp. 1047-1048).

The Epochs of Reconciling

Reconciling thrived during the persecutions (180 A.D. to 300 A.D.). Cairns (1981) saw this as a period in which the church radically opposed claims of the empire and taught that the culture of the world was to be rejected. During these times, many were persecuted and some recanted their faith. Later they wanted to return to the faith (McNeil, 1951). What was to be done? Were they in a right relationship with God? How could those who had loved ones who were martyred for their faith live with those who had compromised their faith? Reconciliation procedures to reunite persons to God and person to person were needed. As a result, exomologesis, or public confession and penance, entered the church (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964).

Reconciling became prominent again during the Reformation period. In fact, McNeil (1951) believed that the issue of reconciliation of the individual to the righteous God became the polarizing soul care issue of this era. He believed that humanistic Renaissance thinking greatly influenced the Church at this point as he saw the quest of the Renaissance as an individual quest which led to a preoccupation with personal salvation and with personal spiritual reconciliation. The great quest became the individual quest for certainty of personal salvation, therefore, soul care focused on the art and craft of achieving and granting certainty of salvation. Reconciling sinners to God and believers to their brethren preoccupied much of Reformation soul care (McGrath, 1990).

Reconciling Developed

Hiltner (1958) saw theology at the core of the reconciliation function, and addressed the question: "How are alienated people helped to establish or renew proper and fruitful relationships with God and with their neighbor?" (p. 65). Two interdependent modes were highlighted—forgiveness and discipline (Burck, 1990). These were interdependent because a reconciled relationship to God was considered a prerequisite to truly harmonious human relationships and because sins against one another were perceived to be sins against God.

Throughout Church history, forgiveness included both confession and absolution (Childs, 1990). Confession itself consisted of four elements. The first was preparation, which was spiritual counsel (the spiritual direction element) designed to help the believer decide whether or not he or she needed the potent medicine of public confession. Actual public confession was the second step, which was called exomologesis or public confession before the entire congregation. Step three was penance. The actual act of penance was decided during further spiritual direction. The fourth step was reconciliation which occurred after a suitable penance. Herein the sinner was received back into the community with prayer and blessings (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Absolution granted the penitent a clear conscience. Remission of sin was announced, and an infusion of sanctifying grace was received (Childs, 1990).

Luther and his fellow Reformers reshaped the entire reconciliation process (Steinmetz, 1995). Confession was no longer compulsory and direct access to God through private prayer was encouraged. Mutual confession and absolution at the lay level became a normal part of the Christian experience (McNeil, 1951). During the Reformation, lay elders served as spiritual directors. They were to make fraternal correction a normal part of the Christian experience by lovingly admonishing erring Christians (Kemp, 1947).

Church discipline restored troubled Christians to one another and allowed a sinning believer to remain within the care of the faithful while also keeping him or her accountable. It also guarded the sinning Christian against further temptations (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964).

Calvin (1541/1960) exemplifies one mode of church discipline in which reconciliation may occur through a fraternal word of correction, a pastoral admonition, or even sterner measures directed toward confession, repentance, and amendment of life. Calvin's insistence on the need for discipline is exhibited in the following:

> But because some persons, in their hatred of discipline, recoil from its very name, let them understand this: if no society, indeed, no house which has even a small family, can be kept in proper condition without discipline, it is much more necessary in the church, whose condition should be as ordered as possible. Accordingly, as the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so does discipline serve as its sinews, through which the members of the body hold together, each in its own place (p. 1229).

In their summary of reconciliation, Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) asserted that there was no non-pastoral substitute for reconciliation. They proposed that, in what they saw as a modern age of alienation, the pastoral task ought to focus on this area of reconciliation. They summarized their

thinking by suggesting that reconciliation endeavors to remove the burden of guilt by reuniting fallen humanity with a loving and holy God. Ruptured relationships between persons and God and between person and person are mended through spiritual direction and loving admonition.

Part of the process of spiritual direction in the area of reconciliation includes the art of spiritual nosology (classifications of problems, issues, sins, and ills). Throughout Church history, pastors and theologians developed culturally relevant spiritual diagnostic systems for use in identifying and overcoming besetting sins, which separate the believer from God (Lake, 1966).

The Pastoral Care Function of Guiding

Definitions of Guiding

The pastoral function of guiding, according to Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), consists of:

Assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and future state of the soul. Guidance commonly employs two identifiable modes. Eductive guidance tends to draw out of the individual's own experiences and values the criteria and resources for such decisions, while inductive guidance tends to lead the individual to adopt an a priori set of values and criteria by which to make his decision (p. 9).

The authors viewed guiding as the pastoral function of spiritual direction which arrives at some wisdom concerning what one ought to do when one is faced with the difficult problem of choosing between various courses of thought or action.

Hiltner (1958) stated that "guiding within the perspective of shepherding means helping to find the paths when that help has been sought" (p.69). The experienced guide in the North Woods was Hiltner's analogy for the spiritual guide.

Assume that we contemplate a trip through the North Woods and want a guide. From this guide we shall expect certain things: familiarity with the terrain, with dangers peculiar to the region, with the kinds of animals that may be hunted and the conditions pertinent to each, and the like. On many matters we rightly expect him to know more than we do (p. 145).

In explaining his analogy, Hiltner emphasized that the shepherd-guide concentrates on the welfare of the person and seeks to enable and strengthen the person.

The Epochs of Guiding

Guiding was a focal point of the period from 306 A.D. to the end of the Dark Ages (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Pastors guided persons to behave in accord with the norms of the new Christian culture and inductive guidance was accented. People were persuaded to interpret their lives by the norms of Christian living. Pastors were to guide troubled people into Christian beliefs, culture, and morality.

Guiding has also been stressed in the modern post-Christian era from the 18th century up until this day (Edwards, 1980). Eductive guidance has been the norm as the new pluralism has raised a multitude of questions concerning norms and personal conviction (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). The pastor's task has been to guide personal, private decisions of troubled persons in a pluralistic age. Much of this has included guiding individuals into a personal conviction that Christianity is the means to a right relationship with God and the access point for mutually beneficial human relationships (Leech, 1985).

Guiding Developed

Edwards (1980) believed that a cohesive theological core could be found in the history of Christian guidance. This core belief, according to Edwards, states that there is useful wisdom that gives meaning and direction to life. He explained that such useful wisdom is available within the framework of the helping act in which a troubled person and a spiritual director mutually search for such wisdom.

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) concurred with this viewpoint.

> This wisdom may be thought of as having its origin from within the troubled person himself, from the experience of the counselor, from the common values regnant in their mutually shared culture, from a superior wisdom available to the counselor, or even from a body of truth or knowledge independent of both the counselor and counselee (p. 50).

Such wisdom, they wrote, is fashioned or shaped for the immediate circumstance of the troubled person in order that it may be appropriated and used in the context of the particular trouble at hand. Guidance forges decision-guiding wisdom in the heat of specific troubles and strives to facilitate its use in particular situations.

Guidance is vital because human decisions are regarded as highly significant before God (Leech, 1977). Persons are seen as "coram Deo"—in the face or presence of God (Lane, 1984). Christianity has historically seen spiritual direction as a vital means of empowering believers to make decisions in light of the ultimate concerns of their loving and holy God (Lake, 1966).

The historical mode of guidance has ranged along a continuum from advice-giving to devil-craft to listening. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) labeled advice-giving inductive guidance as it seeks to lead the perplexed person into a prior and authoritative set of values out of which they may reach a decision.

Another phrase used by Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) was devil-craft. They stated that the roots of devil-craft could be found in the conviction that no one ought to struggle alone. Christianity added the thought that no one ought to struggle alone against Satan and that God instituted the church and the ministry of the Word in order that believers might join hands and help one another to thwart Satan (McNeil, 1951). Devil-craft is the shared discovery of biblical principles of living (Clebsch & Jaekle).

John Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666/1872),

exemplified the belief in the art of devil-craft. In it, Bunyan told how he withdrew from a certain care giver who knew nothing about devil-craft and was therefore of little use when Satan was employing relentless and effective war. Bunyan wrote:

About this time I took an opportunity to break my mind to an ancient Christian, and told him all my case; I told him also, that I was afraid I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; and he told me, he thought so too. Here, therefore, I had but cold comfort; but talking a little more with him, I found him, though a good man, a stranger to much combat with the devil. Wherefore I went to God again, as well as I could, for mercy still (p. 51).

Listening was the third aspect of guiding suggested by Clebsch and Jaekle (1964). Edwards (1980), Jones (1982), and Leech (1977, 1985) each wrote that listening has always been a part of Christian spiritual direction. They proposed that current counseling concepts such as clarification, sympathizing, and reflection, all have historical roots which can be traced to ancient Christian spiritual direction.

Summary

The paradigm of soul care (sustaining and healing) and spiritual direction (reconciling and guiding) has been sketched in this chapter. Detailed descriptions of the four functions of pastoral care have been provided. The framework presented in this chapter has substantial historical support.

This review has laid the foundation for an analysis of Luther's style of pastoral care and counseling. As Luther's letters and table talks are examined, they are probed through these four lenses of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. These precisely defined tasks are used to ask theological and methodological questions of Luther's pastoral care, and can be asked intelligently because there is a framework from which to work.

CHAPTER 3

SUSTAINING IN MARTIN LUTHER'S SPIRITUAL CARE

Overview

The purpose of chapter three is to analyze Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care using the grid of historic Christian sustaining. Chapter two summarized sustaining as "helping a hurting person to endure and transcend irretrievable loss" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 8). The specific question researched in chapter three is, what theory and practice did Luther develop when he sought to help a hurting person to endure and transcend irretrievable loss?

Martin Luther's Theory (Theology) Relative to Sustaining

This section uses historic sustaining to examine the theology Martin Luther followed when he provided pastoral care to hurting people. Luther's theory of soul care emphasized the trial of faith, coram Deo faith, the perspective of faith, the scriptural context of faith, and the theme of faith.

Martin Luther's Conceptualization of Suffering: The Trial of Faith

Luther conceptualized two levels of suffering based upon his definition of two kinds of evil. He wrote of "present evils" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 127) referring to any external suffering such as illness, persecution, rejection, and death. "Level one suffering" (p. 97) was what happened around and to the person.

When Luther wrote of "future evils" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 127), he described internal suffering of the mind that gave rise to "one of the great and principle emotions, namely, fear" (p. 128). "Level two suffering" (p. 97) was what the person's conscience brought to them when they reflected upon their external suffering.

Luther illustrated his conceptualization of evil and suffering in his letters to Mark Schart and Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise. Luther wrote to Schart to address level one suffering, the present evil of death, and to confront level two suffering, the future evil of "distressing thoughts about death" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 97). He discussed both external and internal suffering with Elector Frederick.

> And if there are that many diseases, how great do you think will be the number of misfortunes that assail our possessions, our friends, and even our very mind, which, after all, is the main target of all evils and the one trysting place of sorrow and every ill? (p. 128).

Diseases and misfortunes constituted level one external suffering and distresses of the mind comprised level two internal suffering.

Luther labeled level two internal suffering "anfechtungen" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 50) or spiritual

depressions. Spiritual depression was the result of an internal response to an external event (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). Luther variously defined anfechtungen as "spiritual distresses" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 15), "satanic temptations to doubt God" (LW, Vol. 16, p. 214), and "spiritual trials and terrors, religious disquiet, spiritual depression, restlessness, despair, doubt, turmoil, pangs, torments, panic, desolation and desperation" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 12).

From his personal (LW, Vol. 54, p. 193) and pastoral (LSA, p. 9) experience, Luther taught that the worst anfechtungen were trials of faith produced by the mind's reflection on and reaction to external suffering. He believed that the absence of faith in God, in the presence of external suffering, led to a terrified conscience which perceived God to be angry and evil instead of loving and good.

It is not as reason and Satan argue: "See there God flings you into prison, endangers your life. Surely He hates you. He is angry with you; for if He did not hate you, He would not allow this thing to happen." In this way Satan turns the rod of a Father into the rope of a hangman and the most salutary remedy into the deadliest poison (LW, Vol. 16, p. 214).

Luther's second level of suffering emphasized the trial of faith. This deep suffering involved a person's internal reaction of depression, fear, anxiety, panic, and loss of faith in response to external evils. Thus for Luther the greatest evil was the suffering of the conscience when it moved away from God due to lack of faith in His goodness. A modern parallel might be the question, "What happens when bad things happen to good people?" For Luther, the worst thing that happened was not the evil suffered, as bad as that was. The tragedy was the potential hemorrhage in the relationship with God when the individual responded to evil.

Martin Luther's Conceptualization of Faith: Coram Deo Faith

Since Luther defined the deepest level of suffering as a trial of faith, his spiritual counsel was primarily concerned with sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding faith. In sustaining, Luther's goal was to maintain faith in the goodness of God during times of suffering (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 152-155). He felt that people needed to perceive God as a Father who had good intentions for His children and Luther sought to strengthen faith in the wisdom, plan, and purposes of God as revealed in Christ (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 163-166).

Luther taught that true faith perceived the presence of God in the presence of suffering. He used the Latin phrase, "coram Deo" (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 273) which means "in the presence of God" (p. 274), to picture his concept that people lived face to face with God every moment and in every situation. Therefore, for Luther, all existence found its final meaning and object in God and all emotions, actions, and thoughts had God as their circumference (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43). He perceived that all of life was a story of personal encounter with God and that the deepest questions in life were questions about God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43).

In Luther's view of suffering, people vocalized the questions, "Where is God in my suffering? Is He for me or against me? Has He abandoned me?" (LSC, p. 100). So in his soul care he tried to

move people face to face with God so they could encounter the love of God through faith in the grace of Christ. In one of his table talks, Luther spoke about the centrality of faith in helping people to face suffering coram Deo. "There is only one article of faith and one rule of theology, and this is true faith or trust in Christ" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 157).

Tappert (1955) proposed that Luther's soul care always sought to move people toward faith in God.

> In Luther's eyes, therefore, spiritual counsel is always concerned, above all else with faith—nurturing, strengthening, establishing, practicing faith—because "faith cometh by hearing," the Word of God (or the Gospel) occupies a central place in it. The ministry to troubled souls is a ministry of the gospel. It is a ministry to those who have or who lack faith (p. 15).

When someone was suffering from spiritual depression as a result of an internal response to an external event, Luther encouraged coram Deo faith as a remedy to doubt and despair.

Martin Luther's Conceptualization of Spiritual Comfort: The Perspective of Faith

Since Luther saw the trial of faith as the problem and the presence of coram Deo faith as the solution to transcending loss, in his spiritual counsel he emphasized the development of a faith perspective. Luther saw faith as the divine perspective on life from which a platform could be erected to respond to suffering (LW, Vol. 42, p. 133).

Luther believed that how a person viewed life made all the difference in life. "The Holy Spirit knows that a thing only has such value and meaning to a man as he assigns it in his thoughts" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). Therefore, Luther sought to help people in suffering reshape their perspective or interpretation of their life situation.

This approach is illustrated in Luther's letter of spiritual counsel to the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise. In 1519, the Elector was stricken with a serious illness and his court feared for his life. Frederick's chaplain, George Spalatin, suggested that Luther prepare some writings of spiritual comfort for Frederick. Indebted to the Elector for firm protection against his enemies, Luther felt a special sense of obligation to comply with Spalatin's suggestion and thus penned "The Fourteen Consolations: For Those Who Labor and Are Heavy-Laden" (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-166).

Luther derived the structure of his writing from a cult popular in medieval Germany. According to the legend behind the cult, a Franconian shepherd in 1446 had a vision of the Christ Child surrounded by 14 saints. In the course of time, the 14 saints acquired names and each became identified as a protector against a specific disease. Luther devised 14 consolations arranged in the form of 14 frescos or altar screens similar to the altar screens depicting the 14 saints (LW, Vol. 42, p. 119).

Luther's altar screens had a specific purpose and method. His purpose was to bring "spiritual consolation to uplift and strengthen the pious heart" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123) to trust in God's love and good purposes in suffering. Luther's method was to use spiritual screens, images, portraits, pictures and thoughts to enable people to contemplate suffering from a new, divine perspective (pp. 123-

124). "Luther thus effects a literary altar screen, the first panel or section of which is devoted to the contemplation of seven evils; the second, to the contemplation of seven blessings which God's grace bestows upon the faithful believer" (p. 119). Luther used this literary device in counseling Frederick to consider suffering from the viewpoint of a basic theme or story line that could alter his perspective on suffering.

Strohl (1989) examined the Fourteen Consolations in detail and summarized how Luther rooted his approach to soul care in nurturing alternative ways to view life.

> This whole treatise is concerned with what one sees. It presents fourteen images for contemplation, and their purpose is to renew our sight. The consolation offered by the Word is a new vision, the power of faith to see suffering and death from the perspective of the crucified and risen Lord. It turns our common human view of these matters upside down, lifting us as Luther puts it, above our evils and our blessings, making them res indifferentes. This does not eradicate the pain or the fear of our misery, but it robs it of its hopelessness (p. 179).

The words that Luther chose in writing to Frederick demonstrated the value he attached to changing people's perspective and interpretation of events. He urged the Elector to "be mindful" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 126), "remember, meditate, ponder" (p. 131), "comfort yourself by the remembering of God's works" (p. 132), "perceive the blessings of Christ" (p. 147), and "try to attain to the knowledge and love of this blessing" (p. 149). Luther selected similar words when he explained how to change perspective: "if we consider this (the broader rule and plan of God) rightly, we shall see how greatly we are favored by God" (p. 135), "we thus see that all our suffering is nothing when we consider and ponder the afflictions of men" (p. 139), "oh, if we could only see the heart of Christ as he was suspended from the cross, anguishing to make death contemptible and dead for us" (p. 143), "this (delighting in suffering) will come to pass if this image (of Christ's resurrection) finds its way into our heart and abides in the innermost affections of our mind. This is the first panel" (p. 145). Luther focused on changing the faith perspective because he believed:

> If only a man could see his God in such a light of love . . . how happy, how calm, how safe he would be! He would then truly have a God from whom he would know with certainty that all his fortunes—whatever they might be—had come to him and were still coming to him under the guidance of God's most gracious will (p. 154).

Summarizing his method, Luther wrote "by means of such splendid symbols the mercy of God shows us in our infirmity that even though death should not be taken away, its power has been reduced by him to a mere shadow" (p. 150).

Luther wanted Frederick's non-faith or earth-bound, human story of suffering to give way to God's narrative of life and suffering.

> He who does not believe that he is forgiven by the inexhaustible riches of Christ's righteousness is like a deaf man hearing a story. If we considered it properly and with an attentive heart, this

one image—even if there were no other—would suffice to fill us with such comfort that we should not only not grieve over our evils, but should also glory in our tribulations, scarcely feeling them for the joy that we have in Christ (LW, Vol. 42, p. 165).

Luther encouraged Frederick to consider a new way of looking at life. "All that remains is for us now to pray that our eyes, that is the eyes of our faith, may be opened that we may see. Then there will be nothing for us to fear" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 163). Luther taught the Elector that it was not what happened to him that mattered most, but how he framed what happened to him. "And it is equally true that we measure, feel, or do not feel our evils not on the basis of the facts, but on the basis of our thoughts and feelings about them" (p. 127).

Martin Luther's Context for Developing a Faith Perspective: The Scriptural Basis of Faith

In Luther's theory of helping people to transcend loss, he believed that the Scriptures were the context for realigning one's faith perspective. In the preface to his letter to Frederick, Luther contrasted scriptural consolation with the consolation popular in his day. "The Fourteen Consolations are to replace the fourteen saints whom our superstition has invented and called 'The Defenders Against All Evils.' Now this is a spiritual (scriptural) screen and not made of silver" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123).

Luther expressed his high view of Scripture even more forcefully in his introduction to *The Fourteen Consolations*.

In speaking of the consolations which Christians have, the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4 writes, "Brethren, whatever was written, was written for our instruction, so that through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." In this passage he plainly teaches us that our consolations are to be drawn from the Holy Scriptures (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124).

Luther held a theology that taught that the Bible provided God's story of and explanation for the human condition. Thus the Bible was his source book for developing a faith perspective concerning suffering. He felt so strongly about this that he quoted or referred to Scripture no less than 169 times in his 45-page letter to Frederick.

Martin Luther's Theme for Developing A Faith Perspective: The Cross of Christ

If the Scriptures were Luther's main text, then the Gospels of Christ were his theme text for renewing a faith perspective. Specifically, when Luther conceptualized his Christian view of suffering, he focused on the suffering of Christ on the cross. Theologians have named this "Luther's theologia crucis, the theology of the Cross" (McGrath, 1990, p. 1).

The events of life made no sense to Luther apart from Christ's death on the cross "on behalf of sinners" (Althaus, 1966, p. 173). The Christian must suffer, because Christ also suffered.

Did Christ not offer himself? It is true that he offered himself on the cross for every one of us who believes in him. But by this very act he at the same time also offers us, so that it is necessary for all those who believe in him to suffer too and to be put to death according to the flesh, as happened in this case (LW, Vol. 30, p. 111).

According to Luther, Christ is so connected to the Christian in suffering that He literally suffers with the believer. Luther wrote to Frederick,

Thus, Most Illustrious Prince, since I saw that your Lordship has been stricken with a grave illness and that Christ also is sick in you, I have deemed it my duty to visit your Lordship with this little writing. I cannot pretend that I do not hear the voice of Christ as it cries to me out of your Lordship's body and flesh, saying, "Look, I am sick." Such evils as sickness and the like are borne not by us Christians, but by Christ himself, our Lord and Saviour, in whom we live (LW, Vol. 42, p. 122).

Luther saw Christ suffering everything the Christian suffered. Rather than viewing Christ as uncaring, Luther saw Christ as the Son of God who cared so much that He felt His children's infirmities.

Luther wanted to help Frederick to understand that the death of Christ for him and the suffering of Christ with him could change Frederick's perspective.

How does this come to pass? Surely, it comes to pass when you hear that Jesus Christ, God's Son, has by his most holy touch consecrated and hallowed all sufferings, even death itself, has blessed the curse, and has glorified shame and enriched poverty so that death is now a door to life, the curse a fount of blessing, and shame the mother of glory. Suffering has been touched and bathed by Christ's pure and holy flesh and blood and thus have become holy, harmless, and wholesome, blessed, and full of joy for you. There is nothing, not even death, that his passion cannot sweeten (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 141-142).

Luther urged Frederick to not "fail to perceive" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 162) the implications of Christ's passion. He counseled the Elector that in his pain and suffering he should turn to the image of Christ, "firmly believing and certain that it is not we alone, but Christ and the church who are in pain and are suffering and dying with us" (p. 163).

Luther's theology of sustaining can be put into very practical terms. Luther explained how to nurture the faith perspective that God was good even when life was bad. He believed that "the Christ of the cross" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 162) was the only one who could make sense of life when suffering came; the only one who could enable the one suffering to believe by faith that God was good even when times were evil.

Martin Luther's Practice Relative to Sustaining

This section uses historic Christian sustaining to analyze what Martin Luther did when he helped hurting people to endure and transcend irretrievable loss. Preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption are the four aspects of historic sustaining used to probe Luther's pastoral care activities (Kolb, 1983).

Luther practiced four ways of helping hurting people. First, he prepared to help by sensing the person's life context. Next, Luther preserved or maintained the person's faith by sympathizing with the person's suffering. Luther also attempted to console people in their loss by stretching their faith perspective concerning the goodness of God. Finally, he consolidated their faith by strengthening the person's faith resources (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-166).

Redemption, which was the fourth historic aspect of sustaining, was not found to be a pastoral care activity used by Luther to help hurting people to transcend losses. Instead, Luther blended historic redemptive measures into his strategy for healing—a strategy examined in chapter four (LSA, pp. 175-176).

Preparation Through Sensing the Person's Life Context

Luther prepared to provide pastoral care by coming to know several aspects of the person's situation. He would seek to know the person's personality, relationship to God, and life circumstances.

Preparation Through Sensing the Person's Personality

Sensing the person's personality was important to Luther because he believed that various remedies could work for different "types" of people. In a table talk labeled "treatment of melancholy," Luther was quoted as saying, "But this you ought to know, that other remedies are suitable for other persons" (LW Vol. 54, p. 18). Luther continued this dialogue by insisting that care givers must understand the person before prescribing the treatment.

> There was a bishop who had a sister in a convent. She was disturbed by various dreams about her brother. She betook herself to her brother and complained to him that she was again and again agitated by bad dreams. He at once prepared a sumptuous dinner and urged his sister to eat and drink. The following day he asked her whether she had been annoyed by dreams during the night. "No," she responded. "I slept well and had no dreams at all." "Go, then," he said. "Take care of your body in defiance of Satan, and the bad dreams will stop" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 18).

At this point in his dialogue, Luther further developed his conviction that the spiritual director must understand the individual personality with whom he or she is working.

Copious drinking benefits me when I am in this condition. But I would not advise a young person to drink more because this might stimulate his sexual desire. In short, abstinence is beneficial for some and a drinking bout for others. Augustine says wisely in his rule, "Not equally for all because you are not all equally strong." So he speaks about the body and so we can speak about illnesses of the spirit (LW Vol. 54, p. 18).

Luther gained information about the person in a number of ways. In many of his letters it is evident that he knew a great deal about the individual either through personal contact or through detailed information provided by a mutual friend. More is discerned about his approach to learning the character of a person through this description of what Luther would do when he visited someone who was sick.

When Dr. Martin Luther approached any sick person, whom he visited in time of bodily weakness, he conversed with him in a very friendly way, bent down over him and inquired in the first place about his sickness, what his ailment was, how long he had been weak, what physicians he had employed, and what kind of medicine had been given him. Afterwards, he began to inquire whether in his bodily weakness he had been patient before God (LSA, p. 41).

Preparation Through Sensing the Person's Relationship to God

The last part of the previous quotation also serves to introduce a second aspect of Luther's preparation for pastoral care. Luther inquired about how the person was responding to his bodily weakness. The rest of the text of that interview described the distinctive ways Luther responded dependent upon the level of faith evidenced by the individual: "When he had now learned, how the sick man had borne himself in his weakness, and what was his disposition toward God . . ." (LSA, p. 41).

If the person evidenced strong faith, then Luther would respond with praise and encouragement. If the person did not display a strong disposition toward God, then he might confront the person for lack of faith (if that person was known to be a Christian of some years) or he might attempt to strengthen the person's faith.

Luther perceived that people lived in the presence of God and used this perception as a primary pastoral care tool. He wanted to know where the individual stood in terms of relationship with God. One such example concerned Jerome Weller, who was professor of theology in Freiberg and was struggling with depression. In dealing with Weller, Luther began by asking whether he was angry with God, with Luther, or with himself. Weller replied, "I confess that I am murmuring against God" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 275). Luther then provided comfort by sharing that he, too, had experienced many bouts of anger with God. A lengthy conversation followed in which Luther helped Weller to see that God was not angry at him, even though he was angry at God. He knew Weller well and used his knowledge of Weller and Weller's relationship to his God as the context for his counsel and soul care.

If Luther sensed that a person's faith was weak, especially due to severe trial and spiritual

depression, he recommended fellowship with other Christians who could strengthen and help the person. "Thereupon, he entreated Weller to cultivate the company of men when he is afflicted with such melancholy and not live alone" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 276). If, on the other hand, he sensed great faith, even in the midst of severe trial, Luther simply affirmed people and encouraged them to continue what they were already doing so well. This is the case with his letter to Lambert Thorn who was arrested and tried for heresy.

> Grace and peace in the Lord. Christ has given me abundant testimony of you, dear brother Lambert, that you do not need my words, for He Himself suffers in you and is glorified in you. He is taken captive in you and reigns in you, He is oppressed in you and triumphs in you, for He has given you that holy knowledge of Himself which is hidden from the world . . . . There is little need, then, to burden you with my consolations (LC, p. 213).

Begalke (1980), in his dissertation on Luther's theology of pastoral care, noted how Luther sought to understand the nature of the person's spiritual faith. Begalke asked the functional question of Luther, "How does a pastor offer care?" (p. 5). He answered that it was offered first by distinguishing between penitent sinners and proud sinners. To the penitent sinner who saw the need for grace and turned from self and works, Luther's message and approach emphasized comfort and consolation. To the proud sinner who refused to see the need for grace and outside assistance, Luther's approach employed explanation, warning, and confrontation.

Preparation Through Sensing the Person's Life Circumstances

Though Luther held a strong spiritual focus, he did not see every issue as a spiritual issue in terms of cause and cure. When the plague broke out in his area, Luther's cure was not a simplistic, "pray and trust God."

> "Not so, my friend," cries he to him who says: "If God wishes to protect the city, He will surely do it without waiting for us to pour water on the fire." That is poor reasoning; but use medicine, employ all means that can help you, fumigate house, yard and alleys, avoid also infected persons and places, when your neighbor does not need you or has recovered, and conduct yourself like one who would gladly help to put out a common fire (LSA, p. 37).

Luther was willing to work hand in hand with physicians because he saw ministers as physicians of the soul and doctors as physicians of the body. For Luther, the wise physician of soul or body distinguished causes then prescribed the appropriate cure.

In one table talk, Luther stated that, though Satan was the first cause of sickness and death, this did not negate the need for physical remedies. "Generally speaking, therefore, I think that all dangerous diseases are blows of the devil. For this, however, he employs the instruments of nature" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 53). Since this is the case, when one battles sickness, the battle is on two levels, both the spiritual and the physical. "God also employs means for the preservation of health, such as

sleep for the body, food, and drink, for he does nothing except through instruments" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 53). Therefore, it is appropriate and necessary to treat the whole person.

> Accordingly a physician is our Lord God's mender of the body, as we theologians are his healers of the spirit; we are to restore what the devil has damaged. So a physician administers theriaca (an antidote for poison) when Satan gives poison. Healing comes from the application of nature to the creature . . . . It's our Lord God who created all things, and they are good. Wherefore it's permissible to use medicine, for it is a creature of God. Thus I replied to Hohndorf, who inquired of me when he heard from Karlstadt that it's not permissible to make use of medicine. I said to him, "Do you eat when you're hungry?" (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 53-54).

On the other hand, when convinced that the issue was spiritual in nature, Luther did not hesitate to call for spiritual, rather than medicinal cures. He wrote to his friend John Agricola concerning John's wife. "Her illness is, as you see, rather of the mind than of the body. I am comforting her as much as I can, with my knowledge" (LC, p. 402).

Two concepts stand out in this response. First, it was important for Luther that causes be sensed. Second, even when the causes were sensed as spiritual, Luther did not feel he was the expert with the last word on everything. This passage and others, especially in the table talks, reflect a spiritual director who was willing to refer to physicians when the issue was physical and to other Christians when the issue was spiritual, but beyond his realm of expertise.

Luther continued by telling John Agricola that, "In a word, her disease is not for the apothecaries (as they call them), nor is it to be treated with the salves of Hippocrates, but by constantly applying plasters of Scripture and the Word of God" (LC, p. 402). Then Luther questioned the value of medicine for spiritual issues. "For what has conscience to do with Hippocrates? Therefore, I would dissuade you from the use of medicine and advise the power of God's Word" (LC, p. 402).

Luther prepared for soul care by sensing the life context of those to whom he ministered. He sensed their personalities, backgrounds, faith, relationship to God, situations, and their specific areas of suffering. All of these prepared him to sustain people in times of suffering.

Preservation Through Sympathizing with the Person's Suffering

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) summarized preservation as the art of maintaining faith (compassionate commiseration) by embracing the loss and stopping regression. Luther believed that pastoral care givers should embrace their own suffering, suffer with others, respect a person's struggle to embrace suffering, and turn people to their God in their suffering.

Personal Suffering: I Have Wrestled With Suffering

Luther was convinced, through his study of Scripture, his work with people, and his personal experience, that only the person who had honestly wrestled with suffering could be of help to others

struggling through suffering. Therefore, he taught that the spiritual director had to be willing to wrestle with both level one (the suffering the world brings to people—death, illness, rejection, etc.) and level two (the suffering the person's conscience brings to them—the conscience at enmity with itself and God) suffering.

John Schlaginhaufen, an auditor, recorded this table talk in which Luther addressed Schlaginhaufen's spiritual need.

> Then, after Master Philip had departed, he (Martin Luther) said to me, "Be of good cheer. Things will surely be better with you, for I know that your trials contribute to the glory of God and to your profit and that of many others. I, too, suffered from such trials, and at the time I had nobody to console me. When I complained about such spiritual assaults to my good Staupitz, he replied, 'I don't understand this; I know nothing about it.' You now have the advantage that you can come to me, to Philip (Melanchthon), or to Cordatus to seek comfort . . . ." (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 132-133).

Though Staupitz was Luther's beloved mentor, in Luther's deepest spiritual suffering Staupitz could neither understand nor assist Luther. Luther and Schlaginhaufen needed someone who had also wrestled honestly with their own conscience.

Begalke (1982), speaking of how Luther learned his theology and his pastoral care from his own struggles with suffering, noted that, "Luther gained a tremendous awareness and acceptance of the human condition. Troubled persons could sense in him, a humble fellow-sojourner who experienced many of the same depressive anxieties as they did" (p. 15).

Luther was honest in his experience of suffering. His open sharing of his anfechtungen is the major example of his honesty in dealing with inner, or level two, suffering. But Luther did not hesitate to share his honest response to level one, or external, suffering. When his fourteen-year-old daughter, Magdalene, took sick (after a brief illness she died on September 20, 1542), he openly expressed his struggle. "I love her so very much, but if it is thy will, dear God, to take her, I shall be glad to know that she is with thee" (LSC, p. 50). He then spoke words of comfort to Magdalene about heaven. But, turning away from her and speaking to those present, he said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. I love her very much. If this flesh is so strong, what must the spirit be?" (LSC, p. 50). When his daughter was in the agony of death, he fell upon his knees before the bed and, weeping bitterly, prayed that God might save her if it be His will.

After his father's death, Luther wrote of his deep grief.

> This death has cast me into deep mourning, not only because of the ties of nature but also because it was through his sweet love to me that my Creator endowed me with all that I am and have. Although it is consoling to me that, as he writes, my father fell asleep softly and strong in his faith in Christ, yet his kindness and the memory of his pleasant conversation have caused so deep a wound in my heart that I have scarcely ever held death in such low esteem (LSC, p. 30).

Luther faced suffering with integrity. He viewed this as a prerequisite to helping others in

suffering. He faced suffering *coram Deo*, in the presence of God, by bringing his experience of suffering to God. Since the person's relationship to God in suffering was so important to Luther, he felt that facing suffering *coram Deo* was imperative for anyone claiming to offer spiritual care.

Participation in Suffering: I Suffer With You

Luther suffered with others with great intensity. Frederick Myconius, pastor in Gotha and known as the reformer of Thuringia, had for some time been suffering from a pulmonary infection. By the summer of 1540, he had the symptoms of tuberculosis; soon afterward he lay down on what he thought was his deathbed. Luther wrote to him: "So I pray that the Lord will make me sick in your place . . ." (LSC, p. 48). This is the essence of Luther's preservation—joint-sharing of suffering.

When confronted with a fellow sufferer, Luther entered that person's world by looking at life through that person's eyes. He was willing to be a joint-participant in another's suffering because he believed that this was the Christian's duty of love. "We must support one another and be supported," he wrote to Urban Rhegius when Urban was sick (LSC, p. 40).

Three months before his father died, Luther wrote a lengthy letter of comfort to him in his illness. In it he spoke of his desire to participate with his father in his suffering. "I wish to write this to you because I am anxious about your illness (for we know not the hour), that I might become a participant of your faith, temptation, consolation, and thanks to God for his holy Word . . ." (LSC, p. 31).

Luther believed that a sufferer would not embrace loss unless another Christian shared in that loss. For him, support through sympathy, or compassionate commiseration, could prevent the person from retreating from life. He wrote about the power of shared suffering in his preface to the Fourteen Consolations, when he wrote of Christ crying out, "Behold, I am sick," and the Christian crying out, "I suffer with you" (LSC, p. 28). This consolation held the line against further retreat by communicating that the person was not alone because others were there with and for the person.

John Zink was a very young graduate student at Wittenberg and a frequent guest in Luther's home. On March 24, 1532, he became seriously ill, and on April 20, he died. Luther wrote his parents to express what a great personal loss John's death was. After explaining how highly respected their son was, Luther wrote,

> Accordingly we all are deeply grieved by his death . . . As is natural, your son's death, and the report of it, will distress and grieve your heart and that of your wife, since you are his parents. I do not blame you for this, for all of us—I in particular—are stricken with sorrow (LW, Vol. 50, p. 51).

Luther's conviction was that shared sorrow was endurable sorrow. His practice of preservation involved participation in suffering with another person to the point of experiencing their pain with them.

Permission to Grieve in Suffering: I Respect Your Struggle in Suffering

Luther taught that personal grieving was strongly encouraged when others provided sincere expressions of grief. It is almost as if he wanted the spiritual director to say, "I will grieve for you first, so that you can then allow yourself to grieve. I will feel your pain and express your suffering and thus become a window or mirror of your soul so that you can honestly struggle with your own suffering."

On January 3, 1530, Luther had written to Conrad Cordatus, pastor in Zwickau, to congratulate him on the birth of a son. On April 2, 1530, Luther wrote to Conrad again, this time to grieve with him over the death of his son. Luther sensed Cordatus' life context in terms of the situation, Cordatus' personality, and his faith. Luther sympathized with Cordatus' own honest struggle by sharing how he felt when his daughter died at seven months. And he gave Cordatus permission to grieve by discussing how difficult it was to see life from God's perspective in such a time of grief.

> Grace and peace in Christ. My dear Cordatus: May Christ comfort you in this sorrow and affliction of yours. Who else can soothe such a grief? I can easily believe what you write, for I too have had experience of such a calamity, which comes to a father's heart sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the marrow, etc. But you ought to remember that it is not to be marvelled at if he, who is more truly and properly a father than you were, preferred for his own glory that your son—nay, rather his son—should be with him rather than with you, for he is safer there than here. But all of this is vain, a story that falls on deaf ears, when your grief is so new. I therefore yield to your sorrows. Greater and better men than we are have given way to grief and are not blamed for it (LSC, p. 60).

Through these powerful words Luther shared Cordatus' suffering and grief and felt his pain with him and for him by granting permission to Cordatus to grieve without guilt. Cordatus does not have to feel "un-Christian" in grief because Luther and other people greater than they have grieved without guilt.

When Luther said that he "yields to his grief," he seemed to realize that truth, no matter how true (that this precious girl is now in the hands of her heavenly Father), cannot always be heard and internalized. There is a need for grief, before there is the ability to heal. The companion phrase, "that fall on deaf ears" likewise demonstrated the importance of timing in the offer of comfort and the process of grief by which pain and anger often precede acceptance and growth.

So strongly did Luther believe this, that he taught that it was abnormal and unhealthy not to grieve. Mr. and Mrs. Matthias Knudsen were the parents of John Knudsen, a graduate of the university in Wittenberg. Luther wrote to them after their son's death. After expressing consolation in the experience of the death of their son, Luther wrote,

> It is quite inconceivable that you should not be mourning. In fact, it would not be encouraging to learn that a father and mother are not grieved over the death of their son. The wise man, Jesus Sirach, says this in ch. 22: "Weep for the dead, for light hath failed him . . ." (LSC, p. 61).

Luther readily encouraged others to face their suffering with honesty. Margaret Berndt, the wife of Ambrose Berndt, died in childbirth and her newborn son died shortly after that. Berndt had received his master's degree in Wittenberg and was well-known by Luther.

Grace and peace. My dear Ambrose: I am not so inhuman that I cannot appreciate how deeply the death of Margaret distresses you. For the great and godly affection which binds a husband to his wife is so strong that it cannot easily be shaken off, and this feeling of sorrow is not so displeasing to God . . . since it is an expression of what God has assuredly implanted in you. Nor would I account you a man, to say nothing of a good husband, if you could at once throw off your grief (LSC, p. 62).

Instead of sorrow displeasing God, Luther viewed sorrow as a result of God having created Ambrose as a relational being.

Person to Turn to in Suffering: I Speak to God

The evangelical movement in Miltenberg was suppressed by the local priests and some evangelicals were even beheaded. Luther wrote an open letter of consolation to these persecuted Christians. His letter included an exposition of Psalm 119, which begins with the words, "In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me." Luther's exposition and application of this verse illustrate his belief that God was the person to turn to in suffering.

The first verse teaches us where we should turn when misfortune comes upon us—not to the emperor, not to the sword, not to our own devices and wisdom, but to the Lord, who is our only real help in time of need. "I cried unto the Lord in my distress," he says. That we should do this confidently, cheerfully, and without fail he makes clear when he says, "And he heard me." It is as if he would say, "The Lord is pleased to have us turn to him in our distress and is glad to hear and help us" (LSC, p. 204).

For Luther it is not only pain that is to be brought honestly to God, but also complaint. Luther was convinced that God knew all that the sufferer felt and thought; therefore all feelings and thoughts could be expressed openly to God. One of the Reformer's table talks reflected this viewpoint. The recorder, Veit Dietrich, wrote of a conversation he and Luther had concerning what a Christian was free to share with Christ.

When I asked him about the passage in which Jeremiah cursed the day in which he had been born and suggested that such impatience was a sin, he (Martin Luther) replied, "Sometimes one has to wake up our Lord God with such words. Otherwise he doesn't hear. It is a case of real murmuring on the part of Jeremiah. Christ spoke in this way. 'How long am I to be with you?' (Mark 9:19). Moses went so far as to throw his keys at our Lord God's feet when he asked, 'Did I conceive all this people?' (Num. 11:12)" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 30).

The ongoing dialogue is intriguing. In essence Luther continued by saying that everyone feels and thinks such things; so those who say that Christians should not express them to God are unrealistic. "Accordingly it is only speculative theologians who condemn such impatience and recommend patience. If they get down to the realm of practice, they will be aware of this" (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 30-31). Luther finished with harsh words for those who made this serious issue (of living "coram Deo") a thing for speculative debate.

An open, honest relationship with God was important to Luther's soul care because it prevented retreat in the midst of suffering. He felt that speaking directly and openly to God helped hurting people to maintain their faith in God.

Consolation Through Stretching the Person's Faith Perspective of God's Goodness

Historically defined, consolation is the offer of hope. It is the offer of the comforting hope that even in suffering one is known by God, belongs to God, and is loved by God. Consolation is a present hope in that it links the person with the presence of God, and it is a future hope in that it links the person with the ongoing purposes of God both in this life and the life to come (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964).

In consolation Luther desired to stretch people's faith perspective by showing them that Christ loved them. He did this by expanding the person's story of suffering to God's larger story—a story of hope. Luther felt that a consideration of God and His purposes helped to relieve a disconsolate person from a sense of misery, even while acknowledging that the damaging experience that initiated the disconsolation remained irreparable in and of itself. Luther used this new perspective of hope to stretch the person to experience God's presence in the midst of troubling episodes.

In the dedicatory letter to the Fourteen Consolations, Luther explained the need to go beyond sympathy. He noted that Christians ought to console the sick, but that they ought to do more than sympathize with them in their present affliction (LSC, pp. 27-28).

In this and many other letters, the Reformer taught that there was a time for mourning and a time for comfort. "So you too," he wrote to the Knudsens on the death of their son, "when you have mourned and wept moderately, should be comforted again" (LSC, p. 61). In this counsel Luther fought against what he called the worldly counsel of his day. He believed that, apart from the perspective of God's larger plan, there were only two options to follow after acknowledging loss. The first option was ongoing grief and self-pity taking the form of unceasing retreat from life. The other option was attack or revenge on anyone who may have been the direct cause of the suffering. Allender (1990) called these two options self-centered anger and other-centered anger. Grief without hope, thought Luther, led to despair, self-contempt, rage, and contempt for others.

In his letter of consolation to the persecuted evangelicals in Miltenberg, the Reformer wrote,

It would be worldly consolation and altogether profitless—nay, hurtful—to your souls and to the cause if I were to console you, or we were to console ourselves, with the thought that by scolding and complaining we would avenge ourselves on the blasphemers for their outrages and wickedness (LSC, p. 21).

Luther further decried the futility of consolation which gives people only what they want to hear. He stated that giving only sympathy would result in a failure to gain any healthy perspective on suffering. Pure sympathy demonstrated weakness on the part of the spiritual director because it looked only to give what the afflicted person desired, not what may have been needed.

The Reformer believed that a limit must be put on grieving and mourning because endless mourning left an individual forever embracing loss without ever again embracing life. Life, for Luther, meant this life and the larger story of life beyond what is seen with the eyes and known by the earthly mind. He wanted those he cared for to embrace this fullness of life in the midst of pain so that they did not stay forever in pain, shut off from the giver of life.

Luther's practice of consoling faith focused on a new perspective of God's larger story. This larger story contained two concepts necessary to move from grief to hope: (a) the larger story of Who God is and (b) the larger story of Who Christ is.

The Larger Story of Who God Is: Loving Father

"Luther's approach to pastoral care begins with his understanding of who God is" (Kolb, 1985, p. 3). There were no atheists in Luther's mental universe. A god is that to which people look for all good and in which they find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that god with the whole heart (Luther, 1516/1954). Kolb explained that by Luther's definition, "every person has a god; there is no such thing as an atheist. For everyone must put trust in something or someone, or some combination of persons and things, or life will disappear" (p. 3).

According to Luther, suffering forced people to declare their god and to determine their orientation (McGrath, 1994). In suffering, the person's image of God was revealed, but Luther found that this image was distorted.

In one table talk, Luther affirmed that, according to reason alone, "our God is always in the wrong, no matter what he does" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 105). Either He is viewed as too severe and judgmental, or He is considered too indulgent. In another table talk (LW, Vol. 54, p. 69), he proposed that when a skeptic thinks about God and sees what happens in this world, the skeptic cannot do other than conclude that either God is very weak and cannot stop suffering, or He is very evil and wicked and delights in suffering.

Luther taught that in the middle of suffering people needed to depend upon faith, not unaided human reason. "Faith, is, as it were, the center of a circle. If anybody strays from the center, it is impossible for him to have the circle around him, and he must blunder. The center is Christ" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 45). Luther observed life through the lens or eyeglasses of faith. When looking at suffering, he asked, "Who is God and who is God to me in my suffering?" Reason answered that God was weak or evil, while faith provided a very different response.

So in suffering, as in all of life for Luther, the issue was the matter of faith versus doubt. The problem preventing consolation was the problem of doubting God's goodness and grace. And Luther felt that he found a solution in resting in the goodness and grace of God as a loving heavenly Father.

The Reformer believed that "Father" was the central image of God that was necessary in all of

the Christian life, especially in suffering. When talking about his treatment for depression, he noted that the words of the creed are of utmost importance: "I believe in God the Father." He immediately explained that by reason it never occurs to people that, "God is Father" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 17). Further, to the human mind unaided by faith, it never occurs that the God who is Father is a loving Father. Instead, people see God, especially in suffering, as an angry Father who uses suffering as a punishment. Luther rejected the notion that all suffering was the result of specific acts of individual sin. He also rejected the idea that personal suffering be viewed as punishment for personal sin. His God was not an angry, but a loving, Father.

This was his counsel and consolation to his own father when he lay ill and near death. "Herewith I commend you to Him who loves you more than you love yourself" (LW, Vol. 49, p. 270). In his commentary on Genesis he developed this same line of reasoning.

> True faith draws forth the following conclusion: God is God for me because He speaks to me. He forgives my sins. He is not angry with me, just as He promises: "I am the Lord your God." Now search your heart, and ask whether you believe that God is your God, Father, Savior, and Deliverer, who wants to rescue you (LW, Vol. 4, p. 149).

Luther believed that God was so loving that His friendship was worth more than all the world. In a letter of pastoral counsel to the Elector John, he wrote, "God's friendship is a bigger comfort than that of the whole world" (LW, Vol. 49, p. 306). Luther was saying that when someone is suffering, the temptation is to look at life through the eyes of reason unaided by faith. Luther's soul care involved consoling people by helping them to look at life holistically—through the eyes of reason aided by faith. He pointed them to a faith which saw God as good and fatherly and to a faith that saw suffering as coming from the kindly hands of God, not from the punishing hands of an angry despot.

This is the larger story that was so important to Luther—the story of God's role in all of life. The physical world was real and suffering was real and tragic, but there was more to life's story than the physical world. The spiritual reality of relationship to God was Luther's ultimate story.

Luther attempted to blend these two stories, these two realities. The only son of Benedict Pauli died in June of 1533. Luther wrote a letter of consolation to Pauli. As usual, he began with words of sympathy and comfort. He again expressed the normalcy of grieving. "The Scriptures do not prohibit mourning and grieving over deceased children. On the contrary, we have many examples of godly patriarchs and kings who mournfully bewailed the death of their sons" (LSC, p. 67).

Yet, he also told this man, "at the same time you ought to leave room for consolation" (LSC, p. 67). The Christian can grieve, but not as one who has no hope. Luther gave Pauli the hope or consolation that God was Sovereign and therefore in control. God was good and therefore had the best interest of his son and himself at heart. Luther wanted to help Pauli to see with eyes of faith that God was gracious and omnipotent and therefore had brought his son to eternal life.

Luther seemed to sense that this was difficult counsel to hear. In the letter he expressed that the death of a young child was indeed a very grave evil. Then he described the natural human conclusion.

Human nature cries out against this and imagines that God is angry. It is characteristic of our human nature to think that what we wish is best and what God does is unsatisfactory to us. But it would not be good if our will were always done because we would then become too sure of ourselves. It is enough for us that we have a gracious God (LSC, p. 69).

The last line summarizes Luther's consoling ministry. The larger story sees God as a loving, gracious Father. He is enough to console His children and to give them hope. His will, which at times may seem cruel, does in fact always flow out of His love.

The Larger Story of Who Christ Is: Caring Savior

The largest story of all, for Luther, was the story of the cross. When all else seemed to point to the conclusion that God did not care, he advised people to look to the cross. Luther saw Christ's sufferings on people's behalf as God's clear declaration, His once for all pronouncement, that He is for His children, not against them. Luther used this picture in writing to the wife of a man in prison for his evangelical faith.

Our sufferings have not yet become so deep and bitter as were those of his own dear Son and of the mother of our Lord. By the thought of these we should be comforted and strengthened in our sufferings, as St. Peter teaches us (first epistle, iii.18): "Christ has once suffered for us, the just for the unjust" (LSA, p. 148).

Luther directly connected Christ as a suffering Savior to God as a loving Father. Luther wrote that "the flesh cries out against the belief that God is good, but that the suffering Savior brings consolation that this is indeed true" (LSA, p. 157). Through Christ people can learn once and for all that God is Father and cry out, "Abba, dear Father" (LSA, p. 158).

It was Luther's understanding that in this life such a belief was hard to maintain. To Matthias Weller, he wrote that he should not depend on his own thoughts and reasoning in his attempts to understand and work his way out of depression and suffering. Rather, he should turn to the Scriptures which make plain the truth that Christ is his gracious Lord and Deliverer (LSA, pp. 138-139).

For Luther, Christ was not a suffering Savior who suffered once and then sat down to ignore humanity. He was not a Savior who has said, "Your spiritual needs for eternal life are met, now I leave you to yourself." Instead, Luther presented Christ as a Savior who continued to suffer with humanity.

When, therefore, I learned, most illustrious prince, that Your Lordship has been afflicted with a grave illness and that Christ has at the same time become ill in you, I counted it my duty to visit Your Lordship with a little writing of mine. I cannot pretend that I do not hear the voice of Christ crying out to me from Your Lordship's body and flesh saying, "Behold, I am sick." This is so because such evils as illness and the like are not borne by us who are Christians but by

Christ himself, our Lord and Savior, in whom we live even as Christ plainly testifies in the Gospel when he says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (LSC, p. 27).

Here Luther is discussing coram Deo from God's perspective. Not only do God's children ever live in His presence, but He ever lives not only in their presence, but in them. Luther saw Christ as literally dwelling in and with and therefore suffering with the believer. This was Luther's message to his mother when she was on her deathbed. He consoled her first with the knowledge of Christ's grace and then with the knowledge of His comfort. He called Christ "the true center and foundation" of her salvation and comfort (LW, Vol. 50, p. 19).

Consolidation Through Strengthening the Person's Faith Resources

Historically, consolidation has been defined as the mobilization of faith resources so that life could be embraced (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). In Luther's ministry of consolidation, life was embraced by eyes of faith which perceived the future purposes of God. Luther felt that this sustaining task was best accomplished when Christians met together "as the body of Christ, a priesthood of all believers" (LW, Vol. 44, p. 126) to encourage one another individually and in small groups.

Luther taught that all those who placed their faith in Christ as Savior were baptized into the universal Church, the Body of Christ. Spiritually, every believer became a member of Christ's spiritual Body, the Church (LW, Vol. 44). Every believer was connected as the parts of the body are connected and as members in a human family are connected. Out of this doctrine, Luther developed his teaching on the priesthood of all believers.

For Luther, the Body of Christ was the faith resource. The corporate Body of Christ, through the sympathetic sharing of sorrow and of strength, consolidated the individual's faith resources and empowered her or him to embrace life. The Body of Christ provided the believer with the shared strength to find the courage to heal.

It was in his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (LW, Vol. 44), that Luther first employed extensively the phrase "priesthood of all believers." He used the phrase to emphasize the spiritual equality, duties, and qualifications of every member of God's family.

All Christians truly are of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except to office. Paul says in I Corinthians 12 that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, and faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people (LW, Vol. 44, p. 127).

Luther's thinking continued to develop over the years. In the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (LW, Vol. 36), he maintained and elaborated upon this doctrine. "Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests . . ." (LW,

Vol. 36, p. 116).

The priesthood of all believers made a profound difference in Luther's pastoral care because it democratized soul care. Every believer was now viewed as capable and responsible to be a sustainer because every believer could provide shared strength to someone experiencing suffering. Individuals and small groups of Christians could meet together to consolidate faith resources by strengthening one another's faith perspective concerning God's plans and purposes.

Strengthening Another Person's Faith Resources Through Individual Encouragement

It was dogma for Luther that life could not be embraced alone. "Luther knew full well that persons in sorrow have not always power to exorcise the spirit of sadness, and to draw for themselves the proper comfort from the Word and works of God" (Nebe, 1893/1894, p. 140).

In a table talk dated February 18, 1538, Luther spoke of a period of melancholy that Philip Melanchthon was experiencing. He complained that Philip was seeking solitude in his affliction and affirmed that he ought rather to seek companionship.

"He's gnawing at his own heart," said Luther. "I, too, often suffer from severe trials and sorrows. At such times I seek the fellowship of men, for the humblest maid has often comforted me. A man doesn't have control of himself when he is downcast and alone, even if he is well equipped with a knowledge of the Scriptures. It is not for nothing that Christ gathers his church around the Word and the sacraments and around prayer and hymns and is unwilling to let these be hidden in a corner. Away with monks and hermits! These are inventions of Satan because they exist apart from all the godly ordinances and arrangements of God. According to the plan of creation every man is either a domestic or a political or an ecclesiastical person. Outside of these ordinances he is not a man, unless he is miraculously exempted. Accordingly a solitary life should be avoided as much as possible" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 268).

Luther based his thoughts both on experience and Scripture. He knew that the humblest person had comforted him. He experienced as a spiritual director that people could not shake themselves of melancholy without help. He believed that Christ had called the Body of Christ to unite in Word and sacrament and prayer and hymns. From a sociological and spiritual perspective, Luther believed that men and women ceased to be fully human when in isolation.

Mutual sustaining was also a theological issue for Luther. In another table talk he accused both the papists and Anabaptists of breaking the ten commandments through their teaching that spiritual maturity came through solitude. "The papists and Anabaptists teach: 'If you wish to know Christ, try to be alone, don't associate with men, become a separatist.' This is plainly diabolical advice which is in conflict with the first and second table . . ." (LW, Vol. 54, p. 140).

When Dr. Jerome Weller was very troubled and depressed, Luther urged him to give his heart to the Lord and "seek fellowship with men" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 275). A table talk records the continuation of this exhortation. "Thereupon he entreated Weller to cultivate the company of men when he is afflicted with such melancholy and not live alone. 'Woe to him who is alone,' the

preacher says (Eccles. 4:10). When I'm morose I flee above all from solitude" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 276).

Much as a counselor would say today, Luther insisted that the wife of a suicidal man not leave her husband alone. "Be very careful not to leave your husband alone for a single moment, and leave nothing lying about with which he might harm himself. Solitude is poison to him. For this reason the devil drives him to it" (LSC, p. 91). To another friend he wrote, "This is my only and best advice: Don't remain alone when you are assailed! Flee solitude!" (LSA, p. 277).

To prince Joachim of Anhalt, who was suffering from morbid depression, he wrote,

> . . . seek the company of others who may be able to rejoice with Your Grace in a godly and honorable way. For solitude and melancholy are poisonous and fatal to all people, and especially to a young man. No one realizes how much harm it does a young person to avoid pleasure and cultivate solitude and sadness (LSC, p. 93).

Luther's thinking was practical—solitude produces melancholy because, when people are alone, the worst and saddest thoughts come to mind. The person magnifies those thoughts, leaping to conclusions and interpreting everything in the worst light. In the next line of his letter to prince Joachim, Luther noted that, "On the other hand, we imagine that other people are very happy, and it distresses us that things go well with them and evil with us" (LSC, p. 95).

Luther was very practical in his insistence that people needed community, but this was more than a practical issue for him. It was also a theological issue because Luther believed that Christians were commanded to comfort one another. He quoted 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 concerning the duty of Christians to take the comfort they receive from God and then to pass on that comfort to others in distress (LC, p. 216). In a table talk recorded in 1534 (LW, Vol. 54), Luther stated several theological truths that lay behind his insistence upon the avoidance of solitude and the need for fellowship. In this table talk, he noted that he believed that God created people for society and not for solitude and taught that more and graver sins were committed in solitude than in the society of one's fellow human beings. Luther repeated Christ's promise that where two or three are gathered in His name, there Christ would be. He supported this thinking by the arguments that God created two sexes, that God founded the Christian Church as the communion of the saints, and that the Church is to be a place of consolation (LSC, p. 95).

Luther's thinking on individual encouragement is clear. Alone, the individual was vulnerable to Satanically inspired distorted thinking about the self, about God, and about the world. When enduring suffering, it was very difficult to consolidate one's own resources as the spiral seemed to proceed endlessly downward. To embrace life again, people need one another. Consolidation of personal resources requires consolidation through corporate resources.

Strengthening Another Person's Faith Resources Through Small Group Encouragement

Those corporate resources included both individual and small group encouragement. In his work, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, Luther exhorted his followers to return to the New

Testament model of meeting for worship weekly in a larger celebration group and of meeting daily for fellowship (support and sustaining) in smaller groups or cells. He suggested that during these times every person should share, pray, praise, sing, and interpret scripture so that they could have "free reign to uplift and quicken souls so that they do not become weary" (LW, Vol. 53, p. 13).

Zersen (1981) went so far as to claim a Lutheran root for the modern-day small group ministry.

Thomas Oden has shown that the small group movement has its roots in the Lutheran Pietism of the 17th century. Whether secular proponents of small groups will acknowledge it or not, the historical precedent for the movement is to be found in the small groups founded by Lutheran pastor Philip Jakob Spener. He claimed that he was merely drawing implications from and providing functional realization for Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (p. 235).

Luther intended for Christians to be priests to one another and his writings make it clear that this involved the spiritual care of one Christian for another. Zersen (1981) listed five examples from the life of Luther which promoted the idea of ministry through small groups: Luther's small group devotional times in his home, his table talk groups, his Bible study time in groups in his home, his proposal for the use of the Catechism in small group settings, and his proposal for the order of worship and fellowship in homes.

In his *Preface to the German Mass and Order of Service* (LW, Vol. 53), Luther urged Christians to meet in small groups in homes to pray, to read Scripture, and to promote ministries of love. These groups were also to make it possible for members to know each other well enough so that they could console, challenge, confront, and strengthen one another.

Luther believed that consolidation of faith resources came about as a result of the joint resources of the faith community. Through the "one anothering" ministry of the Body of Christ, people were strengthened individually so that they could endure suffering, embrace the loss, and be prepared to embrace life again through the ministry of healing.

Summary of Research Findings

Summary of Martin Luther's Theory of Sustaining

To help a hurting person to endure and transcend irretrievable loss, Luther emphasized coram Deo living, the faith perspective, grace spirituality, and the trials of faith. The following conclusions may be drawn about Luther's sustaining theory:

1. Luther theorized that humanity lived coram Deo—face to face in the presence of God as worshiping beings longing to entrust themselves to Someone beyond themselves. He believed that people needed to experience the presence of God in the presence of suffering. This theory prompted him to raise two primary vertical questions. Who is God in your suffering—what is your image of God? Where is God in your suffering—do you perceive that He is for you or against you?

2. In sustaining hurting people in times of loss, Luther emphasized one's faith perspective. He

believed that it was in the soul (the seat of relationship with God) that people assigned meaning and value to their loss. Luther theorized that a divine perspective on loss could reshape the value and meaning people assigned to their loss by nurturing alternative ways of viewing life in order to erect a platform for responding to suffering. To help people to endure and transcend loss, Luther used the Scriptures in general and the Gospels in particular to sustain the faith perspective that God was good even when life was bad.

3. Luther believed in a grace spirituality in which humanity was on a quest to find God's Fatherly grace, forgiveness, love, and acceptance. He concluded that people asked the common vocalizing question, "Is God good and gracious?" He theorized that the spiritual care giver could seek to nourish the faith perspective that God is good and gracious through interactions that exposed God's character as loving Father and Christ's character as forgiving Friend.

4. Luther concluded that the worst suffering of all was the trial of faith. This potential hemorrhage in the relationship with God led suffering people away from God due to their lack of faith in His goodness. Since, for Luther, God was the circumference of everything, then human faith always reflected on the presence of God in the absence of good. Luther proposed that the knowledge that God was for the person (a gracious Father) and not against the person (an angry Judge) could encourage people to move toward God rather than away from Him.

Summary of Martin Luther's Practice of Sustaining

In order to help hurting people to endure and transcend irretrievable loss, Martin Luther sought to develop a faith perspective by using the Scriptures to alter the person's perspective on their suffering so that they recognized that God was good even when life was bad. He sustained clients during spiritual despondency by assisting them to experience spiritual security. The goal of his sustaining practice was to help faith survive the onslaught of doubt. Luther mobilized faith resources by sensing, sharing, stretching, and strengthening faith.

1. Luther sought to sense the nature of a person's faith by discerning their current perspective on their relationship to God. Since he perceived that everyone lived in the immediate presence of God, he used a person's perception of and attitude toward God as a primary spiritual diagnostic tool. He attempted to perceive how the person was perceiving God in light of their suffering. Did they see God as good or indifferent to them, kind toward or angry with them, near or far from them, friend or foe to them?

2. In his sustaining practice, Luther desired to share in the person's trial of faith by empathizing with his or her suffering. Desiring to maintain the person's faith against the onslaught of doubt and believing that shared suffering was endurable suffering, he practiced the art of compassionate commiseration by sharing how he wrestled with God in his suffering. Luther also attempted to participate in and empathize with people's suffering by granting them permission to grieve and by encouraging them to talk honestly with God about their doubts and hurts. He wanted hurting people to embrace their suffering and to embrace their God during their suffering.

3. Luther practiced the art of stretching a person's faith perspective by using the wisdom

inherent in the person's faith system, namely the Scriptures, to offer hope and to alter the person's view of who God and Christ were. Believing that suffering distorted a person's image of God, Luther turned people to God's deeper story of a heavenly Father's grace, love and acceptance. Believing that suffering caused a person's faith perspective of Christ to shrink, he turned people to Christ's larger story of a forgiving Friend who suffered for and now suffers with all who suffer.

4. Luther also attempted to strengthen the suffering person's faith perspective. In sensing and sharing a person's perspective, Luther's goal was to stem the tide of loss by helping the person to embrace the loss, rather than deny it or retreat from it. In stretching and strengthening a person's faith perspective, his goal was to mobilize faith resources so that life could be embraced and faced again. He felt that the sustaining task of strengthening faith was best accomplished when Christians met together; so he trained and encouraged his followers to provide individual encouragement and small group discipleship to hurting people.

CHAPTER 4

HEALING IN MARTIN LUTHER'S SPIRITUAL CARE

Overview

The purpose of chapter four is to analyze Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care using the grid of historic Christian healing. Chapter two summarized healing as "helping a debilitated person to be restored to a condition of wholeness, on the assumption that this restoration also achieves a new level of spiritual insight and welfare" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 8). The specific question being researched in chapter four is, what theory and practice did Luther develop in seeking to restore a debilitated person to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare?

Martin Luther's Theory (Theology) Relative to Healing

This section uses historic healing to examine the theology Martin Luther followed when he provided soul care to hurting people. It is particularly important to understand Luther's theory of healing since he significantly altered the healing art as it was practiced in his era (Strohl, 1989).

Luther shifted the focus of healing from the Medieval emphasis on physical recovery through ritual to an emphasis on spiritual growth through dependence upon God. Luther explained to the Elector Frederick that his 14 consolations were to "take the place of the fourteen saints whom our superstition has invented and called defenders against all evils" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123). Rather than seeing healing as a defense against all evils, Luther resolved in healing "to strengthen the pious heart" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123).

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) explained the common medieval approach to healing.

When the Reformation began in Germany, popular piety appealed in spiritual distress for comfort from 14 saints who, according to legend, had appeared to a shepherd in a vision of the Christ-child. Prayers to these 14 were particularly efficacious to relieve dire difficulties. (p. 209)

The Medieval person looked for something that was efficacious to relieve dire difficulties; Luther looked for something that was efficacious to promote spiritual maturity. He pointed people away from relief and to God.

He allows no legitimacy to acts of piety which seek to avert suffering so that one might return unscathed to one's temporal concerns. Moreover, to depend upon the saints and their relics to restore one to bodily health is to make far too much of earthly well-being and far too little of the mercy of Christ (Strohl, 1989, p. 171).

Instead of emphasizing earthly well-being and the end of suffering, Luther emphasized the well-being of the soul.

Luther's significant departure in viewpoint and practice can best be explained by examining his theology relative to healing. Luther based his theory and practice of healing soul care upon his spiritual understanding of God's promise concerning healing, his spiritual interpretation of sickness, his understanding of the spiritual significance of suffering, and his spiritual definition of health.

Martin Luther's Spiritual Understanding of God's Promise Concerning Healing

Throughout his ministry, Luther addressed three areas of healing: external suffering through persecution, physical sickness, and spiritual depression. He believed that God could end persecution, bring physical healing, and relieve spiritual depression; but he was convinced that such healing was not guaranteed by God.

Ballard (1987) explained that Luther maintained a dispensational view of miraculous healing. That is, he believed that the miraculous healings performed by Christ and the Apostles were part of the early Church era and were never intended to be ongoing. Instead, he saw his era as one of spiritual healing in which the blind were made to see (spiritually), the deaf were made to hear (spiritual truth) and the lame were made to walk (in newness of spiritual life) (LSA, p. 40).

Luther was not against praying for the end of persecution, the literal removal of physical suffering, or relief from spiritual depression. In each of these areas he believed that God could, and at times would, answer prayers for healing. On June 27, 1535, Luther wrote to believers in the town of Mittweida who were being persecuted for their refusal to receive Holy Communion according to the Catholic belief and practice. Luther wrote:

> I deplore the suffering and persecution of innocent people. May my dear Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake you are suffering, comfort and strengthen you for His glory and your deliverance. Meanwhile it is incumbent on us to be prayerful in hope that God will make haste and put an end to the matter (LSC, p. 225).

Luther experienced what he perceived to be answered prayer for physical healing in the life of his dear friend Philip Melanchthon. Scherzer (1950) recounted the scene when Luther was called to the bedside of the deathly ill Melanchthon.

> When Luther arrived to visit his friend, he found him in a dying condition. He was semiconscious and could neither eat nor drink. Luther was much agitated at his appearance, and after gazing at him awhile, went to a window in the room and prayed fervently to God. When he finished his prayers, he went over to the bed, grasped Melanchthon by the hand and said: "Be of good courage, Philip, you will not die; give no place to the spirit of sorrow, and be not your own murderer, but trust in the Lord, who can slay and make alive again, can wound and heal again." After that, Melanchthon began to improve, immediately became more cheerful, and regained his health and strength (p. 68).

Luther also prayed fervently for his own soul and the souls of others who were experiencing

spiritual depression or anfechtungen. Writing to a good friend experiencing spiritual depression, Luther said, "I am truly sorry that you are called to bear this burden and sorrow. I pray that Christ, the very best Comforter of all the distressed, may comfort you, as he certainly can and will. Amen" (LSA, p. 141).

Luther believed that God could heal, but he was not persuaded that the goodness of God required Him to always heal. Luther believed the Scriptures taught that God never guaranteed that Christians would be shielded from persecution, physical illness, or spiritual depression; nor promised that tribulation, physical suffering, or anfechtungen would be relieved. So rather than focusing on cure, Luther highlighted spiritual care by encouraging believers to mature spiritually through their suffering.

Regarding persecution, Luther wrote, "Peace is not to be found anywhere until the Lord comes and overthrows the enemy of peace" (LSC, p. 218). He then continued to tell the exiled believers in Leipzig who were being persecuted by Duke George that:

> If you get nowhere with that willful man, and if you cannot secure a certificate of your upright walk from him, still you have achieved more than enough, seeing that both God, and the world, and even Duke George's own adherents, testify that you do and suffer all this in a Christian spirit and solely for Christ's sake (p. 218).

Luther wrote to John Ruehel that he was sorry that Ruehel was sick, but that he was more concerned by the fact that Ruehel was bearing his sickness so poorly. Luther was disappointed that Ruehel failed to understand the truth that God's strength was made perfect in weakness (LSC, p. 37). This response reveals Luther's view of suffering and healing: suffering is bad, but since God does not guarantee the end of suffering, the failure to grow from suffering wastes a spiritual opportunity.

Believing that God did not promise healing, Luther significantly altered the Medieval approach to healing by focusing on spiritual growth rather than on actual cure. Because of his views concerning God's promises regarding healing, Luther essentially was saying, "Do not focus on actual cures, because God does not."

Martin Luther's Spiritual Interpretation of Sickness

The worst sickness, according to Luther, was spiritual sickness—sin that caused estrangement from God (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 137). Spiritual sickness was so prominent in Luther's theory of healing that even as the Elector Frederick lay on his death bed, Luther attempted to explain the evil greater than death—the evil of sin.

> Whether man believes it or not, it is most certain and true that no torture can compare with the worst of all evils, namely, the evil within man himself. The evils of sin within him are more numerous and far greater than any which he feels. If a man were to feel his evil, he would feel hell, for he has hell within himself (LW, Vol. 42, p. 125).

For Luther, highlighting recovery from persecution, illness, or spiritual depression while ignoring recovery from spiritual estrangement would be like a physician today refusing chemotherapy for cancer patients because they are taking aspirin for their headache. Because of his spiritual interpretation of sickness, Luther essentially was saying, "Do not focus on ending persecution, healing physical illness, or reliving spiritual depression; because there is a much greater sickness that must take priority."

Since this interpretation carried such weight in Luther's thinking, it is necessary to understand Luther's view of sickness in order to understand the significance he saw in suffering, his definition of health, and his practice of soul care by healing. In Luther's view of spiritual sickness he saw humanity as: (a) spiritually dead and therefore separated from God, (b) spiritually deceived and therefore unaware that any problem existed, (c) spiritually self-dependent and therefore unwilling to seek help from God, and (d) spiritually disabled and therefore impotent to fight off the disease of sin.

Spiritually Dead and Therefore Separated From God

In Luther's view of sickness, humans were so sick they were dead. He explained in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525/1957) that humans lived under the complete mastery of sin and could not survive in their own strength even for a moment (p. 137). He also believed, "they have a nature that is corrupt and turned from God" (p. 204), and that, "the thought and imagination of man's heart is inclined to evil from his youth. Every imagination of man's heart is intent on evil continually" (p. 242).

Human sin, according to Luther, resulted in alienation from and judgment by God unless a cure was found.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness. Do you hear this general judgment against all men, that they are under the wrath of God? (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 273).

Spiritually Deceived and Therefore Unaware That Any Problem Exists

In Luther's view of sickness, the worse problem was not that humans were dead, but that they were unaware that they were dead. Speaking of the Apostle Paul's writings to the Romans, Luther explained that Paul concluded that all people are ignorant of sin, death, righteousness, and eternal life; sitting ignorantly in darkness and knowing not that "they are certainly under wrath and condemnation, and by reason of their ignorance they cannot thence extricate themselves, nor endeavor to do so" (Luther, 1525/1957, pp. 275-276).

Luther was concerned that focusing primarily on stopping persecution, curing illness, and relieving spiritual depression might hinder the deeper work of God in which trials are used to reveal one's need for God. He warned his followers, "let him who stands take heed that he does not fall" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 129), explaining that as long as a person is healthy and life is going well, "he is

always likely to fall into more sins, thus constantly thwarting the loving will of his loving Father" (p. 129).

Spiritually Self-Dependent and Therefore Unwilling to Seek Help From God

Luther was also of the opinion that even if people became aware that they were dead, they would still prefer death over depending on God. Therefore, God sends pain and suffering because He "wishes to break your will. He is apt to lay His hand upon us just where it will give us the most pain, in order to slay our old Adam" (LSA, p. 172).

Luther borrowed the phrase "the old Adam" from the New Testament to picture the person without Christ. He used this phrase interchangeably with another New Testament term, "flesh" to describe the person who refused to seek God's remedy for the sickness of sin and to indicate human existence under sin.

"Flesh" for Luther is human existence opposed to the Holy Spirit, a revival of the Pauline-Biblical view. The spirit-flesh dualism is prominent both in the preaching of Jesus and the writings of St. Paul. The spirit, that part of human existence belonging to God, understands itself as a sinner justified before God. The flesh, the human nature estranged from God, cooperates with the devil and the world in opposing God and His will. It hates God, languishes in self-grief, is anxious about its own existence, murmurs with impatience against God, and stirs up the conscience with concerns about the Christian's own personal accountability before God (Scaer, 1983, p. 20).

Scaer (1983) noted that Luther used the terms "fallen world" and "fallen flesh" to indicate creation in its estrangement from God due to sin. According to Luther, humans in their fallen state arrogantly see themselves as independent from God, neither needing nor trusting in Him.

Spiritually Disabled and Therefore Impotent to Fight Off the Disease of Sin

Luther saw people as sick unto death, thinking they were healthy when they were unhealthy, and depending on themselves when they needed to depend upon God. Their critical condition was made even more serious by the view that they were spiritually impotent—totally unable to heal themselves. Part of Luther's goal for spiritual care through healing was to "admonish and awaken a man to see his own impotence" (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 158).

Luther radically shifted the focus of healing by moving it away from a sense of external cure and toward a concentration on spiritual wholeness and personal integration in the midst of the prevailing condition of suffering. He made this shift because of his distinct understanding of sickness. As bad as persecution, illness, and spiritual depression were; the spiritual sickness of sin was worse. In Luther's theology of healing, humanity was spiritually dead, deceived, self-dependent, and disabled. Surprisingly, Luther viewed suffering as the medicine of choice to heal spiritual sickness.

Martin Luther's Understanding of the Spiritual Significance of Suffering

C. S. Lewis wrote that, "God whispers to us in our pleasure, but shouts to us in our pain. Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a sleeping world" (Lewis, 1956, p. 23). Luther wrote that, "by these vicissitudes He teaches us not to be arrogant, as we might be if we were always strong. We are best off when we ourselves acknowledge that we are framed of dust and are mere dust" (LSC, p. 41).

Persecution, illness, and spiritual trials are all sent by God to "conform you to the image of His Son" (LSC, p. 40), Luther wrote to Urban Rheguis, a Roman priest who became an Evangelical clergyman and rose to a position of great influence. Luther told Rheguis, "I believe that this trial comes to you, as it does to other brethren who occupy high stations, in order that we may be humbled" (p. 41).

Luther summarized the spiritual significance of suffering by quoting the words of Saint Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (LSC, p. 41). Luther believed Paul's concept to be true with regards to both levels of suffering: level one external suffering such as persecution and physical illness and level two internal suffering such as spiritual depression or anfechtungen.

The Spiritual Significance of Level One External Suffering

Luther taught that persecution and physical suffering opened channels for dependence upon God. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), speaking of Luther's healing ministry, wrote,

> Sickness, therefore, was to be seen by the sufferer in two ways: on the one hand, for what it was, a painful and debilitating event which the believer wished to be ended; but on the other hand, sickness had a meaning for faith, an inside meaning, as it were, for which the believer was to raise his voice in thanksgiving. By sickness he was being driven to participate in the grace of God which in this world was still "via passionis" of Christ (p. 210).

Luther wrote to the Elector John of Saxony, who was deathly ill, that God used tribulations, suffering, and pain to draw people nearer to Him in faith.

> This is the school in which God chastens us and teaches us to trust in Him so that our faith may not always stay in our ears and hover on our lips but may have its true dwelling place in the depths of our hearts. Your grace is now in this school (LSC, p. 56).

When evil intrudes into the usual rhythms of life, people are brought to a full stop and moved to the verge of defenselessness. According to Luther, this state of being was fertile ground for the growth of faith.

Strohl (1989) commented that Luther met people at the border of despair and there attempted to promote profound trust in Christ. Concerning Luther's healing ministry and view of suffering, Strohl wrote, "Suffering can render the believer more susceptible to the divine activity, which as sheer grace can transform the emptiness of deprivation into the fullness of God" (p. 171).

The Spiritual Significance of Level Two Internal Suffering

For Luther, God made therapeutic use of both external and internal suffering. Luther's concept of therapeutic anfechtungen can be understood by: (a) identifying Luther's definition of anfechtungen, (b) grasping the need for anfechtungen in Luther's theology, and (c) clarifying the purpose of anfechtungen in Luther's pastoral care.

Luther's definition of anfechtungen.

Ji (1989) described anfechtungen as inner conflicts, trials, temptations, and profoundly disturbing experiences of the soul. Anfechtungen contain a sense of being estranged, abandoned, or rejected by God. Ji developed the idea from Luther that these spiritual depressions involved a complex inner struggle and anguish of heart in which one's relationship to God was called into question. The sufferer experienced a deep sense of despair; perceiving that his or her relationship to God changed from friendship to isolation and estrangement.

Luther described many forms of anfechtungen. Foremost in intensity was the anfechtung of faith which was the temptation to lose faith in the pardoning grace of God. In this anfechtung, a person felt as if God were angry and ready to reject the person, rather than sensing God as good, loving, and accepting. Luther called such spiritual depression "the strongest, greatest, most severe temptation" (LSA, pp. 188-189).

The need for anfechtungen in Luther's theology.

Luther taught that the greatest suffering was the conscience at enmity with God and that the conscience would stay alienated from God unless suffering entered life to produce weakness and dependence (Luther, 1516/1954). Without such weakness, the conscience remained autonomous, trusting in itself, rather than in God.

> The most dangerous trial of all is when there is no trial, when everything is all right and running smoothly. That is when a man tends to forget God, to become too independent and put his time of prosperity to a wrong use. In fact, at this time he has more need to call upon God's name than in adversity (LW, Vol. 44, p. 47).

While calling anfechtungen "the greatest grief" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 75), Luther also considered them to be necessary trials and God's visitations by which one's need for total dependence upon God was revealed. These repeated experiences of anfechtungen were opportunities for God to divulge more of Himself. "Therefore, we should willingly endure the hand of God in this and in all suffering. Do not be worried; indeed such a trial is the very best sign revealing God's grace and love for man" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 184).

When Anthony Lauterbach was deeply discouraged in his faith, Luther explained to him that without inner turmoil to try the Christian faith, the believer would remain indolent, self-indulgent,

and secure (in self and not in Christ). To prevent such callousness, God allowed spiritual depression. During these times He withdrew His seen comfort so that the Christian might be prodded to trust deeply in the unseen comfort of His Word believed by faith (LSA, p. 159).

Thus Luther saw a positive role for such deep internal suffering, even describing it as a "delicious despair" (quoted in McGrath, 1990, p. 171). Spiritual depression brought the sufferer to the border of despair in order to produce profound faith in Christ (LW, Vol. 42, p. 143). Mildenberger (1986) discussed Luther's view of faith and suffering noting that Luther saw humans as usually untroubled persons, people at ease, who imagine faith to be within their control.

> The Reformers taught that we receive God's salvation in Christ only when we are past the point of being able to do anything. At this point, the point at which we are unable to do anything for ourselves, the Holy Spirit works faith. This kind of faith, therefore, comes only at a specific time and place. The time and place at which we experience spiritual temptations is the time and place at which God wills to create the faith which is God's own work in us (p. 41).

In Luther's view, people needed to face suffering with stark realism because undiminished suffering was God's catalyst for faith.

The purpose of anfechtungen in Luther's pastoral care.

In Luther's theology, God sent anfechtungen, or spiritual trials, for the express purpose of producing humble faith. Vallee (1984) stated that Luther viewed anfechtungen as assaults through which the attention of the soul was recalled to God. The love of this world lulled the soul away from a passionate relationship with God. "But, as if by a thunderstroke, the ache of the soul sent by God startles us and awakens us to life lived coram Deo. The trials of faith are a prerequisite to knowing God deeply and loving Him passionately" (p. 292).

McGrath (1990) outlined Luther's understanding of God's purposes in sending anfechtungen.

> God Himself must be recognized as the ultimate source of anfechtungen: it is His "opus alienum," which is intended to destroy man's self-confidence and complacency, and reduce him to a state of utter despair and humiliation, in order that he may finally turn to God, devoid of all the obstacles to justification which formerly existed (p. 170).

McGrath further described the most appropriate response to anfechtungen.

> The believer recognizing the merciful intention which underlies anfechtungen, rejoices in such assaults, seeing in them the means by which God indirectly effects and assures his salvation. Anfechtungen, it must be appreciated, is not some form of spiritual growing pains, which will disappear when a mystical puberty is attained, but a perennial and authentic feature of the Christian life. In order for the Christian to progress in his spiritual life, he must continually be forced back to the foot of the cross, to begin it all over again ("semper a movo incipere") (p. 171).

In Luther's view, anfechtungen made room for faith. They were God's healing medicine against the disease of self-trust.

> Inasmuch as tribulation serves the same purpose as rhubarb, myrrh, aloes, or an antidote against all the worms, poison, decay, and dung of this body of death, it ought not to be despised. We must not willingly seek or select afflictions, but we must accept those which God sees fit to visit upon us, for he knows which are suitable and salutary for us and how many and how heavy they should be (LSC, p. 165).

People did not ask for spiritual depression, nor were they expected to enjoy anfechtungen. But, according to Luther, believers did experience spiritual depression and could grow from them if they were faced coram Deo.

Luther's Spiritual Definition of Health

For Luther, the healthiest people were those who knew how unhealthy they were. Since "strength is found in weakness" (LSC, p. 37), the need was neediness and the Christian's greatest enemy, according to Luther, was needlessness.

Since spiritual sickness was essentially the refusal to depend upon God (LSA, p. 172), Luther defined spiritual health as the awareness and acceptance of one's consummate need for Christ. To become whole, one first had to experience the fragmentation of sin and suffering; to become integrated, one first had to experience the paradoxical stage of disintegration or desperation (LW, Vol. 42, p. 125).

Therefore in Luther's pastoral care ministry of healing, he encouraged his followers to face and embrace suffering from a faith perspective (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). When suffering was viewed through the lens of the goodness of God, a new vision of the purpose for life's negative experiences could develop. The non-faith or human, fleshly way of perceiving life could give way to God's perspective on life and suffering (LW, Vol. 54, p. 46). This was the healing task for Luther: the spiritually debilitated person was restored to wholeness as defined as the renewal of a faith-perspective in which doubts about the goodness of God were transformed into dependence upon the goodness of God as a loving Father (LSA, pp. 183-185).

Healing occurred when the individual's perspective was once again moving toward a faith perspective which saw God as good even in the midst of evil. Thus Luther's purpose in healing was to advance the soul to a new state of relationship with God by returning the doubting or anxious soul to a gracious God who, as the heavenly Father, had only good purposes for them (LSC, p. 56).

Martin Luther's Practice Relative to Healing

This section uses historic Christian healing to analyze what Martin Luther did when he attempted to restore a debilitated person to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare. In sustaining, Luther sought to maintain faith in the face of the temptation to retreat; he focused on helping faith

survive the onslaught of doubt and despair so that a platform could be built from which life could be embraced. Luther built upon this platform in his healing ministry because he wanted people to do more than survive; he wanted them to thrive (LSC, p. 217).

If sustaining comprised fortifying faith to resist retreat, then healing sought to deepen faith and promote spiritual maturity. Luther sought to accomplish this task by addressing the mind, the soul, and the will of those he pastored. He healed the mind by teaching how to reinterpret suffering; he healed the soul by reintegrating people to God and themselves; and he healed the will by challenging people to reengage the world.

Rational Healing: Healing the Mind by Teaching How to Reinterpret Suffering

Luther encouraged his followers to reinterpret life by exegeting it from a biblical perspective, and he cared for souls by promoting the curative attitude of spiritual insight into the deeper meaning behind events and experiences (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). Luther's rational healing can be understood by considering the need, mindset, and medicine for healing the mind.

The Need for Healing the Mind: The Battle Between Faith and Experience

When healing the mind, Luther was asking and answering the question: How is faith to win over despair? In sustaining, people were encouraged to face despair; in healing Luther taught them what to do with despair in order to move from doubt to trust. His answer was: triumph over despair through courageous trust—confident reliance on God developed through the perspective of reason redeemed by grace in contrast to reason apart from faith which is the embodiment of doubt and unbelief (LW, Vol. 1, pp. 187-188).

McGrath (1990) explained Luther's view of life as a constant battleground between trust and despair, faith and experience.

> The Christian life is characterized by the unending tension between faith and experience. For Luther, experience can only stand in contradiction to faith, in that revealed truth must be revealed under its opposite form. This dialectic between experienced perception and hidden revelation inevitably leads to radical questioning and doubt on the part of the believer, as he finds himself unable to reconcile what he believes with what he experiences (pp. 168-169).

Luther realized that there were definite, apparent contradictions when one reflected on experience and on the Scriptures (LW, Vol. 1, p. 123). Circumstances were shouting, "God does not care about me!" and the Scriptures were loudly proclaiming, "God loves you!" Which does the Christian believe?

The Mindset for Healing the Mind: Reason Redeemed by Grace

Luther discerned two primary approaches to resolving such apparent contradictions. One

approach was to examine the situation based on reason unaided by faith or grace; the other was to scrutinize the situation based upon reason aided by faith and grace (LSA, pp. 175-221).

Explanations of Luther's concept of reason redeemed by grace.

Luther chose the holistic approach of reason aided by faith and grace. Grislis (1982) explored Luther's thinking in this area through a study of Luther's commentary on the life of Joseph. Grislis told how Luther recorded the plight of Joseph who was rejected by his own brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and cast into prison. The questions that arose for Joseph were questions like, "Where is God now? Where are those very great and precious promises that He loves, guards, and preserves His saints?" (p. 22). Grislis described this as the paradox of faith in which by human reason no one could interpret such events as good or as sent from the hands of a good and loving God. In Joseph's life, God did not seem merciful and kind, but He was—according to the insight of faith combating the insight of reason. Grislis summarized his initial thoughts on Luther, reason, and faith.

> Further doubts came to light within Luther's category of "reason," reflection on the meaning of life which proceeds solely on the grounds of empirical evidence and does not rely on faith or the Scriptures. From the point of view of "reason," Luther noted, the presence of a benevolent God is not discernable. Rather, thought Luther, "reason" concluded that "God either plainly does not exist or does not concern Himself with human affairs (1:123)." Or, if God does exist, he is "capricious" (2:64), that is, unreliable and therefore unpredictable. While both faith and doubt co-exist in the believer or, more dynamically, faith struggles with "reason," in the secular world only the judgments of reason are accepted as valid (p. 23).

Luther rejected the vantage point of unaided reason (LSA, p. 183). The divine promises are meaningless and empty words to the counsel of reason (Grislis, 1982). By reason, the flesh is compelled to shout, "God is a liar!" (Grislis, p. 23) For Luther, this battle was necessary. Within the darkness of despair, the light of faith emerged, for only in the struggle with unbelief could faith be won and nurtured. Luther insisted that despair be faced, that the resources of reason be used and shown faulty, and that the resources of faith be retained (LSA, p. 184).

"Luther saw that the reality of faith was often expressed by a courageous reliance on God" (Grislis, 1982, p. 24). Grislis also contended that this courageous faith was not unreasonable—it was reason redeemed by grace. It was reason which, with the benefit of faith, saw the benefits of trials. "With the assistance of reason-redeemed-by-grace, Luther thought that the believer should be able to recognize several distinctive benefits which arise on account of the anfechtungen" (p. 24). Luther believed that God's good purposes were discerned through a perspective which was not unreasonable, but which was beyond mere reason (LSA, p. 186).

Illustrations of Luther's practice of reason redeemed by grace.

For Luther, reason unaided by grace was an insufficient foundation for honestly facing the distresses of life. So he counseled people to cling to the source of reason aided by grace—the Scriptures.

By the help of God I have learned how to heal those under temptation and by experience I have learned how one should act when afflicted with sadness, despair or other heart sorrow, or has a worm gnawing in his conscience. This is an excellent passage, which contains a doctrine great and precious beyond measure, showing how we should conduct ourselves in great temptations. Let us first lay hold of the comfort of the divine Word and then seek the conversation of pious Christian people and we will soon be better (LSA, p. 175-176).

In his commentary on Isaiah, Luther used the circumstances surrounding Hezekiah's trials to illustrate his point. Hezekiah's advisers suggested a course based upon reason unaided by grace. Luther explained that this course only served to "whet the devil's tongue" (LSA, p. 176). He explained that "human reason cannot be content until it has looked about for human help" (p. 176), but that such human reason unaided by grace would only deepen spiritual perplexity.

In his ongoing commentary, Luther taught his followers a method of mental healing based upon biblical reinterpretation.

Therefore, whenever any one is assailed by temptation of any sort whatever, the very best that he can do in the case is either to read something in the Holy Scriptures, or think about the Word of God, and apply it to his heart. The Word of God heals and restores again to health the mind and heart of man when wounded by the arrows of the devil (LSA, p. 178).

In dispensing the medicine of reason redeemed by grace, Luther emphasized the importance of perspective. "The Holy Spirit knows that a thing has only such value and meaning to a man as he assigns to it in his thoughts" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). From Luther's perspective, the meaning that one ascribed to an event was the key to the event, and people must turn to the Scriptures—to reason aided by faith/grace—in order to accurately assign meaning and value to events.

He urged suffering people to turn to the Scriptures as their source of reason redeemed by grace.

Christ heals people by means of his precious Word, as he also declares in the 50th chapter of Isaiah (verse 4): "The Lord hath given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to speak a word in season to the weary." St. Paul also teaches likewise, in Romans xv 14, that we should obtain and strengthen hope from the comfort of the Holy Scriptures, which the devil endeavors to tear out of people's hearts in times of temptations. Accordingly, as there is no better nor more powerful remedy in temptations than to diligently read and heed the Word of God (LSA, p. 179).

Luther directed Christians to a higher truth and a deeper reality than their earthly suffering by guiding them to the reality of God's healing power contained in the Scriptures.

In sustaining, Luther also exhorted people to see life from God's perspective, but there his intent was to help faith to survive. In healing, he taught his parishioners how to use the Word to cause their faith to thrive. Without the Word, he said that a Christian was like a soldier, "entering upon conflict naked and unprotected" (LSA, p. 180). With the Word, the Christian could defeat even the "most practiced and experienced warrior" (p. 180). According to Strohl's (1989) interpretation of Luther, scriptural reason applied to spiritual trials, "presents one with opportunities to exercise virtue, build strength and acquit oneself meritoriously" (pp. 177-178).

The Medicine for Healing the Mind: A Faith Perspective on Suffering

In Luther's sustaining, the believer needed to have his or her faith stretched to the larger story of the goodness of God. In his healing ministry, men and women needed to grasp the good purposes of a good God when He allowed evil to enter the natural rhythms of life. In this mindset, Luther said that he followed the biblical perspective first communicated in the Old Testament story of Joseph who had been thrown into a pit and eventually sold into slavery by his own brothers. Much later in life when he had the power to punish his brothers, Joseph told them that though they meant his slavery for evil, God meant it for good (LW, Vol. 50, p. 20). Luther deepened faith in the good purposes of God in suffering by teaching that suffering united the believer with Christ.

He was not teaching that suffering was painless. Quite the opposite seems to be the case. Luther first helped Christians to comprehend that this life would always be a life of suffering. In his letter to his father, Hans Luther (LSC, pp. 30-32), he taught that life on earth was a troubled and unhappy time, a vale of suffering. It was a vale of tears because of the curse of sin and because there was no respite or cessation this side of the grave. The longer one lives, the more one experiences sin, wickedness, and sorrows.

Luther continued by explaining to his father that in this life of suffering one's only hope was faith in Christ. This faith strengthens the person because Christ is the true mediator between the self and God. Then Luther described how Christ participates with the Christian in his or her suffering. There is a unique union with Christ in suffering because Christ was the man of sorrows.

Due to this union, Luther taught that the Christian could actually glory in being chosen to suffer with Christ. Luther related this to Romans 8, where the Apostle Paul wrote that if "we share in Christ's suffering, we will also share in Christ's glory" (LC, pp. 194-195).

Suffering was experienced as painful and grief was anticipated, but they could be viewed as beneficial and accepted as good because Christ Himself suffered (Kelly, 1986). Speaking of Luther's view of the purpose of suffering and how it unites the Christian with Christ, Kelly wrote, "Christ bestows His suffering on His followers so that they may wear His yoke and share His burden. Because of this point the Church's suffering is a gift of grace and is pleasing to God" (p. 7).

This view of suffering reflects Luther's concept of God's sovereignty. Luther's God was in control of all things, including the suffering of His children. However, His sovereignty was not vindictive, but positive and purposeful as He sovereignly called His people to suffer so that they

could be united to and identified with Christ. Kelly (1986) explained Luther's perspective.

> When looking at the phenomenon of the suffering and persecution of the church from the perspective of the theologia crucis, the cause is God. It is God who has "appointed that we should not only believe in the crucified Christ, but also be crucified with him." It is God who allows the godly to become powerless and suffer. It is God who imposes death on the church and lays the cross of Christ upon it. It is God who covers Christ's holy people with "slander, bitter hatred, persecution, and blasphemy" from its enemies and "contempt and ingratitude" from its so-called followers. From the perspective of the theology of the cross, God wants the church to suffer so that the people of Christ can be identified as Christ's and God causes persecution to come as a gift of His grace so that His Word is revealed according to the paradigm of the cross (p. 10).

Luther's God suffered. His God was not apathetic (used in the sense of the negation of suffering), but full of pathos. Christ's crucifixion was the ultimate demonstration of this. McGrath (1990) called this Luther's theology of the cross. It is the opposite of the theology of glory which teaches that neither God nor His children will suffer. Jensen (1991) wrote about the contrast between the theology of glory and the theology of the cross.

> It is in reaction to such a view (the theology of glory) that Luther makes his statement that suffering is the Christian's greatest treasure. He is not suggesting that suffering is something to be glorified. What he is saying, however, is that faith is not an eternal fire insurance policy. Rather, it is a daily risking of one's self to God's care. A theology of the cross stresses that God is to be found in the struggles and uncertainties of this earthly life. This is the way God has chosen to be revealed. Consequently, true faith also involves living in the midst of uncertainties. It is a "theology of Anfechtungen" (temptations, struggles, trials), where the outcome always depends totally on God. Only in the midst of trials can a true hope emerge, a hope which does not avoid the struggles of life. By facing one's challenges head on, as Christ did, rather than running from them, an undeniable hope is the result. One is not abandoned in personal and communal struggles, for God is present. God suffers and dwells with us in order to lead us to an unquenchable hope (p. 4).

Suffering brought people to a greater dependence upon Christ as the one who gives hope. Luther wrote, "'Cast thy burden upon the Lord; he will provide for thee,' and St. Peter (first epistle, v. 7), following the above, 'Beloved brethren, cast all your anxious care upon him, for he careth for you'" (LSA, p. 141). Luther wrote to his lord and sponsor, Hans of Taubenheim, after the death of Hans' wife.

> Bear, then, the stroke of the dear Father's gentle rod in such a way that you may find in his gracious and paternal will towards you a comfort deeper than the pain; and, in the conflict of your grief, let the peace of God, which soars above all our reason and senses, be triumphant,

however the flesh may sob and whimper (LSA, pp. 156-157).

Luther also examined this union with Christ from the perspective of the internal results which flowed from suffering—suffering plus faith had the promise of promoting Christlikeness in the believer. When The Magdeburg chancellor, Laurentius Zoch, lost his wife, Luther explained how the image of Christ was being formed in his soul. "But it is a much greater comfort, that Christ has formed you in his likeness, to suffer as he suffered, i.e., to be punished and distressed, not alone by the devil, but as though by God, who is and must be your comfort" (LSA, p. 158).

Luther's perspective on suffering was the perspective of faith in a God Who was larger than, but not at all immune to, human suffering. His purposes in suffering were good purposes. This truth, Luther believed, would never be learned through reason. Rather, this larger story could be read and understood only with the eyes of faith in the goodness of God. Luther merged these two stories in his final words to Zoch. "Heavy is thy (God's) rod, but I know assuredly that thou art Father still" (LSA, p. 158). The smaller story is real and it is heavy (hurtful). The larger story is real (even more real, if such a thing were possible), and it is light, for His burden is light and His yoke is easy because it flows from His fatherly love for His children.

Luther spoke of these two "realities" in his follow-up letter to Zoch. He first noted with pleasure that Zoch had written that Luther's first letter had indeed brought him great comfort. Then he began to explain the comfort of Scripture, which is a hidden comfort. "Therefore, he often withdraws from us the comfort of visible things, in order that the comfort of the Scriptures may find room and opportunity within us, and not remain standing uselessly in the bare letter without exercise" (LSA, p. 158).

The reality of God's comfort was a faith-sensed reality for Luther. "We are told that faith consists in that which cannot be seen, and which does not appear" (LSA, p. 159). Because of this,

> We must turn our faces to the unseen things of grace and to the hidden things of comfort, hoping and waiting upon these; and our backs to things that are seen, that we may accustom ourselves to leave these and depart from them, as St. Paul says: "Who look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen" (2 Cor. iv. 18) (LSA, p. 160).

Luther believed that the healing which God offered was His own intimate presence in union with Christ. It was the knowledge that when a Christian suffered, Christ suffered in her or him. "Therefore, when we feel pain, when we suffer, when we die, let us turn to this, firmly believing and certain that it is not we alone, but Christ and the Church who are in pain and are suffering and dying with us" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 163).

The larger story of suffering is a faith-centered story and it is an elementary story for Luther. "This is the school of Christians. They take lessons daily in this art and cannot comprehend it, much less learn it thoroughly, but they always remain children, spelling the A B C of this art" (LSA, pp. 160-161). Luther saw suffering as God's school of faith for the Christian. In this school the number one lesson plan was to enable the student to learn to see the larger story through the eyes of faith in the goodness of God. This larger story, Luther believed, was internalized when one comprehended

the truth of union with Christ in suffering.

Healing called for a higher medicine—the medicine of faith (LW, Vol. 54, p. 46). Faith allowed Luther's followers to perceive that, when it appeared that God meant them evil and harm, in truth all that He did, He did for their benefit (LSC, p. 120). Life said that God had forsaken them; "faith responded that He had not forsaken them as flesh and blood would imagine" (LSC, p. 82).

Luther taught that faith resources could not be consolidated apart from the resources found in God's Word and that the Christian was destined to remain in despair unless and until she or he somehow was moved to reinterpret events from God's scriptural perspective. Luther's soul care by healing involved applying the voice of the gospel to the lives of people (LW, Vol. 49, p. 16).

Relational Healing: Healing the Soul by Reintegrating People to God and Themselves

Luther attempted to heal the mind through reinterpretation of life events based upon the Word of God. He also strove to heal the soul by reintegrating people to God and themselves. In Luther's view, sin caused despair and despair caused a dis-integration (Luther, 1516/1954). Through healing, Luther sought to produce spiritual wholeness by reconnecting the person to God (from alienation to reconciliation) and to self (from dis-integration to re-integration) (Luther, 1516/1954).

The Reformer's view of spiritual wholeness involved the restoration of the person to a condition of personal well-being in which a new level of spiritual insight and spiritual welfare was achieved. His healing was more than caring; caring marked Luther's approach to sustaining. In healing, Luther moved to cure; cure in the sense of stretching the person to a higher level of spiritual awareness. It was a forward gain over the previous condition where a new depth of life was found (LSC, pp. 68-69). As always, Luther healed in light of coram Deo because wholeness and integration seemed impossible to him apart from the spiritual dynamic of relationship to God.

Relational Healing Through Integration With God: From Alienation to Reconciliation

When suffering first entered a person's life, Luther observed the temptation to deny either the reality of suffering or the truth of the goodness of God (LSA, 176). Through his sustaining ministry, he hoped to enable people to embrace life, facing both the goodness of God and the evils of the world. Consequently, people were now called upon to face the paradox of a good God who would allow bad things to happen. Luther dealt in part with this paradox by explaining the purpose of suffering (LSA, p. 159). He further addressed this paradox by answering the implied question, "What sort of God works out good through evil?" (LSA, p. 177).

For Luther, integration to God was based upon a biblical understanding of God. His healing through integration focused on an integrated view of God's character and on an integrated view of God's relationship to His children.

An integrated view of God's character: A God of absolute grace and holiness.

Luther taught that holy love was the essence of God's character. He saw God's holiness as His

absolute power, righteousness, and separateness from humanity; and His love or grace he viewed as God's absolute kindness, mercy, and nearness to humanity (Luther, 1516/1954). His God was transcendent (always above, always sovereign) and immanent (always near, always a servant) (Luther, 1525/1957).

Luther sought to instill this view of God into people's lives in order to heal their relationships to God. When Benedict Pauli was experiencing horrible doubts about the love and goodness of God, Luther wrote to him both about God's holiness and mercy. "God is omnipotent." "It is enough that we have a gracious God" (LSC, pp. 68-69).

As John Reineck was struggling with doubts about God's goodness, Luther penned a letter to him concerning God's inscrutability (His otherness, holiness), sovereignty, and goodness (His very good will). In fact, he combined these ideas in the term, "the inscrutable goodness of the divine will" (LSC, p. 69).

Such an integrated view of God was important in Luther's healing process because when evil happened, someone might assume that it was due to God's insufficient power to stop it—He is not omnipotent, holy, or sovereign. Or, the person in the midst of suffering might perceive that God is not loving enough to care or intervene—He might not be gracious, caring, or loving (LSA, p. 183).

Luther was of the opinion that attacks on God's holy love were a staple of the devil. "This, then, is the most furious and sudden of all attacks, in which the devil exerts to the full extent all his powers and arts, and transforms himself into the likeness of the angry and ungracious God" (LSA, p. 183).

Viewing God as a God of holy love provided Luther with an answer to the question of the origin of suffering. He understood suffering from the paradoxical perspective of the God who smites in order to make whole. His absolute power and His absolute love worked in the believer's life simultaneously to promote the greater good of the believer which was the firm conviction of eternal relationship with God. In his commentary on Romans, Luther (1516/1954) explained both this paradox (of God's goodness and human suffering) and God's good purpose in human suffering.

> In the phrase, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (8:33, 34, 35), he shows that the elect are not saved by chance, but by God's purpose and will. Indeed for this reason, God allows the elect to encounter so many evil things as are here named, namely, to point out that they are saved not by their merits, but by His election, His unchangeable and firm purpose (of salvation in Christ) (p. 128).

Luther believed that it was only as people maintained an integrated view of God's greatness and goodness that they could begin to understand God's relationship to them.

This integrated view of God was especially necessary for Luther in the midst of suffering and spiritual depression. Strohl (1989) described this viewpoint.

> That God does not remove suffering and immediately make straight the rough places of our lives isn't for Luther a negative reflection either on the extent of God's power or the integrity of God's professed love for us. The absoluteness of that power is revealed in its extraordinary

efficaciousness. God's power serves God's love, making itself susceptible to the suffering of creation so as to transform that suffering from within and able to bring life out of nothingness (p. 180).

Luther deeply desired that Christians understand this view of God at a personal level, not simply at a theoretical or theological level. The theology of God as a God of holy love served as the foundation for Luther's more personal and very energized letters to people suffering in the throes of spiritual depression.

Speaking to one such man, Luther said, "One should therefore banish from his mind and heart the grievous thoughts of sin and of the wrath of God, and cherish the very opposite thoughts" (LSA, p. 183).

On another occasion Luther wrote to a woman who was devastated by the thoughts that either God was too weak to help or too unkind to care. The seriousness of his letter reveals the importance Luther granted to one's view of God.

I have known many such, who, when very great and sudden temptations such as these have assailed them, did not understand the art of despising and casting out these thoughts, and in consequence lost their minds and became violently insane; and some, when their minds had become too severely strained by these startling thoughts, took their own lives (LSA, p. 187).

An integrated view of God's relationship to His children: Loving Father and gracious Savior.

Losing faith in the grace and goodness of God was the gravest temptation Luther could imagine.

By the temptation of faith is meant that the evil conscience drives out of a person his confidence in the pardoning grace of God, and leads him to imagine that God is angry and wishes the death of the sinner, or that, in other words, the conscience places Moses upon the judgment-seat, and casts down the Savior of sinners from the throne of grace . . . He says, "God is the enemy of sinners, you are a sinner, therefore, God is your enemy" (LSA, pp. 189-190).

What was the believer to do when confronted with the devil's syllogism (God is the enemy of sinners, you are a sinner, therefore, God is your enemy)? Since Luther attributed the dis-integration of the divine-human relationship to such thinking, he also insisted that altering this thinking ought to instigate a movement back to God.

The heart of Luther's healing counsel was to turn people to the heart of God. The Reformer exhorted sufferers to reflect on God's love and Christ's grace.

I know nothing of any other Christ than he whom the Father gave and who died for me and for my sins, and I know that he is not angry with me, but is kind and gracious to me; for he would not otherwise have had the heart to die for me and for my benefit (LSA, pp. 180-181).

Luther emphasized that God the Father was not angry. He asserted that the cross forever proved that God was kind and gracious to His children.

Luther believed that the devil would hold up before God's children the lie that God was wrathful toward them. He taught believers how to counter this deception.

> For the spirit and heart of man is not able to endure the thought of the wrath of God, as the devil represents and urges it. Therefore, whatever thoughts the devil awakens within us in temptation we should put away from us and cast out of our minds, so that we can see and hear nothing else than the kind, comforting word of the promise of Christ, and of the gracious will of the heavenly Father, who has given his own Son for us, as Christ, our dear Lord, declares in John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Everything else, now, which the devil may suggest to us beyond this, that God the Father is reconciled to us, and graciously inclined to us, and merciful and powerful for the sake of his dear Son, we should cast out of our minds as wandering and unprofitable thoughts (LSA, pp. 184-185).

These words contain an important concept in Luther's healing ministry: God the Father is reconciled to and graciously inclined toward His children.

When Hohann Schlaginhaufen of Kothen battled melancholy, Luther explained his spiritual temptations should not be viewed as signs of God's wrath but as signs of the paternal love of God because God uses the temptation of faith to produce deeper faith.

> Let it be granted, that God appears to be angry when we are vexed and tempted; yet, if we repent and believe, we shall come to see that beneath the wrath of God lie hidden grace and goodness, just as his strength and power lie concealed beneath our weakness . . . . He who is assailed by temptations to doubt should bury himself in the Holy Scriptures. He should diligently read them and hear them, should meditate upon and lay them to heart. The comfort of the Gospel is this, "It is a falsehood, that God is an enemy of sinners, for Christ roundly and plainly declares, by commandment of the Father: 'I am come to save sinners'" (LSA, pp. 192-193).

For Luther, Christ had to be to the Christian's heart a daily mirror reflecting the faithfulness of God's love (LSA, p. 207). This mirror of grace must never be torn away. In fact, it should be thrown at the devil. Luther encouraged his followers to mock the devil rather than debate him.

> When the devil casts up to us our sin, and declares us unworthy of death and hell, we must say: "I confess that I am worthy of death and hell. What more have you to say?" "Then you will be lost forever!" "Not in the least: for I know One who suffered for me and made satisfaction for my sins, and his name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So long as he shall live, I shall live also." Therefore treat the devil thus: Spit on him, and say: "Have I sinned? Well, then I have sinned, and I am sorry; but I will not on that account despair, for Christ has borne and taken away all

my sin, yes, and the sin of the whole world, if it will only confess its sin, reform and believe on Christ. What should I do if I had committed murder or adultery, or even crucified Christ? Why, even then, I should be forgiven, as he prayed on the cross: 'Father, forgive them' (Luke xxiii. 34). This I am in duty bound to believe. I have been acquitted. Then away with you, devil!" (LSA, pp. 213-215).

In these words of counsel, Luther highlighted the perspective that both sins and sinners were forgiven. Therefore, the believer was no longer separated from God. Luther urged his followers to "depend boldly upon this" (LSA, p. 215) in order to experience peace with God.

He is not the one who accuses or threatens us, but he reconciles and intercedes for us by his own death and by his shed blood for us, that we may not be afraid of him, but draw near to him with all confidence (LSA, p. 236).

In addition to teaching that the believer did not have to be afraid of Christ, Luther preached that the Christian could "draw near to Christ with full confidence and assurance of His love" (LSC, p. 91). The Reformer surmised that such an understanding brought hope, joy, peace, confidence, and love. To John Schlaginhaufen, he wrote, "believe that he esteems and loves you more than does Dr. Luther or any other Christian" (LSC, p. 92).
For Luther, awareness of God's friendship had the power to reconcile prodigals to the Father.

The conscience, spurred by the devil, the flesh, and the fallen world; says, "God is your enemy. Give up in despair." God, in His own Fatherly love and through His Son's grace and through His Word and through the witness of His people; says, "I have no wrath. You are accepted in the beloved. I am not angry with you. We are reconciled!" (LW, Vol. 16, p. 214).

Spiritual wholeness began in Luther's thinking with an integrated view of God who is a God of holy love. This wholeness was deepened by integrating this view of God into the relationship between the person and God.

Relational Healing Through Integration With Self: Compassionate Commiseration

Tappert (1955) spoke about the importance of "viva voce: the viva vox evangeli which was so prominent in Luther's pastoral counseling as it was in his theology" (p. 101). Luther felt that the soul could experience integration through personal encounter as the voice of the Gospel was carried by the human voice. "Perhaps your temptation is too severe to be relieved by a brief letter; it can better be cured, God willing, by a personal encounter with me and my living voice" (LSC, p. 101). Luther taught that personal encounters were mirrors by which another person was enabled to encounter God in love.
Schleiner (1985) examined Luther's view of integration through personal encounter in its historical context. During the Renaissance and Reformation era, the medical experts of the day were

anything but sympathetic toward people suffering with symptoms of "melancholy and schizophrenia" (p. 157). Renaissance doctors delighted in mocking psychotics (persons thinking themselves other than they were—a clay jar, a cock with flapping wings). They were considered comic fools. "The sense of ridicule overcomes pity. Of course the pain and inhumanity resulting from unsympathetic attitudes towards psychotics have mostly gone unrecorded" (p. 159).

Schleiner (1985) set as his task finding some source whose treatment and healing methodology might be more compassionate.

If, then, a certain kind of psychotic case tended to attract medical ridicule and if the Erasmian notion of pleasurable delusion likewise did not lead to serious consideration of therapy, we may have to look elsewhere in the Renaissance for a glimpse of what has become so strikingly obvious in our times: that a knowledge of the patients' histories, empathy with their condition, and endeavors to understand their particular thought processes are important in the treatment of psychotics, whose suffering and pain are beginning to be fully recognized (p. 163).

According to Schleiner (1985), Luther was a rare example of such empathy. He called Luther's cure, the cure by charity and company ("societas"). Schleiner's work bears examination because it highlights what was so important to Luther—personal encounter or cure by company. His main research finding was that Luther spent much time in the company of those he was trying to help. During this time he sought to understand the person's history, his or her perspective, and he sought to bring about cure through relationship—through charity (love) and company ("societas"). "Clearly human company is the essential ingredient in the cure of the melancholic" (p. 165).

Ingenious persuasion through human contact was an essential element in Luther's soul care. He used his personal encounter as a way of encountering another person on behalf of God so that the other person's image of God and relationship to God could be altered in ways which brought integration to the human personality. In fact, Schleiner (1985) even labeled Luther's approach "compassionate reintegration" (p. 166) because Luther focused so heavily upon the two elements of "consideration of the psychotic's past and the role of societas in re-integrating such a person into the community" (p. 169). Schleiner further explained that, "the 'cure' is brought about not by trickery but by friendly persuasion, by appeal to common humanity, by company" (p. 172). Schleiner's concluding remarks put Luther's healing ministry in historical perspective. "It would seem that Luther and Cervantes represent the best of a long psychiatric tradition" (p. 173).

Luther believed that spiritual wholeness or integration was achieved through personal encounter. This was true in his ministry to others and in his openness to being ministered to by others. Nebe (1893/1894) described in his first chapter on Luther's soul care. "He never regarded himself as all-sufficient, nor as highly lifted up above all others; humbly and urgently he besought help in hours of trial" (p. 13).

Volitional Healing: Healing the Soul by Challenging People to Reengage the World

The preceding phases of Luther's healing practice allowed the believer to say in the midst of

suffering, "If God be for me, who can be against me" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 133). It was unthinkable for Luther to imagine that individual Christians rejoicing in God's grace would isolate themselves from the larger community. So Luther exhorted people to move out into the world, believing that the human heart must have something to do (LSA, p. 195), and that isolation, idleness, and purposelessness would lead back to the route of despair (LSA, p. 181). For Luther, engagement with the world was both the result of healing and part of the process of healing. Three steps can be identified in Luther's process of volitional healing: (a) affirming existing faith resources, (b) exposing and confronting the refusal to use existing faith resources, and (c) strongly challenging the further use of existing faith resources.

Affirming Existing Faith Resources

Nebe (1893/1894) described Luther's method for encouraging reengagement. "To Frederick Myconius, Superintendent at Gotha, who lay dying of consumption, he addressed the following heroic epistle" (p. 52). The Reformer's letter to Myconius (LSA, pp. 52-54) is filled with affirmations of Myconius' strength in weakness. Luther spoke of how Myconius, while lying sick unto death, could so "rightly and in true Christian spirit" (p. 52) call his sickness a sickness unto life. That is, he affirmed the faith that allowed Myconius to reinterpret life from God's perspective. Luther shared how Myconious was impacting Luther's own life by sharing what peculiar joy Myconius was giving Luther by being so unterrified in view of death, and by being so desirous of seeing Christ (LSA, pp. 52-54). Luther identified specific details in Myconius' faith-response which so impressed him.

In affirming faith resources, Luther also drew out specific instances of courage and faith. He recounted in detail how the Elector John of Saxony had endured an extremely negative situation. He then described the fruit of John's faithfulness and explained how God was using John's faith to impact others for good (LSC, p. 141). Luther identified strengths in one area and then encouraged his followers to apply them in other pressing matters. "You who are so pugnacious in everything else, fight against yourself . . ." (LSC, p. 146). To his friend Philip Melanchthon he wrote, "I believe that you have wrestled manfully with the demons this past week" (LSC, p. 154).

Luther also used "miracle stories" (LSC, p. 156). He sent two miracle stories to Brueck, who was struggling with doubts. Immediately after telling these stories, Luther wrote,

> I take the liberty of engaging in such pleasantries with Your Honor, and yet I write with more than pleasantries in mind, for I found special pleasure in learning that Your Honor, above all others, has been of good courage and stout heart in this trial of ours (LSC, pp. 155-156).

From the nature of the two miracle stories and from what followed in his letter, it appears as if Luther was trying to connect God's faithfulness and power (the essence of the miracle stories) to Brueck's faith in God's power. From the lack of definite explanation of the faith stories, it also appears that Luther was wanting Brueck to draw his own meaning or application from the miracle stories.

Exposing and Confronting the Refusal to Use Existing Faith Resources

Luther identified strengths and exposed weaknesses by affirming instances of courage and by bluntly confronting instances of cowardice. After affirming Philip, he confronted him with these strong words, "you keep sucking up cares like a leech" (LSC, p. 147). To John (LSC, p. 160), he wrote, "Be a man now . . . God is trying you a little, be steadfast . . ." He exhorted his son to, "Conquer your tears manfully" (LSC, p. 166). Luther wrote to another individual, "only be a man and hope in God" (LSC, p. 156).

Challenging the Further Use of Faith Resources

Luther did not stop with words of exposure. When he saw a current failure to use faith resources, he confronted it and then challenged the person to move on. If he saw current success in using faith resources, he affirmed them and then challenged the person to continue growing. Part of his challenges included courageous imagery. To those being persecuted he wrote, you are as "guests in an inn whose keeper is a villain. Be strong through this evil" (LSA, p. 174). His intent here seems to be to validate their trials, to affirm their faith, and to motivate them to ongoing courage.

When his father was ill, Luther wrote, "Let your heart be strong and at ease in your trouble" (LSC, p. 30). To Meueller, who was facing temptations, he penned the words, respond "with gladness, singing, 'Alleluia'" (LSC, p. 40). To many individuals suffering external or internal suffering, Luther would encourage mourning plus movement beyond mourning. His thought seems to have been, "mourn, but move on; get on with life; embrace life again." For instance, to Catherine Metzler, whose husband and son had died within an eight-month span, he wrote,

> I could not refrain from writing to you and, in so far as God enables me, sending you these lines of comfort since I can well imagine the cross which God has now laid upon you through the death of your beloved son sorely oppresses and hurts you. It is natural and right that you should grieve, especially for one who is of your own flesh and blood. For God has not created us without feeling or to be like stones or sticks, but it is his will that we should mourn and bewail our dead. Otherwise it would appear that we had no love, particularly in the case of members of our own family. However, our grief should be moderate, for our dear Father is testing us here to see whether we can fear and love him in sorrow as well as in joy and whether we can give back to him what he has given us . . . . I pray you, therefore, that you acknowledge the gracious and good will of God and that you patiently bear this cross for his sake . . . (LSC, pp. 72-73).

Luther challenged Catherine to use her faith resources (her knowledge of and relationship to God in Christ) as the means by which she could embrace life again.

The Captain of Nordhausen, Jonas of Stockhausen, had grown weary of life. Luther spoke to him about the power of personal encounter,

> You should give up trusting your own thoughts and following them, and listen to other people,

who have escaped from the power of this temptation. Press your ear close to our lips, and let our word go straight down into your heart, and God will comfort and strengthen you through our word (LSA, p. 199).

He followed this with an exhortation to "pluck up courage and confidence" (LSA, p. 201) and to fight strongly against the devil's temptations. Jonas was exhorted to lay hold of himself and to fight the good fight in God's strength. Luther concluded by linking Jonas to Christ. He called Christ the "true Conqueror" (p. 202) and exhorted Jonas to celebrate their (Jonas and Christ) shared triumph over the devil.

When Anthony Lauterbach was very distressed and discouraged, Luther challenged him with the strong words, "Let your heart be strengthened! Be of good courage! Wait on the Lord!" (LSC, p. 168).

A final letter of scriptural soul care illustrates Luther's volitional healing. Lambert Thorn was arrested for his faith and two of his fellow ministers were burned at the stake. Thorn spent five years in prison where he died. Early in his imprisonment Luther wrote to him a letter of scriptural strengthening.

Luther began by picturing Lambert as a true disciple of Christ. He then forcefully described the strength resident within Lambert. "Christ, who is in you, has given me abundant testimony that you do not need my words, for he himself suffers in you and is glorified in you" (LSC, p. 198). Luther continued by expressing what impact Lambert was having on him and on the whole world.

Luther rejoiced with him and wrote, I "congratulate you with my whole heart" (LSC, p. 198). Thorn's faith was challenged when Luther penned the words, "Be of good courage and he will strengthen your heart; wait on the Lord" (p. 198). Luther spoke much of how Christ had overcome the world and encouraged Thorn to fix his eyes on the Lord and to rely on his simple faith in Jesus Christ. Thorn's union with Christ in suffering and in glorification was highlighted by Luther. His closing words of challenge and comfort were these, "You have become a member of Him by the holy calling of our Father. May He perfect His calling in you to the glory of His name and of His Word. Amen. Farewell in Christ, my brother" (p. 199).

Summary of Research Findings

Sustaining and healing were the twin tasks of Luther's soul care for treating suffering. In sustaining he sought to promote the spiritual survival of faith; in healing he desired to promote the spiritual maturity or growth of faith. Through sustaining, men and women were enabled to face life honestly and to grasp that God was good even when life was bad. In healing, Luther took people a step further to explore God's good purposes for life's bad events. Sustaining might have helped a person to say, "God is good." Healing enabled them to answer the question, "What good are my trials?" In sustaining, Luther turned people to the presence of God in the presence of suffering while in healing he turned them to the benefits of faith to perceive the benefits of trials. When suffering entered the normal flow of life, the natural response was to retreat from life; to deny either the reality of evil or the goodness of God. Through sustaining and healing, Luther encouraged people to

face both truths: life is bad and God is good.

Summary of Martin Luther's Theory of Healing

To help a debilitated person to be restored to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare, Luther highlighted a spiritual understanding of God's promise concerning healing, a spiritual interpretation of sickness, the spiritual significance of suffering, and a spiritual definition of health. The following conclusions may be drawn from Luther's healing theory:

1. Concerning a spiritual understanding of God's promise concerning healing, Luther theorized that God could heal, but he was not persuaded that the goodness of God required Him always to heal. Therefore, Luther chose not to focus on cure (either physical cures or short-term solutions to the problem at hand), but on spiritual care that encouraged people to face suffering in order to promote spiritual maturity.

2. Luther developed a spiritual interpretation of sickness by which he perceived that the worst sickness was spiritual estrangement from God due to sin. He postulated that people were spiritually dead and separated from God, spiritually deceived and therefore unaware that they were separated from God, spiritually self-dependent thus preferring death to dependence upon God, and spiritually disabled making them impotent to fight off the disease of sinful independence from God.

3. Believing in a spiritual significance for suffering, Luther taught that suffering was sent to cure the deepest sickness of estrangement from God caused by independence from God. Luther perceived a deeper work of God by which He used trials as the medicine of choice to reveal one's need for God. Luther believed that suffering could lead people to a greater susceptibility to the divine activity, develop profound trust, and serve as a catalyst for humble faith.

4. When presenting a spiritual definition of health, Luther suggested that the healthiest people were those who knew just how spiritually unhealthy they were. Therefore, Luther saw the healing task as restoring the spiritually debilitated person to wholeness as defined as the renewal of the faith perspective in which doubts about the goodness of God were transformed into dependence upon the good purposes of God. When people raised the question, "What good are my trials?" Luther encouraged them to face the paradox of a good God who used bad things to produce good results. Thus he pointed people to the benefits of faith to perceive the benefits of trials.

Summary of Martin Luther's Practice of Healing

Whereas Luther's practice of sustaining sought to help faith survive the onslaught of doubt; his practice of healing sought to empower people to thrive even through suffering. Luther sought to help faith by promoting a greater awareness of God's purposes and a greater dependence upon God. Luther addressed the mind, soul, and will of those he pastored. He healed the mind by teaching how to reinterpret suffering, the soul by reintegrating people to God and themselves, and the will by challenging people to reengage the world.

1. Luther practiced the art of healing the mind by teaching people how to use the Bible to reinterpret God's purpose for their trial. Once people faced their trials they began to ask, "What good are my trials? Why would a good God allow bad things to happen?" Luther noted that despair overcame faith when such questions were examined only from a human perspective. So he proposed what he believed was a more holistic method of healing—reason redeemed by grace. This method used Scripture to promote mental healing through biblical reinterpretation of the meaning of suffering by meditation upon God's good plans for His children. Reason redeemed by grace allowed people to perceive how God could bring good even from evil.

Since Luther believed that the foremost purpose of trials was to create dependence upon God, he encouraged people to face and embrace their suffering. Through his method of reason redeemed by grace, Luther used the Bible to explore with people how their suffering exposed their need for God and to help them to understand how the defenselessness developed from undiminished suffering was fertile ground for their spiritual growth.

2. Luther practiced the art of relational healing by reintegrating people to God and to themselves. Luther found that people were asking, What sort of God works good from evil? Not finding acceptable answers to this paradox from any human perspective, people began to pull away from God. Luther encouraged people to move back toward God by honestly facing this paradox. He felt that the question of what sort of God works good from evil could be answered by an integrated, biblical view of God's character (a God of absolute grace and holiness) and relationship to His children (a loving Father and gracious Savior).

Luther also noticed that suffering caused people's faith resources to disintegrate. It was Luther's practice to use loving personal relationship to encounter another person on behalf of God in order to bring integration to the human personality. He used his loving relationship as a catalyst to alter the sufferer's image of and relationship to God.

3. Luther practiced the art of healing the will by challenging people to reengage the world. It was unthinkable for Luther that newly reintegrated Christians would isolate themselves from the larger community. So Luther encouraged reengagement with the world by affirming existing faith resources ("you have the spiritual resources to engage and impact your world"), exposing and confronting the refusal to use existing faith resources ("you are squandering so many wonderful gifts"), and strongly challenging the further use of existing faith resources ("you can do it, go use your resources for others").

CHAPTER 5

RECONCILING IN MARTIN LUTHER'S SPIRITUAL CARE

Overview

This chapter presents an analysis of Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care using the framework of historic Christian reconciling. In chapter two, reconciling was summarized as "a ministry which seeks to re-establish broken relationships between man and fellow man and between man and God" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 9). The specific question being researched in chapter five is, what theory and practice did Luther develop in seeking to re-establish broken relationships between people and people and between people and God?

Martin Luther's Theory (Theology) Relative to Reconciling

Burck (1990) maintained that theology was central to the reconciling function and addressed the question, "How are alienated people helped to establish or renew proper and fruitful relationships with God and with their neighbors?" (p. 867). Throughout church history, pastors and theologians answered this question by developing a spiritual nosology—a culturally relevant spiritual diagnostic system for use in identifying, classifying, and overcoming sins through a biblical study of the nature of the soul, sin, and salvation (Lake, 1966). It is particularly important to understand Luther's theory of reconciling since reconciliation has been viewed as the polarizing soul care issue of the Reformation era (McNeil, 1951), and since Luther has been perceived as having greatly altered the approach to granting certainty of right relationship with God, reconciling sinners to God, and reestablishing relationships between people (McGrath, 1994).

McNeil (1962) noted that by the time of the Reformation, reconciling had been codified and organized, consisting of confession to heal the rupture in the horizontal relationship with God, and church discipline to heal the broken relationship between person and person. Luther agreed with the prevailing wisdom that the need for forgiveness assumed the presence of sin (Luther, 1516/1954). Forgiveness aimed to amend life alienated from God by sin through reconciling sinners to God. Sin might be real sin with true guilt or it might be imagined sin with false guilt. Whether real or imagined, sin burdened the conscience and needed to be treated (Childs, 1990).

In his thorough reshaping of reconciliation, Luther taught that confession was no longer compulsory. He also believed in and encouraged direct access to God through private prayer as opposed to exomologies or mandatory confession before the entire congregation (LSA, p. 217). Luther instituted mutual confession and absolution at the lay level, making shared confession a normal part of the Christian experience in contrast to confession before a priest (Childs, 1990).

The horizontal relationship between person and person emphasized discipline. Discipline aimed to place alienated persons into situations in which good relationships might be established through restoring troubled Christians to one another (Childs, 1990). Discipline allowed sinning believers to remain within the care of the faithful; it kept the Christian accountable; and it guarded against

further temptations (Kemp, 1947).

Luther's reformatory work altered how his followers practiced church discipline. Lay elders served as spiritual directors and made paternal correction a normal part of the Christian experience by lovingly and privately admonishing erring Christians (Becker, 1969).

Luther's departure in practice can be explained by his theology relative to reconciliation. Luther based his reconciling ministry upon his views of: (a) spiritual nosology, (b) the struggle of the conscience, (c) the soul (biblical anthropology), (d) sin (biblical hamartiology), and (e) salvation (biblical soteriology).

Martin Luther's Spiritual Nosology

Luther developed a spiritual nosology—a way of conceptualizing humanity based upon a system of diagnosis built on a theological understanding (Burns, 1981). Burns explained that spiritual nosology or theological anthropology has enjoyed broad acceptance throughout Christian history. He traced it from the earliest Christian writers of the first century up to the end of the 19th century. It was his view that in the 20th century the church abdicated its historical jurisdiction over caring for souls, which led to the rise of modern secular psychology. Burns' point was that biblical psychology is one of the oldest sciences of the church and that the church, as curator of the soul, studied the Word and the world in order to develop methods of care and cure which were both biblically effective and culturally relevant.

Burns (1981) saw Luther's spiritual nosology or theological anthropology as an exegetical and systematic study of the doctrine of Scripture concerning humanity. Theological anthropology was the study of the nature of humanity (their personal capacities, constitution, and make-up) as humanity was created, how that nature was affected by the fall of humanity, and how that nature was restored by redemption through Christ.

In Luther's eyes, the Bible did not present a study of the nature of humanity as an end or even a focus in itself (Luther, 1525/1957). Rather, the Bible described the human constitution (personhood, personality, inner make-up) in light of humanity's relationship to God. Luther's theological psychology rested upon the fulcrum of biblical truth regarding the God-human relationship (Luther, 1516/1954).

These characteristics of Luther's psychology are important because Luther looked at nosology from a culturally different perspective than many modern non-evangelicals. He attempted to know the creature through the Creator instead of knowing the creature through the creature. The source of reality for Luther was not the human mind, and his assumptions about humanity did not emerge from what the human self could understand and say about itself (Luther, 1516/1954). Burns (1981) proposed that secular psychology proceeded from "anthropos" and excluded "theos," while Luther developed a coram Deo psychology through which he studied "anthropos" in light of "theos."

Martin Luther's Theology of the Struggle of the Conscience

In his reconciling ministry, Luther made the struggle of the soul his pastoral care theme (LSC,

pp. 337-339). He believed that finding peace with God was the soul's ultimate struggle, and he aspired to teach people how they might obtain a good conscience before God (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70). Theologically, he was explaining how to face the results of the entrance of sin into the world and into the human personality (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 368-369).

Luther wanted to make practical the ramifications of the doctrine of justification (the belief that people are fully accepted into God's family based upon faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ) (Luther, 1516/1954). Since by justification, one's eternal relationship to God is secure, Luther wanted people to understand by faith that their present, or day-by-day, relationship to God was thereby secure.

Luther explained the relationship between eternal acceptance by God and daily relationship to God in his commentary on Galatians (1535/1988). He imagined an individual coming to him while troubled in conscience due to grievous temptations to sin. This person is overcome and capitulates to sins like hatred, wrath, impatience, carnal desire, heaviness of spirit, or some other lust of the flesh that cannot be defeated, and the person's conscience struggles with the burden of guilt. Then Luther asks the practical question. "What should the person do in this case?" (p. 368). What a Christian should do when the conscience is assailed by sin was the question at the heart of Luther's reconciling ministry.

Luther answered his own question in his commentary on Galatians (1535/1988) by focusing upon connecting the believer's eternal relationship to God to his or her temporal relationship to God.

> What should he do in this case? Should he despair? No, but let him say to himself: "Your flesh fights and rages against the Spirit. Let it rage as long as it wants." And let not him that suffers this temptation be dismayed, in that the devil can so aggravate sin, that during the conflict he thinks himself to be utterly overthrown, and feels nothing else but the wrath of God and desperation . . . . The sum of all that Paul has taught in this discourse concerning the conflict between flesh and Spirit is this: that the saints or believers cannot perform that which the Spirit desires. For the Spirit would gladly that we be altogether pure, but the flesh will not allow it. Notwithstanding they are saved by the remission of sins, which is in Christ Jesus (pp. 368-369).

Luther taught that a person who was in an eternally secure loving relationship with the God of the universe need never despair. In reconciling, Luther strove to empower the conscience by helping troubled people find peace with God.

Theologically, Luther taught that the person who placed faith in Christ was declared righteous (acceptable to God and, therefore, having a righteous conscience) (Luther, 1516/1954). But Luther experienced a practical problem—people with a righteous conscience failed to live consistently righteous lives. In this situation, the temptation, according to Luther, was to become overwhelmed with guilt and believe the lie of Satan that God was now angry and full of wrath (LW, Vol. 17, p. 89). His reconciling ministry endeavored to empower a righteous conscience to flourish in the midst of such unrighteousness (LW, Vol. 2, p. 22).

Martin Luther's Spiritual Nosology of the Soul (Biblical Anthropology)

Luther understood people in terms of their orientation to God—they were oriented either with their faces or their backs to God (Luther, 1516/1954). Within this *coram Deo* framework, Luther developed views on the original nature of the human personality (anthropology), on the fallen nature of the human personality (hamartiology), and on the redeemed nature of the human personality (soteriology).

Luther taught that in the innermost chamber of the soul there resided a worshiping being. According to Luther, all people are in-relationship-to-deity-beings. Women and men were designed by God with a fundamental nature which must worship; humans were designed to trust, to place faith in and display loyalty to someone or something that transcends the self.

All men therefore had a clear knowledge of God, especially of His Godhead and His omnipotence. They proved this by calling the idols which they made "gods," and even "God," and they revered them as eternal and almighty. This demonstrates that there was in their hearts a knowledge of a divine sovereign Being. Manifestly they knew that God is mighty, invisible, just, immortal and good. "From the creation of the world" (1:20). This phrase emphasizes the fact that God was known ever since the world came into existence (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43).

According to Luther, people must worship. "The human mind is so inclined by nature that as it turns from the one, it of necessity becomes addicted to the other. He who rejects the Creator needs must worship the creature" (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 44-45). The human personality, in Luther's theology, was inclined to worship, and this inclination could be filled in God or it could be filled outside of God.

Luther taught that the ability to worship from the heart was, in fact, what made people truly human. Luther did not inquire who had faith and who did not, since he believed everyone had faith. Luther saw faith as a "living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xvii). Luther said that men and women were worshiping beings designed to long for the God who is the Father of grace (Luther, 1516/1954).

Kolb (1985), in attempting to analyze Luther's anthropology, noted that Luther taught that the essence of humanity was "our relationship of love and trust with our Creator Father" (p. 4). Kolb further described Luther's view of what constituted the human creature in original form—the longing for peace and harmony with a gracious heavenly Father.

In one of his table talks, Luther shared the essential cure for spiritual depression. The problem was that in a sinful state, "it does not occur to man that God is Father" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 17), and the answer was faith in God the Father. "If we only had the first three words of the Creed, 'I believe in God the Father,' they would still be far beyond our understanding and reason" (p. 17). (The Apostles Creed in Latin reads, "Credo in Deum.") Luther believed that the human soul was designed for faith in God the Father.

Concerning Luther's pastoral care, Kolb (1985) recognized that:

Luther's approach to pastoral care begins with his understanding of who God is. We usually think of Luther's theology centering on the Second person of the Holy Trinity. Luther's theology, though, arises out of the First Article, out of his understanding of who God is and who we are in relationship to God (p. 3).

Luther taught that the human personality was comprised of the longing to worship, trust in, and relate to God the Father. People longed to enjoy the Father, entrust themselves to Him, and engage in His good purposes (Luther, 1525/1957). This view played a crucial role in his ongoing development of what it meant to be human and of what it meant to empower the flourishing conscience.

Martin Luther's Spiritual Nosology of Sin (Biblical Hamartiology)

God's original design, according to Luther's understanding, was marred by sin. Consequently, "He who rejects the Creator must needs worship the creature" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 45). Humanity is now oriented with its back to God. The longing for God remains, but humanity turns in other directions to meet that longing for the Creator Father. Each human is now a moving-away-from-God-being.

Luther viewed people as relationally motivated beings who long (Kellemen, 1985). Longings and thirsts provided the energy behind life so that the soul was energized and motivated to satisfy a hunger for intimate involvement and union with another personal being. According to Luther's writings, sin changed the direction humanity turned in order to quench these relational thirsts (Luther, 1516/1954).

As Luther understood the consequences of sin, the capacity to worship was disrupted and distorted by rebellious self-centeredness. Consequently, as worshiping beings created to know the Father, but divided by the pull of a sinful nature, people resort to worshiping created reality. For Luther, the foundation of sin was putting one's ultimate faith, trust, and loving commitment in anything besides God. Luther saw false worship or idolatry at the heart of all sin (Luther, 1516/1954). Idolatry revealed an emptiness that only the grace of God the Father could fill. Kolb (1985) summarized the essence of Luther's view.

In the Large Catechism Luther places his doctrine of God in a terribly anthropocentric setting. In the explanation of the First Commandment he wrote, "A god is that to which we look for all and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true God." By this definition, of course, every person has a god: there is no such thing as an atheist. For everyone must put trust in something, or some combination of other persons and things, or life will disappear (p. 3).

Luther asserted that faith was the core of the original human personality. Each person was originally designed as a faith-in-God-being, but now people are faith-in-anything-but-God-beings.

Had Luther's spiritual nosology stopped here, it might have been accepted for presentation at the theological society of his day, but it might not have had much relevance for pastoral care. Luther did not stop here, as his nosology of sin developed the further implication that the controlling passion in the human soul is now fear.

> The poets fancied that souls were terrified by the bark of Cerberus; but real terror arises when the voice of the wrathful God is heard, that is, when it is felt by the conscience. Then God, who previously was nowhere, is everywhere. Then He who earlier appeared to be asleep hears and sees everything; and His wrath burns, rages, and kills like fire (LW, Vol. 2, p. 22).

Luther was saying that the human personality went from a center of faith to a nucleus of fear, and not just some angst or generalized fear. Rather, at the heart of humanity resides a spiritual fear: all human beings experience spiritual separation anxiety (Luther, 1525/1957). Luther taught that the soul's original essence consisted of faith in the Father, while the essence of the fallen soul consisted of fear of the Father.

The Reformer held that people were in flight from the Father, but still in need of the Father. Consequently, people searched for substitutes. In Luther's commentary on Romans (1516/1954), he traced the steps in the process of flight from God and the commensurate emptiness. The first stage was idolatry (false worship). The next stage was vanity in which the mind, for a time, actually believed that the substitute deities would work. The next step was futility. In this stage Luther described the many efforts, plans, and endeavors that humanity made to fulfill their desire for God. But this search was hopeless. "In and through them they seek whatever they desire; nevertheless, all their efforts remain vain since they seek only themselves" (p. 45). The final stage emphasized addictive passions where lusts of the flesh controlled the person who by now was in a desperate attempt to fill the void in his or her soul.

Kolb (1985) summarized Luther's view of this process. In the absence of God, fallen humanity had to impose for themselves some substitute source of identity, security, and meaning.

> Our substitutes can never adequately serve as proper sources for life, but following the Deceiver who led Adam and Eve to doubt, we lie to ourselves and learn to live with our idols. At some level of semi or sub-consciousness, though, we recognize our lie, and therefore we live in dread, dread that the gods we have fashioned for ourselves will fall apart. That makes us defensive: Luther's term was that we are "turned in upon ourselves," and protecting ourselves from the evils that assault us (p. 5).

Luther, the pastor, centered his message, his life, and his pastoral care in God's coming to retrieve the broken sinner. Humanity was fleeing; God was pursing. Humanity was in fearful flight from God; God was in passionate flight to humanity. Luther worked to restore people to Eden—to their original shape—turned upward to God and turned outward to others instead of turned inward on self. He cared for tender consciences, terrified by the breakdown of their false gods and in search of the true source which would quench their thirst for the Father's love (LSA, pp. 115-118).

In his role of spiritual director, Luther taught that when one discovered that there was nothing to fear from God the Father, then the lesser fears of life could be faced. Luther pointed people to the ultimate resolution of all fears, not by denying lesser fears, but by first facing the greatest fear—the fear that God was not a loving Father (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70).

Luther thought that fear clutched at the heart of every person, and he understood the fear that one felt in the vicissitudes of life. When fear gripped the heart, Luther developed an understanding of its psychological and theological meaning. Commenting on Isaiah 43:5, Luther wrote:

> Fear not for I am with you. Why does He say: Fear not? Because there are fears within and terrors without, the church is a tumult and a frightened people, beset by fear, despair, and sins. For that reason it has the Word, which is the breath of its life, so that it may be consoled by the Word. "Why are you afraid? Do not be afraid. I am with you." Since the conscience feels that God is very far away from us, it is necessary for Him to say, "I am with you." These are hidden words. It seems that God is against us and with our opponents, because everything is going well for them (LW, Vol. 17, p. 89).

For Luther, trust in the Father was the core longing, the core issue was the refusal to trust in the Father, and the core result was fear of the Father.

Put in modern terms, Luther was saying that people are what they worship. Put in Luther's terms, when people worship anything other than the God of the Bible who is revealed as a loving Father, then they commit idolatry. None of these idols are ultimately able to satisfy. The God-shaped vacuum inside the soul leaves the soul restless until it rests in the Creator Father. There resides in the soul, therefore, a fearfulness, restlessness, and emptiness that drives and motivates the human personality. Unmet, this hunger for Father-love leads to fear, which leads to movement away from God and from others as the soul turns in upon itself more and more in a desperate attempt to fill its own hunger (Luther, 1525/1957).

Martin Luther's Spiritual Nosology of Salvation (Biblical Soteriology)

Luther's biblical soteriology addressed his theology of the redeemed, or saved, person. This theology is not so much his method of working with the Christian as it is his psychology of the nature of the Christian's soul.

According to Luther, all people are faith-in-something-beings. Christians are those who have placed faith in Christ and thus become faith-in-Christ-beings and under-the-love/grace-of-God-beings. The Christian has the capacity to be reoriented toward God because the justified (accepted and cleansed) person sees God as Father.

However, Luther was well aware that Christians do not consistently orient their lives toward the Father (Luther, 1525/1957). Luther explained this by teaching that faith in Christ forgave original sin and personal sin, but did not remove the vestiges of sin from the human personality. He proposed that believers were "simul justus est et peccat" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 115), simultaneously both sinner and saint. Luther clarified his position when speaking on Romans 7:25.

In 7:25 the Apostle writes: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." This is the clearest passage of all, and from it we learn that one and the same believing person serves at the same time the Law of God and the Law of sin. He is at the same time justified and yet a sinner (simul justus est et peccat); for he does not say: "My mind serves the Law of God", nor does he say: "My flesh serves the Law of sin"; but he says: "I myself." That is, the whole man, one and the same person, is in this twofold servitude . . . . The Apostle means to say: "You see, it is just so as I said before: The saints are at the same time sinners while they are righteous. They are righteous because they believe in Christ, whose righteousness covers them and is imputed to them. But they are sinners, inasmuch as they do not fulfill the Law, and still have sinful lusts" (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 114-115).

The Reformer was teaching that the Christian is one person with two orientations. As saint, the Christian is oriented with the face to God; as sinner, the Christian is oriented with the back to God. Face and back are both simultaneously oriented toward God.

In this belief, Luther was arguing against the teaching of perfectionism which said that the redeemed person was sinless. Luther strongly taught that the believer was a deeply divided person. The ongoing dynamic struggle within the personality of the Christian is a struggle of the "old man in himself against the new man" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 115).

Luther described this struggle as the conflict between flesh and spirit. Speaking of the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans, Luther stated, "In chapter 6, he takes up the special work of faith, the conflict of the spirit with the flesh, for the complete slaying of sin and lust that remains after we are justified" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xxi). Faith does not free people from sin. There is sin; but it is no longer counted for condemnation. Therefore, "we have enough to do all our life long in taming the body, slaying its lusts, and compelling its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts" (p. xxi).

The spirit and the flesh strive with and rage against one another. The whole person is both spirit and flesh and fights with the self throughout life.

The one and the same person is both flesh and spirit. Because the total person consists of flesh and spirit, the Apostle ascribes to the whole person both things, which contradict each other and stem from parts of his being that are contradictory (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 113).

One should not confuse Luther and the Apostle Paul's use of the term "flesh" with the platonic notion that the body is evil. The Apostle Paul, and Luther after him, used the term "flesh" not in a material sense, but in an ethical sense. "Flesh" is that part of us that is still oriented away from God. Ethically, it refuses to move toward God, to trust in God, to obey God, and to worship God.

"Spirit" is used, not of the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Christian Trinity), but of the human spirit. In Paul's usage, "spirit" is that part of the redeemed person that is ethically oriented toward God (Luther, 1535/1988). The spirit chooses to move toward God, to trust God, to obey God, and to worship God.

In his commentary on Galatians (1535/1988), Luther used the powerful imagery of two captains to capture the essence of the meaning of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The one

redeemed person has two captains fighting for the control of the orientation of the soul. These two forces are like two rudders or two steering wheels.

> But this I mean, that there are two contrary captains in you, the Spirit and the flesh. God has stirred up in your body a strife and a battle: for the Spirit wrestles against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. Here I require nothing else of you but that you resist that captain of the flesh; for that is all that you are able to do. Obey the Spirit and fight against the flesh (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 359).

These two captains, or leaders, or guides fight for control of the human being. This battle of the flesh against the spirit is one that all saints have fought. The major battleground is in the soul on the battlefield of worship. The flesh and the spirit fight for control over who will be worshiped: the true God which leads to loving others, or substitute gods which lead to loving only self (Luther, 1535/1988).

For Luther, this was no scholastic exercise of the mind. "Hereby we may see who are very saints indeed. They are not sticks and stones so that they are never moved with anything, never feel any lust or desires of the flesh" (Luther, 1535/1988). Luther felt deeply this struggle between flesh and spirit in his own life and in the souls of those he was called to help.

Luther developed a strategy for defeating the flesh by defining and categorizing the flesh into three component parts.

> Hereby it is plain that Paul calls flesh whatever is in man, comprehending all the three powers of the soul, that is, the will that lusts, the will that is inclined to anger, and the understanding. The works of the will that lusts are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and such like. The works of the will inclined to wrath are quarrelings, contentions, murder, and such other. The works of understanding or reason are errors, false religions, superstitions, idolatry, heresies, and such like (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 375).

The flesh fights for control of the emotions, the actions, and the thoughts of the personality.

In his commentary on Galatians chapter five (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 356-375), Luther further detailed the nature of the sins of the flesh by describing the gross emotions of the flesh and the spiritual emotions of the flesh. His emphasis was upon the spiritual emotions of the flesh.

The gross emotions of the flesh were those that Medieval Christianity had called the concupiscence of the flesh. These were the fleshly carnal lusts, physical sins, or sins of the body. Scholastic theologians taught that the concupiscence of the flesh was overcome when the fleshly lusts were subdued.

Luther believed that this was a naive and unbiblical way of looking at sin and the flesh. Rather, the Reformer preferred to think of the spiritual emotions of the flesh as the deeper issues. The spiritual emotions of the flesh were heart issues and not just body issues. They were relational sins against God and included sins of disbelief like lack of faith, hatred of God, contempt of God, idolatry, and heresy (Luther, 1535/1988).

Luther also spoke of relational sins against God's creation. These spiritual emotions of the flesh were sins of the heart like pride, hatred, covetousness, and impatience. Thus, Luther taught that the deepest issues of the fleshly nature were heart issues in which the spiritual emotions of the flesh prompted relational sins. Consequently, the originally created longings of the soul were distorted.

Once these longings were distorted, the person was at gravest risk for sins of the flesh. When the spiritual emotions of the flesh failed to "quench the thirsts and calm the fears of the soul" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 30), then the emptiness of the soul prompted the person to still this restlessness in any way possible. A desperate search for peace and meaning began, which Luther believed, would end in passion run wild (Luther, 1535/1988).

Original sin was like a festering wound which was in the process of being healed, but the wound and the process were both very painful (LW, Vol. 54, p. 20). The wound was painful because the flesh opened it again and again while it did battle with the spirit; and the process was painful because it required the skill of a soul-surgeon to open the wound, diagnose the spiritual disease, and prescribe the cleansing spiritual medicine that could destroy the spiritual cancer cells of the flesh so that the spirit could thrive and the conscience flourish (Luther, 1535/1988).

Luther's art of spiritual direction focused on moving Christians back toward their original design: worshiping God through trusting in Him as their Heavenly Father (Luther, 1535/1988). This art took into account the fear that dwelt deep in the flesh and the substitute gods that were used in an attempt to quench this fear. It considered the addictive passions that arose when the natural affections were turned against their natural use and the grace of God which could woo the human heart back to God, quench the thirst of the soul, and quiet the troubled conscience (LSA, pp. 217-218).

Luther's spiritual nosology can be briefly summarized. Before the entrance of sin, the controlling passion of the soul was faith in the Father. Since sin, the controlling passion is fear of the Father. The soul is in flight from the Father while at the same time in desperate need of the Father. The need compels the soul to flee to substitute (false) gods. These false gods become the controlling passion of the soul. When the controlling passions fail to quench or quiet the soul, the soul turns to gross passions or the addictive passions of the flesh. The soul now turns in upon itself, loving only itself, protecting itself, and defensive of the self. Redemption calls the soul back to its first home—its real home. Now two guards, who stand at the door of the soul, fight for the control of the controlling passions. The fight causes tremendous upheaval in the soul where wounds arise and spiritual reconciliation is needed.

Martin Luther's Practice Relative to Reconciling

This section uses historic Christian reconciling to analyze what Luther did when he attempted to restore people to right relationship with God, others, and self. Luther sought to help the spirit become the ruling captain of the soul so that the soul could find rest and peace. Luther accomplished this task by enlightening believers to understand their identity as reconciled persons and by empowering the conscience to live according to this reconciled identity.

The Goal of Martin Luther's Reconciling Practice:
To Enlighten Believers to Understand Their Identity as Reconciled Persons

Luther connected theology and his reconciling ministry and believed that the central theme of both was trust in Christ.

> There is only one article and one rule of theology, and this is true faith or trust in Christ. Whoever doesn't hold this article and this rule is no theologian. All other articles flow into and out of this one; without it the others are meaningless. The devil has tried from the very beginning to deride this article and to put his own wisdom in its place. However, this article has a good savor for all who are afflicted, downcast, troubled, and tempted, and these are the ones who understand the gospel (LW, Vol. 54, p. 157).

Luther was indicating that in the Gospel men and women encountered God, through Christ, in all His self-giving love and that this loving encounter was the only power capable of empowering the spirit to reign over the flesh.

Kolb (1985) described Luther's approach. It was, "the 'how to' of taking care of our people's relationship with their God" (p. 2). It involved, "applying the living voice of the Gospel to people's lives" (p. 2).

Luther believed that Christians needed to recognize that in their central identity they were those who were loved by God. In one table talk, Luther reflected on his own spiritual struggle and noted that for a long time "I went astray and didn't know what I was about" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 442). He continued by saying that what freed him was the realization that he was indeed someone who was loved by God—his core identity was a beloved child of God. "I began to experience a change when I read about the love of God and what it signifies passively, namely, that by which we are loved by God" (p. 443).

Again, Kolb (1985) summarized Dr. Luther's method. "He read the Scriptures as one who had wrestled with the most serious of spiritual questions with a deep sense of honesty and insight into the essence of the relationship between God and his creatures" (p. 3). The essence of Luther's reconciliation ministry was teaching those already reconciled to God that they were loved by God and could live out that love. Luther was painfully aware of the many ways in which evil afflicted the human personality. Subsequently, he was also convinced that experiencing the Gospel was central to combating evil. As Kolb (1985) explained, "the combating of evil with the Gospel stood at the heart of his pastoral care" (p. 4).

Luther's letters were his personal attempts to underscore the daily significance of the Gospel. The exact significance of the salvation experience was that it was a joyous exchange (LW, Vol. 54). A transaction had taken place in which the sinner's sinfulness was transferred to Christ and where the righteousness of Christ was transferred to the sinner. It was the duty of fellow believers, through mutual conversation and consolation, to enable the Christian to hear the personal meaning of the Gospel. Through Christian sisters and brothers, God says to the struggling soul:

You are mine. In my sight you no longer exist as sinner. You are righteous, innocent, holy. It is nothing short of blasphemy to call God a liar and say, "No, I want to continue to be miserable and incapacitated for genuine, joyful Christian living because if I can make myself feel guiltier and guiltier still, I will suffer what I deserve" (Kolb, 1985, pp. 7-8).

Luther used the Gospel of God's grace to assure beleaguered and battered people that God was at ease with them and thus that they could relax in God, be at ease with themselves, and reach out unburdened hands to others. Luther did not want people turned in upon themselves. Instead, he urged them to focus on the heavenly Father's love and to give and receive mutual support from the human community of love. It was Luther's view of the natural stance of the human soul that God filled the individual with love so that the individual could joyously engage others in mutual filling and being filled with love (LW, Vol. 54). Believers needed to understand that the ramifications of this exchange included a new identity.

Luther Identified the Believer as a Loved Child of God the Father

Luther found in his own life that the love of the Father was central to his joyous walk with God. With fond recollection, he recalled the words that helped him to experience reconciliation with God. "God is not incensed against you, but you are incensed against God. God is not angry with you, but you are angry with God. This was magnificently said" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 15).
Luther exhorted his followers to understand the true meaning of God's forgiveness.

You say that the sins which we commit every day offend God, and therefore we are not saints. To this I reply: Mother love is stronger than the filth and scabbiness on a child, and so the love of God toward us is stronger than the dirt that clings to us. Accordingly, although we are sinners, we do not lose our filial relation on account of our filthiness, nor do we fall from grace on account of our sin (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70).

Luther felt that viewing God as an eternally forgiving Father was the major distinction between Christianity and every other approach to life and religion. "Thus the Christian faith differs from other religions in this, that the Christian hopes even in the midst of evils and sins" (LW, vol. 54, p. 70).
Luther emphasized how important it was for believers to see themselves as God's children.

To say, "I am a child of God," is accordingly not to doubt even when good works are lacking, as they always are in all of us. This is so great a thing that one is startled by it. Such is its magnitude that one can't believe it (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70) .

Knowing "I am a child of God" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70) was for Luther a stark realization having the power to free the soul from the tyranny of the flesh.
But the human mind, apart from the Word of God, could not grasp this truth. "It's very difficult

for a man to believe that God is gracious to him" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 19). Luther attempted to use human imagery in helping others to comprehend the magnitude of God's love. In one table talk he related the love of his wife Katy for their son Martin to the love of God for his children.

> God must be much friendlier to me and speak to me in friendlier fashion than my Katy to little Martin. Neither Katy nor I could intentionally gouge out the eye or tear off the head of our child. Nor could God. God must have patience with us. He has given evidence of it, and therefore he sent his Son into our flesh in order that we may look to him for the best . . . . When I reflect on the magnitude of God's mercy and majesty, I am myself horrified at how far God has humbled himself (LW, Vol. 54, p. 127).

Luther preached that God was for His children and had demonstrated this once for all in Christ. If believers would only live their lives on this basis, then they could experience freedom and joy. In a letter of pastoral counsel to Elector John, Luther explained that even in tiresome and troubling life events, God's friendship was sufficient to carry a person through. The Elector was "suffering so much shame and enmity" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 306) on account of the cause of Christ. Yet Luther said that all of this "should be a source of comfort. For God's friendship is a bigger comfort than that of the whole world" (p. 306).

In his reconciling ministry Luther illustrated the relevance of justification by grace by showing its resemblance to the relation of a father and a son.

> A son is born an heir, is not made one, and inherits his father's goods without any work or merit. Meanwhile, however, the father commands and exhorts his son to be diligent in doing this or that . . . God also deals with us in this way. He coaxes us with promises of spiritual and physical things, although eternal life is given freely to those who believe in Christ as children of adoption, etc. (LW, Vol. 54, p. 240).

In his reconciling ministry, Luther sought to identify the believer as a loved daughter or son of God.

Luther Identified the Believer as a Forgiven Friend of Christ

Luther linked the Christian's identity both to God the Father and God the Son. The redeemed soul is a loved adult child and a forgiven friend. Luther taught that these two core identities were sustaining identities that had the power to enable the spirit to captain the soul (LW, Vol. 54, p. 86).

Luther encouraged those struggling with sin to cling to the friendly heart of Christ (LW, Vol. 54, p. 87). If one did not do so, the temptation was to let sin overwhelm the conscience. "Satan speaks to the sinning saint according to the law and says to you in your heart, 'God doesn't want to forgive you'" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 86). Luther asked in this situation, "How will you as a sinner cheer yourself?" (p. 86). As the devil continued to question whether God was indeed a gracious God, Luther's answer was clear. "Then the Christian must come and say, 'I have been incorporated in Christ'" (p. 86). Incorporation or identification with Christ was a central tenet of Luther's

reconciliation ministry. Since it was evident that the believer will sin, the issue was, how will the believer respond to his or her own sin?

> But a Christian remains firmly attached to Christ, and says, "If I'm not good, Peter wasn't either, but Christ is good." Such are the elect. But a Christian says, "I wish to do as much as I can, but Christ is the bishop of souls. To him will I cling, even if I sin" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 87).

Luther worked first with the conscience because struggling sinners were destined to win or lose the battle between the flesh and the spirit in the realm of the conscience, which included faith, fear, trust, and doubt. Peace could be brought to the conscience only by trust in Christ. In a paradoxical way, to obtain peace with God one had to acknowledge that they were unable to obtain peace with God. "Meditate on this love of his and you will see his sweet consolation. For why was it necessary for him to die if we can obtain a good conscience by our works and afflictions?" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 13). The consolation of peace came only when one realized that peace with God was in Christ's hands. "Accordingly you will find peace only in him and only when you despair of yourself and your own works" (p. 13).

Luther taught that God was not angry with His children when they sinned. Rather, in Christ, God is always the Friend of sinners. "Christ is friendlier than we are. If I can be good to a friend, how much more will Christ be good to us! The principal lesson of theology is that Christ can be known" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 143). Luther insisted that this knowledge was not simply cognitive. It was a personal knowledge of Christ as merciful Friend. It is the most basic knowledge that the soul needs—the knowledge that in a remarkable way the soul can trust Christ as best Friend. "Satan clouds this basic knowledge in our hearts in a remarkable way and causes us to trust an earthly friend more than Christ" (p. 143).

The Methods of Martin Luther's Reconciling Practice: To Empower the Conscience to Live According to the New Reconciled Identity

In his reconciling ministry, Martin Luther: (a) discerned the conscience, (b) calmed the conscience, (c) assured the conscience, (d) liberated the conscience, (e) renewed the conscience, (f) strengthened the conscience, (g) forgave the conscience, (h) battled the fleshly conscience, and (i) restored the conscience.

Discern the Conscience

Luther believed that it was important to discern the different ways that sin worked in different people so that the Gospel could be idiosyncratically applied to the individual conscience. This required the wisdom to know both the individual and the battle she or he was fighting. "To distinguish between two kinds of sinners, the penitent and the secure, is especially necessary for the preacher, otherwise all Scripture remains closed" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 321).

Luther taught that sin permeated human nature and produced different results in different

people. Recognizing those differences was the first task of the pastoral counselor. Luther felt so strongly about this that he wrote a letter rebuking the Archbishop of Mayence for his failure to discern the condition of his spiritual flock. Luther warned that lack of spiritual discernment in spiritual counseling results in inciting "subjects to displeasure, ill will, and hostility, and it is also foolish to do so" (LSC, p. 175). He proceeded to tell the Archbishop that the spiritual counselor must perceive whether the conscience is seditious, unmanageable, stubborn, or despondent. The stubborn conscience required sternness, while the despondent conscience required mercy.

Calm the Conscience

Luther asserted that little direction or counsel could be received when the conscience was in intense turmoil. Therefore, he sought to bring rest to the conscience by separating sin from suffering and exhorting believers to refuse to let sin overwhelm them.

   Separate sin from suffering.

Luther's intention in separating sin from suffering was to alleviate the sting of false guilt. When sinful thoughts came into the minds of his followers, he told them, "Now such thoughts are nothing but a web spun by the devil; which we do not make or do, but suffer; they are not the works of men, but their sufferings. For those who will not learn this, all is lost . . ." (LSA, p. 187).
   He also quoted an unnamed ancient father who said,

   As it is not in your power to forbid the birds to fly in the air over your head, although you can prevent them from making their nests in your hair; so, too, you cannot protect yourself from the thoughts of the devil, but give all diligence that the thoughts of the devil do not take and hold the entire possession of your heart (LSA, p. 186).

The Reformer taught that the conscience could be calmed by the realization that much that happens within and around people is not due to personal sin but to the sufferings that come with living in a fallen world.
   When bad things happen to God's people there is a great temptation to respond with self-recriminations. Luther faced this himself when he was persecuted for his reformatory actions. He spoke of how the devil tempted him to ask himself whether or not this was happening in punishment for his sins. His recommended the following solution: "Do not even ask if this is happening from personal sin" (LW, Vol. 43, p. 65).

   Refuse to let sin overwhelm the conscience.

In addition to rejecting false guilt, Luther also dismissed the thought that true guilt—sin—should overwhelm. In fact, Luther held that the worst sin of all was letting sin overwhelm the conscience because the primary problem faced by the child of God was the problem of despairing of

grace in the midst of sins.

Luther sought to calm the disquieted conscience by encouraging the faithful to refuse to let sin overwhelm them. When his close friend, George Spalatin, reproached himself most bitterly for a decision he made in the course of counseling someone else, Luther wrote, "It is enough to have sinned; let the sin now vanish, and let sadness, which is a much greater sin, depart" (LSA, pp. 217-218).

Luther taught that despairing of grace was the greatest evil, for sin can be forgiven. But believing that sin cannot be forgiven leaves the soul with no hope but to despair (LW, Vol. 54, p. 37). When sin is exaggerated beyond the grace of Christ, the believer denies Christ and claims that his or her sin is greater than Christ's forgiving grace.

The conscience is calmed when the believer can distinguish between law and gospel.

> It's the supreme art of the devil that he can make the law out of the gospel. If I can hold on to the distinction between law and gospel, I can say to him any and every time that he should kiss my backside. Even if I sinned, I would say, "Should I deny the gospel on this account?" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 106).

This distinction was important to Luther the reformer and Luther the spiritual director. The following quote from his confessions unites these two roles. "In our time almost every conscience has been seduced by human teaching into a false trust in its own righteousness and works, and learning about trust and faith in God has nearly ceased" (LW, Vol. 39, p. 28).

Assure the Conscience

In his commentary on Romans (1516/1954), Luther contrasted the spirit of bondage with the spirit of sonship and adoption. The spirit of bondage was the fleshly conscience, which felt like it was still under the weight of the law and under the condemnation of God who was viewed as a harsh judge. The spirit of sonship and adoption was the spiritual conscience, which knew that it was under the freedom of grace and under the love of God who was a forgiving heavenly Father. It is through "the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (p. 122).

This spirit of adoption, according to Luther, freed the conscience from fear and released it to trust. "This is the cry of a heart which is full of childlike trust and knows not fear" (p. 122). The spirit of adoption was the inner witness to the believer's experience of Christ's love. Luther tried to assist his followers to see that it was the love of Christ that made the conscience triumphant over the flesh.

Liberate the Conscience

The knowledge that God was forgiving was Luther's magnet for attracting the soul back to the Father's waiting heart. When George Spenlein was struggling to receive God's forgiveness, Luther wrote,

Now I would like to know whether your soul, tired of its own righteousness is learning to be revived by and to trust in the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, my dear brother, learn Christ and him crucified. Learn to pray to him and, despairing of yourself, say, "Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am thy sin." For Christ dwells only in sinners. Meditate on this love of his and you will see his sweet consolation (LSC, p. 110).

Luther taught that the forgiven conscience was a liberated, revived, and consoled conscience.

Luther's commentary on Galatians (1535/1988) underscored the Apostle Paul's doctrine of freedom in Christ. Luther had tried every human means of finding liberation from the flesh. He attempted all manner of physical and ritualistic devotions and deprivations (Oberman, 1989). All of this he did to harness his sinfulness, his desires, and his flesh; and to find peace with God. In Galatians, he found clear additional support for his Reformation doctrine of freedom in Christ. Galatians directed Luther away from introspection and into relationship with Christ.

Luther began by quoting Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 313). He then presented his proto-typical definition of liberty.

This is that liberty whereby Christ has made us free, not from an earthly bondage, from the Babylonian captivity, or from the tyranny of the Turks, but from God's everlasting wrath. And where is this done? In the conscience. There rests our liberty, and goes no farther. For Christ has made us free, not civilly, nor carnally, but divinely; that is to say, we are made free in that our conscience is now free and quiet, not fearing the wrath to come (p. 314).

The liberated conscience was the soul that knew experientially that "God is for me, He is not angry with me, but He loves me" (p. 314). This resulted in a peaceful, free, and quiet conscience, a conscience with faith, not fear.

In pastoral care, Luther taught that spiritual directors must magnify this liberty.

For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is nor will be angry with him, but will be forever a merciful and loving Father to him for Christ's sake? This is indeed a marvelous and incomprehensible liberty, to have the most high and sovereign Majesty so favorable to us. Wherefore, this is an inestimable liberty, that we are made free from the wrath of God forever; and is greater than heaven and earth and all other creatures (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 314).

Luther also taught his young proteges that when they provided pastoral care they must maintain as a prime directive the instruction of the conscience. The instructed conscience knew ahead of time that "the terrors of the law and the lies of the flesh could not remove the person from the love of God" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 315). Luther saw prior instruction in Christian liberty as the means by which, "we may remove these heavy sights and fearful fantasies out of our minds, and set in their place the freedom purchased by Christ . . ." (p. 315).

Renew the Conscience

In Luther's theology, the redeemed personality existed in conflict. The forces of the flesh and of the spirit waged an ongoing battle. Luther's work of spiritual direction addressed this warfare.

Because the believer was always sinner plus saint, the Christian was always becoming, always moving, always growing (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 168). Growth was necessary because the battle was unceasing. Mind renewal was necessary because it was a battle for the mind. Luther's mind renewal does not equate with rational emotive therapy; rather it is the renewal of faith. Faith renewal involved a renewed trust in the love of God which caused people to grow in love and in grace.

> However, when the Apostle says that the proving of the threefold divine will comes from the transformation or the renewing of the mind, he may think of something that goes much deeper than what the words can express, something which we can learn only from experience. Only faith transforms the mind and leads us to where we may prove the will of God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 168).

Luther's mind renewal included information, for it began with the instruction of the conscience. It continued with the spiritual director magnifying the truth of the believer's liberty in Christ and moves beyond this also. Mind renewal occurred as the saint experienced sin and turned to God in faith. Luther saw each occasion of turning to God as a stretching experience by which the spirit took more and more control, and the person became more and more a turning-toward-God-being and a trusting-in-Christ-being.

Strengthen the Conscience

Even the renewed conscience still required strengthening. Luther emphasized strengthening the conscience through the people of God and the Word of God.

> *Strengthen the conscience through the people of God.*

Luther believed in the power of community, the power of words, and the power of God's Word. All three of these active powers were united in his doctrine of the communion of the saints. When entangled in temptations and struggling with sin, the Christian should remember that, "the word of a fellow-Christian has wonderful power" (LSA, p. 181).

The voice and words of "brethren and fellow Christians are to be heard and believed as the word and voice of God himself, as though God were speaking to them" (LSA, p. 182). God encounters the conscience through His Word mediated through His people.

The tormented conscience will lose the battle between the flesh and the spirit if it is left alone. To one individual experiencing great upheaval of conscience, he wrote, "I beseech you by the Lord Christ, as earnestly as I can, not to depend upon yourself and your own thoughts, but to hear the brother in Christ who now speaks to you" (LSA, p. 217).

Because he felt so strongly about the power of the Body of Christ, Luther totally altered the medieval emphasis on confessions which allowed only priests to hear confession and handle discipline. Instead, Luther strongly encouraged and developed within his congregations a network of mutual consolation and fraternal correction (LSC, p. 91). Through this ministry the lay Christian provided spiritual direction to the penitent. The entire congregation was involved in the task of strengthening the conscience.

Strengthen the conscience through the Word of God.

Luther saw Christianity as a religion of the Book in which the Word of God, contained in the Old and New Testament, was seen as the inspired revelation of God; useful for all faith and practice; and beneficial for teaching, training, instruction, encouragement, confrontation, exhortation, and consolation. The Word of God, according to Luther, strengthens first by weakening. The Reformer taught that the Word of God exposes the system of hideouts that the person has constructed from the awareness of his or her own helplessness. The flesh resists the awareness of neediness. The spirit is enlivened when it acknowledges, through the insight of the Word, that it is incapable in itself to gain peace with God (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 359-365).

For Luther, the central tenets in life were doctrinal and truth-related (LW, Vol. 54, p. 110). "He who was assailed by temptation should bury himself in the Holy Scriptures. He should diligently read them, should meditate deeply upon them and lay them to heart" (LSA, p. 193). Luther was not speaking of burying problems or of hiding from reality. He insisted that reality must be taken to Scripture, and argued that problems needed to be examined through the light of the Word.

He encouraged prayerful meditation on the Word during times of turmoil. Especially helpful, thought Luther, were the Psalms by which the conscience was directed toward the right path for handling tribulation. The Psalms and the New Testament were to be read aloud and listened to attentively during difficult times. Why? "For at such time you must accustom yourself not to wrap yourself up in your misfortune and sink into your own thoughts, without the Word of God" (LSC, p. 121). One can think on misfortune but should do so only while wrapped up in the counsel of the Word. It is the Word of God which strengthens the conscience.

Forgive the Conscience

Luther was a realist who sensed that all the discernment, calming, assuring, liberating, renewing, and strengthening of the conscience could not eliminate sin. Saints who are sinners will continue to sin. It was that simple for Luther (Luther, 1535/1988). Therefore, the conscience needed to be forgiven.

Confession and absolution were the means by which the guilty conscience could experience forgiveness. The word "experience" is the key here. In Luther's doctrine, all sins, past, present, and future, were forgiven in Christ. But the sinning penitent experienced a break in relationship (in fellowship) due to the effects of sin on the soul. The truth of ongoing forgiveness needed to be mediated to the conscience through confession and absolution (Luther, 1535/1988).

Luther emphasized the depth of forgiveness rather than the depth of confession. In his own life, he had confessed sin for hours and still felt as though he had forgotten some. He rejected this sort of confession which he called the "papal kind of confession" (LW, Vol. 40 p. 296). Instead he taught that it was enough that the person was contrite. It was attitude of heart, not remembrance of every sin, that was central. Luther believed that the forgiven conscience went through a process from the awakening awareness of sin which led to fear to the awakening awareness of faith which led to peace.

When he saw in the gospel the message of a God who freely forgave sins because of the work of Christ, the Reformer returned to the concept of confession and absolution centering in the proclamation of the Word in the congregation. He spoke about the efficacy of the Word of God and the joy in the church when "brethren comfort one another with the Word of God. There's something great about the employment of the keys and of private absolution when the conscience can be put to rest" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 334). The "keys," which are mentioned in Matthew 18, were seen by the papacy as gifts given only to ordained priests. Luther was quite radical in suggesting that every believer has the keys; every believer can hear the confession of fellow believers, and can privately absolve them thus giving rest to their conscience. The well-known passage from *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (Luther, 1531/1947) explained this well.

> When we have laid bare our conscience to our brother and privately make known to him the evil that lurked within, we receive from our brother's lips the word of comfort spoken by God himself. And if we accept this in faith, we find peace in the mercy of God speaking to us through our brother (p. 201).

Historically, lay confession became known as "consolatio fratrum" (Ivarsson, 1962, p. 21). The mutual consolation of the brethren through private confession was a primary means of absolving the conscience of guilt. Luther based this teaching on his view "that all Christians are priests in equal degrees" (LW, Vol. 40, p. 21). This is the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Since all are priests, all can bind and loose sin; that is, all can announce the absolution or forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness was vital to Luther because he was convinced that the forgiven conscience could bear anything. The unforgiven conscience would be so tormented that inner suffering, outer suffering, and temptations to sin would easily overwhelm the soul. The forgiven conscience was not immune to these. Victory was not guaranteed. But the forgiven conscience had a better chance to win the battle with the flesh.

Battle the Fleshly Conscience

In his commentary on Galatians (Luther, 1535/1988), Luther imagined the meeting of two Christian lay people. Absolution had just been granted. A lengthy discussion had followed in which the conscience was calmed, assured, liberated, renewed, and strengthened. But the Christian who had received absolution expressed the fear that he might sin in the same way. Though delighted by the prospects of endless forgiveness, this Christian still desired victory over this sin. By battling the

fleshly conscience, Luther helped penitents begin to conquer besetting sin. Luther conceived of three primary methods for overcoming the fleshly conscience: (a) expose the perverted conscience, (b) warn the erring conscience, and (c) despise and cast out the evil conscience.

Expose the perverted conscience.

Nebe (1893/1894) expressed the priority that Luther gave to the ministry of battling the perverted conscience.

> Throughout his entire life, the Reformer was, to a most extraordinary extent, brought into contact with people who cherished erroneous opinions, or whose consciences were perverted, especially with people who, unable to find the right way, wandered about in uncertainty or had actually started upon some course that was utterly wrong. (LSA, p. 103)

When someone cherished wrong beliefs, Luther looked to the Scriptures as his source of authority for correct beliefs. He used the teaching of the Scriptures to explain truth and to expose waywardness from that truth.

Luther followed a common process when using the Word to expose sin (LSA, pp. 115-118). First, he quoted the Word; next he related the Word to the situation at hand; then he prayed for conviction of error in the heart of his reader; next he rebuked the reader for sinning; after that he expressed his outrage and anger over the failure to return to God's Word; and finally, he exhorted repentance and a return to godly living. Luther followed such a procedure when he wrote to Hans Kohlhase who had taken revenge on a neighbor for stealing his horse.

> It would have been better in the first place not to have undertaken revenge, since it cannot be undertaken without burdening of the conscience; for a private vengeance is forbidden by God, Deut. xxxii. 35, Rom xii. 19: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay," etc., and it cannot be otherwise than that he who enters upon it shall run the risk of doing much against God and man which a Christian conscience cannot approve. Now to make one's self a judge and execute judgment upon others is certainly wrong, and the wrath of God will not suffer it to go unpunished. Accordingly, if, as you write, you desire my advice, it is this: Accept terms of peace wherever they can be obtained, and rather suffer injury in possessions and honor, than prosecute further an undertaking in which you must make yourself responsible for the sins and villainy of all who may follow your fortunes (LSA, pp. 115-117).

Warning the erring conscience.

Luther warned the erring conscience by disclosing the burden of guilt that would flow from further sinning. "But you ought to consider what a grievous burden your conscience will have to carry if you knowingly bring ruin upon so many people, as you have no right to do" (LSA, p. 117). The worst thing in life, for Luther, was a burdened conscience. So the greatest deterrent to a life of

sin was the possibility of heaping the burden of guilt upon one's own conscience.

Despise and cast out the evil conscience.

As spiritual director, Luther taught people to resist the flesh by despising and casting out the evil thoughts of the flesh-inspired conscience. Luther instructed troubled people to think on the opposite and do the opposite. They were not to directly fight the evil inclinations because the more one fights evil thoughts, the more those thoughts are fed and the more the flesh clamors for attention. So instead, Luther said to focus on those thoughts which are pure and true. "As these thoughts came of themselves, so he should let them go of themselves again, and only not give himself up to them" (LSA, p. 186). Luther had a name for this: "the art of despising and casting out thoughts" (LSA, p. 187). One should not think about the fleshly passions, but think about the grace of God.

Despising the passions of the flesh meant to ignore them by focusing on the passions of the spirit.

God has stirred up in your body a strife and a battle: for the Spirit wrestles against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. Here I require nothing else of you but that you follow the Spirit as your captain and guide, and that you resist that captain the flesh; for that is all that you are able to do. Obey the Spirit and fight against the flesh (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 358).

Luther mocked the power of sin. When Luther took the flesh seriously and tried not to succumb to it, he was consumed all the more. But he found that he could turn evil into good. "For when the flesh provokes him to sin, he is stirred up and forced to seek forgiveness of sins by Christ, and to embrace the righteousness of faith which otherwise he would not so greatly esteem" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 365).

Restore the Conscience: Discipline

When the believer wanted victory over the flesh, Luther taught how to battle the flesh. But when a Christian did not desire to forsake sin, Luther recommended restoration of the conscience through discipline. In this area of discipline, Luther emphasized the body of Christ and encouraged believers to restore one another. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 389). Luther explained the meaning of this phrase. "Let them therefore to whom the charge of men's conscience is committed learn by this commandment of Paul how they ought to handle those who have offended" (p. 391). He further explained that believers were to restore others with humility, with personal involvement, with the Word, and for the purpose of their return to Christ, not for judgment.

His letter to Count Albert of Mansfield is an extended example of how Luther approached the task of church discipline. He had written several times to Count Albert of Mansfield after he became aware that the Count was confiscating mines from those under Luther's pastoral care. When Albert refused to discontinue his practice, Luther wrote him yet another letter of restoration (LSC, pp. 337-339).

Luther addressed Albert as a man who was falling away from God, yet he still concentrated on Albert's potential to be restored to God. Luther began by writing a narrative of strength in which he described Albert's past strengths and future potential.

> I desire from the bottom of my heart that you may receive in a Christian and gracious way what I write here. God did many laudable things through Your Grace at the beginning of the gospel: churches, pulpits, and schools were well ordered to the praise and honor of God. And during the peasant uprising God made excellent and glorious use of Your Grace. For these and other reasons I cannot readily forget Your Grace or cease to pray for you and be concerned for you (LSC, p. 338).

Luther continued by writing a narrative of sin in which he exposed sin and expressed his sorrow and grief.

> But it appears to me, especially from rumors and complaints that have reached me, that Your Grace has fallen away from such good beginnings and has become a very different person. As Your Grace may well believe, this causes me great heartache on your account (LSC, p. 338).

Luther then provided a narrative of Scripture in which he presented scriptural truth and provided logical explanations and applications of those Scriptures.

> Your Grace too must be aware that you have become cold, have given your heart to Mammon, and have the ambition to become very rich. According to complaints Your Grace is also sharply and severely oppressive to subjects and proposes to confiscate their forges and goods and to make what amounts to vassals out of them. God will not suffer this. Or if he does, he will allow your land to become impoverished and go to ruin, for he can take away what is his own gift without giving an accounting for it; as Haggai says: "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (LSC, p. 338).

Luther next attempted to personalize his message with a narrative of exhortation in which he beseeched as a friend, warned as a prophet, and confronted as a priest.

> This is, I believe, the last time that I shall be writing to Your Grace, for I am nearer to my grave than may be supposed. I pray again that Your Grace may be more gentle and gracious with your subjects. Let them remain as before. Your Grace will also remain, if God wills it, here and hereafter. Otherwise Your Grace will lose both, as the fable of Aesop tells of the man who killed the goose that laid a golden egg every day and so lost both the daily eggs and the goose that was the source of them . . . . This is certainly true, that he who desires too much will have too little, as Solomon states again and again in the book of Proverbs.

> In short, I am concerned about Your Grace's soul. I cannot permit myself to cease praying for you and being concerned about you, for then I am convinced that I would cease being in the

Church. Not only the law of Christian love constrains me, but also the dire threat in Ezek., ch. 4, that God will damn us preachers for the sins of others: "If thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked man from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand, for therefore have I made thee a pastor" (LSC, p. 338-339).

Luther concluded his disciplinary epistle with a narrative of grace in which he described God's past, ongoing, and future grace.

Your Grace will know how to take this admonition, for I cannot allow myself to be damned by Your Grace's sin. I desire, rather, that you may be saved together with me, if this be possible. If not, I have at least done my duty and am excused in God's sight. Herewith I commit you to God in all his grace and mercy. Amen. Your Grace's willing and faithful servant, Martin Luther, Doctor (LSC, pp. 338-339).

Luther's words were strong. Yet they maintained a ring of confidence that Albert could return to God.

Summary of Research Findings

Summary of Martin Luther's Theory of Reconciling

To reestablish broken relationships between people and God and between people and others, Luther emphasized a spiritual diagnostic system of the soul (the original nature of the human personality), of sin (the fallen, sinful nature of the human personality), and of salvation (the redeemed, forgiven nature of the human personality). The following conclusions may be drawn about Luther's reconciling theory:

1. According to Luther, God the Father designed His children as worshiping beings oriented with their faces, not their backs, to Him. The human personality was comprised of the longing to entrust itself to, emulate, and enjoy the Father.

2. Luther developed an understanding of the fallen or sinful nature of the human soul. Though designed for faith in the Father, the alienation resulting from sin caused human beings to fear and flee from the Father, create false substitutes of the Father, and become controlled by addictive passions and selfish desires. These beliefs led Luther to theorize that the burning contextual question of his day was, How do men and women find peace with God? Perceiving that human beings were filled with a spiritual fear that they would never find the grace, love, and acceptance of God; Luther aspired to teach people how they might find harmony with God and obtain a clear, peaceful conscience before God.

3. Luther conceptualized a model of the redeemed nature of the human soul by which he explained how people could return to right relationship with God. Humanity, having moved from

faith in the Father to fear of the Father, was perceived by Luther to now be in flight from the Father. The soul in flight from the Father at the same time was in desperate need of the Father. Forgiveness in Christ called the soul back to its first home—the Father's home, back from the false gods and controlling passions of the soul. Luther believed that God's grace (forgiveness, love, and acceptance through Christ's death for sinners) was the only power able to woo the human heart back to the Father, quench the thirsts of the soul, quiet the troubled conscience, and empower the spirit to defeat the flesh so the Christian could live a life of faith active in love.

Summary of Martin Luther's Practice of Reconciling

In order to restore people to right relationship with God and others, Luther sought to enlighten them to understand their identity as reconciled persons and to empower the conscience to live according to this reconciled identity. The goal of his reconciling practice was to return the soul to its original stance of hands raised upward to God in loving worship and arms stretched outward to others in loving fellowship and service.

1. Luther attempted to enlighten believers to their identity as reconciled persons. Through the Scriptures he helped people to see that the repentant sinner became the loved child of God the Father and the forgiven friend of Christ the Son. These central identities became sustaining identities which provided rest for troubled souls.

2. Luther taught that right relationship with God provided the energy necessary for right living. So he practiced the art of empowering the conscience to live according to the new reconciled identities. He used a nine-stage model (discerning, calming, assuring, liberating, renewing, strengthening, forgiving, battling, and restoring the conscience) to empower people to live selfless, not selfish, lives.

CHAPTER 6

GUIDING IN MARTIN LUTHER'S SPIRITUAL CARE

Overview

This chapter presents an analysis of Martin Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care using the framework of historic Christian guidance. In chapter two, guiding was summarized as a ministry "assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and future state of the soul" (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964, p. 9). The specific question being researched in chapter six is, what theory and practice did Luther develop in seeking to assist perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul?

Martin Luther's Theory (Theology) Relative to Guiding

Edwards (1980) wrote that a cohesive theological core could be found throughout the history of pastoral guiding. This central perspective asserted that there was a useful wisdom found in Scriptures, the insights of the spiritual director, and the experience of the person seeking help which could give meaning and direction to life. Theologically and historically, Christianity has seen such spiritual direction as a vital means of empowering believers to make decisions in light of the ultimate concerns of their loving and holy God (Lake, 1966).

Luther used Scriptures, his Christian insights, and the experience of those he assisted to guide his followers to make decisions in light of their personal relationship to God. Luther based his guiding ministry on his theology of: (a) faith active in love, (b) self-aware beings, (c) social beings, and (d) spiritual beings.

Martin Luther's Theology of Faith Active in Love

Luther taught a relational theology in which the essence of Christianity involved encountering God's love in Christ and living out that love toward others (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xxii). Luther wrote that the Christian expresses love for God through faith and trust, and love for others through care and concern (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230). Thus faith active in love became the compass point for Luther's guiding.

Luther's guiding might be labeled neighbor-centered because he sought to empower individuals to practice their faith in the power of God by loving others for and like Christ (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 231-232). In reconciling, he concerned himself with the person's relationship to God; in guiding, he focused on the person's relationship with others. Luther's guiding focused upon living out the consequences of faith by loving one's neighbor in all of life's complexities and perplexities (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 238-241).

Historically, guiding focused on helping believers find maturity or sanctification. A person was

thought to become stronger, more loving, and more holy by doing holy tasks like praying, reading the Scriptures, and fasting (Lane, 1984). Luther granted that these holy tasks were helpful, however, they were not primary in his guiding model.

The Reformer taught that the primary spiritual discipline was relationship (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242). He believed that people grew spiritually as they related in the world. Living out the Christian faith comprised faith active in loving others by fulfilling one's communal vocational callings.

Luther made a tremendous shift from the culture of his day when he insisted that guiding be seen as communal and relational (Oberman, 1989). He was raised in a religious culture which taught that spiritual growth was an individual and private endeavor best accomplished in separation from the world. The most spiritual people were the monks, nuns, and hermits (Lane, 1984), who avoided relational entanglements in order to love God more. Luther was convinced that this was a faulty biblical definition of love. He believed that Medieval Christianity defined love only or primarily in terms of love for God and left out the emphasis on love for humanity (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 238-241).

In guiding, Luther suggested a return to what he believed was a more biblical idea of love for God. Love for God, claimed Luther, could not be separated from love for God's creation (LW, Vol. 54, p. 74). Spirituality is lived out day by day in the routines of life. It is faith active in love.

In a table talk recorded in 1533, Luther addressed the relationship between faith and love.

> Concerning the verse in Galatians (5:6), "faith working through love," we also say that faith doesn't exist without works. However, Paul's view is this: Faith is active in love, that is, that faith justifies which expresses itself in acts. Faith comes first and then love follows (LW, Vol. 54, p. 74).

Luther would not separate the two because love for God and love for people were interchangeable in his mind. True faith issues in true love.

In his guiding, Luther attempted to move away from the Medieval concept of specific direction for every minute issue. In a letter to Paul Speratus concerning the Waldensians (LC, Vol. II), he stated his wish that questions of this sort (details about minor points of decision-making) would be suppressed, because they easily draw people away from "the things that are necessary—that is, faith and love . . ." (p. 126). Instead, he advised people to "Urge, insist on, demand the things that are necessary; namely faith and love . . ." (p. 126). His letter also indicated how to make any decision—if something is not forbidden by the principle of faith active in love, then feel free to do it.

Prior to Luther, spirituality and sanctification had become matters of separation from the world (McNeil, 1951). Luther made them matters of involvement with and in the world (LC, Vol. II, p. 126). Sanctification in Luther's theology involved living out the Christian life in the world. Guiding in Luther's pastoral care involved discerning how to do Christ's work of love and grace in the world.

Martin Luther's Theology of Self-Aware Beings

Chapter five examined Luther's nosology as it related to reconciling and probed Luther's theology of the soul in relationship to God. This chapter examines Luther's theology of the soul in relationship to people and addresses the question, what is the basic nature of the soul in the world?

Luther saw people through three lenses. He imagined people as self-aware beings, social beings, and spiritual beings. His letters of guidance seem to be filtered through these three viewpoints. It is almost as if he asked himself as he wrote, "What sort of guiding does this person need as a self-aware being? What sort of guiding does this person need as a social being? What sort of guiding does this person need as a spiritual being?"

Luther believed that humans were self-aware beings with a conscious sense of self and a longing for wholeness and inner peace (Luther, 1535/1988). In guiding, Luther emphasized advising consciences in areas of ethical and daily living that involved real struggles to know how the self relates, loves, serves God in this world, and how the self fulfills vocational callings (Luther, 1516/1954). The self-aware being was asking, "What actions rhyme with Christian faith and love?"

Luther pictured the conscience in turmoil. His goal was to enlighten the wise conscience, which was liberated by the Scriptural law of love, so that the person could be confident and free in fulfilling his or her relational callings in life. Luther's guiding involved confronting the perplexed conscience (the self-aware being) with the loving God (the spiritual being) who calls on people to zero in on loving others (the social being) (Kolb, 1982).

Luther's guiding sought to liberate the conscience so that it was free and confident, flourishing in daily living with others, and able to discern how to live out faith to God and love to others. The self-aware being was asking, "What is spirituality? What is sanctification? What does the mature Christian look like? What is the life that accords with the Gospel and how do I live it?"

As Luther interacted with individuals from the perspective of the self-aware being, he had one overriding rule: never do what is contrary to the conscience even in areas of freedom. In his commentary on Galatians (1535/1988), Luther taught that the Christian conscience is free from God's wrath and from God's law. In his commentary on Romans (1516/1954), he expanded on this view.

> What the Apostle teaches is that in the new Law (the Gospel covenant) everything is free and nothing necessary (for salvation) for those who believe in Christ, except "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5) (p. 195).

Luther's guidance never focused on rules and regulations because the believer was free from rules and regulations. Luther's only "law" was the law of love.

Luther still viewed the free conscience as tender. He believed that Satan could trap and trick the conscience into doubting its freedom, and that the Christian became susceptible to Satan's temptations when he or she exercised freedom while still doubting. Luther called this the "weak conscience" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 194). When the weak conscience did what it felt that it was not free to do (even though it was free), then it experienced guilt, doubt, and grief.

To a person like Luther who struggled so with anfechtungen, the last thing that he would suggest was for someone to expose their conscience to torment. So he emphasized a basic guiding principle that those who were unsure about doing something should not participate in that activity (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242).

Because of this view, Luther's guidance avoided pressure, for he did not want to pressure or push others into making decisions. He urged people to decide out of freedom, not fear. He advised people to make decisions from the foundation of a good, strong, and free conscience, not from a troubled one.

> We fail to take into consideration that we should do all things not under the pressure of coercion, or driven by the goad of anxious fear, but moved by a cheerful and fully free will, if they are to please God. In all we do, we must consider not what we have done or what there is to be done; not what we failed to do or what we should fail to do; also not what good we have done or what good we have omitted, or what evil we have done or omitted. But we should rather consider of what nature and how strong our good will has been, and the readiness and cheerfulness of our heart with which we have done all or intend to do all (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 197).

His counsel was clear: the self-aware being should never act out of guilt. The wisest relational acts arise out of freedom and joy, not guilt and remorse.

The Reformer believed that the self-aware being should act out of faith because faith and trust in God produced freedom and peace. When a potential decision brought with it great doubt, then faith was absent, and the best course was not to act in that matter. "Everything that is not of faith is sin, because it goes counter to faith and conscience; for we must beware with all possible zeal that we may not violate our conscience" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 206). Luther's first principle of guiding suggested that people should never do what is contrary to the conscience, even in areas of freedom, because people are self-aware beings with a free, yet tender conscience.

Martin Luther's Theology of Social Beings

Luther also saw people as social beings.

> God created man for society and not for solitude. This may be supported by the argument that he created two sexes, male and female. Likewise God founded the Christian Church, the communion of saints, and instituted the Sacraments, preaching and consolations in the Church (LSC, p. 95).

Luther's second guiding tenet arose out of his theology of social beings and stated that people should do only what was indicative of love for others. Luther tried to help people apply the law of love to specific relational situations where the Word gave no clear direction. He attempted to advise people how to live out the consequences of faith by loving their neighbors in all of life's

complexities. Luther's guiding always asked the question, "What serves my neighbor in love?"

In many ways, Luther's belief that spirituality was social separated him from the Catholic Church and from the Anabaptists. "The papists and Anabaptists teach: If you wish to know Christ, try to be alone, don't associate with men, become a separatist" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 140). Luther responded to this idea by saying, "This is plainly diabolical advice which is in conflict with the first and the second table of the Decalogue" (p. 140). He then further built his case.

> One must not flee into a corner. So the second table teaches that one must do good to one's neighbor. We ought not to isolate ourselves but enter into companionship with our neighbor. Likewise it (this notion) is in conflict with marriage, economic life, and political existence and is contrary to the life of Christ, who didn't choose solitude. Christ's life was very turbulent, for people were always moving about him. He was never alone, except when he prayed. Away with those who say, "Be glad to be alone and your heart will be pure" (pp. 140-141).

Luther taught that spiritual growth was communal and that sanctification expressed itself in mutual love. His notion that spirituality was relational and social was radical for his era (Oberman, 1989). Luther envisioned a redirection of people's efforts from the self to the care of others.

> God also created human beings to serve Him, not just by acknowledging His goodness, Luther insisted, but also by representing Him in the delivery of mutual care and concern within the human community. Fundamental to Luther's understanding of the Biblical teaching of creation was his conviction that God had made human beings in and for community with one another. God had so structured human life that He made individual human beings not only to stand in relationship to Him in vertical dependence but also to associate with other human beings in horizontal interdependence. God generally comes to meet human needs behind his chosen "masks," that is, other people who care for those in need (Kolb, 1982, p. 5).

Luther wanted Christians involved with others. In a letter to Joachim of Anhalt (LSC), he wrote that "Solitude and melancholy are poisonous and fatal to all people" (p. 92). He also penned the words, "No one realizes how much harm it does a young person to avoid pleasure and cultivate solitude and sadness" (p. 93). Company was Luther's best medicine, so good that one might even risk the occasional overdose. "Participation in proper and honorable pleasures with good and God-fearing people is pleasing to God, even if one may at times carry playfulness too far" (p. 93).

For Luther, human beings were always active social beings. There was no transcendental region of the soul apart from the active life of interaction and relationship (LW, Vol. 33, pp. 175-176). Since people are social beings, Luther guided his followers by teaching them to do only what was indicative of love for others.

Martin Luther's Theology of Spiritual Beings

Luther also believed that people were spiritual beings (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242) who should

be guided by the principle of doing only what was indicative of loving God through expressing faith in the grace of Christ (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 140-141). Luther used the concept of humans as spiritual beings to connect the relationship to God with the relationship to others through his theory of the spiritual conscience and a spiritual calling.

Oberman (1989) noted that Medieval Christianity had numerous road maps such as the spiritual ladder, spiritual disciplines, and spiritual exercises that Luther rejected. Yet he was aware that not having a spiritual road map put people into further despair. In response, Luther preached one of his most frequently quoted sermons, "A Sermon on the Three Kinds of Good Life for the Instruction of Consciences" (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242). The sermon spoke in simple, graphic terms to men and women who were confused about how to live out their justification.

He preached this sermon using imagery from the Hebrew tabernacle of the Old Testament in order to picture a new Christian road map. The scheme of construction (the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies), he said, corresponded to that of Christian churches, which had a churchyard, a nave, and the sanctuary. Luther stated that through this scheme of construction the Holy Spirit was teaching that there are three kinds of doctrine, which in turn teach that there are three kinds of consciences and sin as well as three kinds of good life or works. A Christian must not confuse these with each other, but must know how to distinguish among them.

There are first the churchyard saints. These saints allow their minds to dabble only in matters of external things such as rules and regulations and ceremonies and performing special religious works. To dwell upon these matters leads to constant uncertainty of conscience.

Luther taught that "it is necessary to graduate from the churchyard school and its religion of works and externals and to move up to the nave" (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 232-234). Here one learns what truly good works are and the nature of the good conscience. Luther wrote that the spiritual conscience learns to distinguish between the grain and the chaff (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 232-234), meaning that the spiritually mature Christian gained insight into the difference between the bad, the good, and the best.

Finally, there is the sanctuary. Here one learns to deny the self and to call upon Christ in faith. The Holy Spirit gives the sanctuary saint a pure, free, cheerful, and glad conscience (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 234-236).

This sanctuary represents Christ's good works, which are for Christians and are to flow out of Christians. Thus, for Luther, reconciliation was coram Deo or humanity sanctified before God in Christ, and guiding was coram Deo or humanity living the sanctified life before God in Christ. When Christians love their neighbors, they love out of Christ's love which flows from within their pure conscience.

Luther's sermon on the temple (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242) taught that the proper and God-pleasing life flows from the spiritual conscience that recognizes God as the good Lord of human life. This recognition of God issues into lives lived for others within the structure provided by the spiritual calling of God's creation. The spiritual conscience flourishes as those who trust in God for salvation fulfill their calling within the four vocational areas of home, work, community, and church.

Luther believed that spirituality included one's relationship with God in Christ (faith) and one's

relationship with God's creation through Christ (faith active in love) (LW, Vol. 44, pp. 230-242). Moreover, he taught that one relates well to others by fulfilling obligations and callings. In other words, many of the decisions of life are answered by simply doing what one is responsible to do (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 291-292).

People do not become spiritually responsible by joining a religious order or by choosing the vocation of priest, monk, or nun. "A woman suckling an infant or a maid sweeping a threshing floor with a broom is just as pleasing to God as an idle nun" (LW, Vol. 6, p. 348). Christians are spiritual because of Christ and exercise their spirituality through being responsible to Christ and others in their relational and vocational callings.

Therefore, Luther's guiding sought to enable people to live wise and loving lives in each of these four communal estates. The Reformer believed that much of life would take care of itself if one would but live all of life, especially communal life, coram Deo. "God wants no lazy idlers. Men should work diligently and faithfully, each according to his calling and profession, and then God will give blessings and success" (LW, Vol. 14, p. 115).

Luther helped people to ask and find answers to questions about loving God and others in the daily outworking of life's obligations. He wanted people seeking answers to questions such as these. What are my home, work, community, and church relationships like? In these relationships am I doing anything which is contrary to my conscience? In these relationships am I doing those things which are indicative of love for others? In these relationships, am I doing those things which are indicative of faith in Christ? (LSC, pp. 308-309). In the vocational area of my home life, am I participating in anything or any relationships which are contrary to my conscience? In the vocational area of my work life, am I a participant in relationships and activities that reflect my love for others? In the vocational area of church and community life, am I a participant in relationships that reflect my trust in and love for Christ? (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 140-141).

All of these questions attempted to address the broader issue of the nature of the faith that is active in love. Luther's guiding ministry was designed to empower people to resolve this issue. He found his pattern for his ministry in the three areas of human beings as self-aware, social, and spiritual beings. He further developed this model by emphasizing the four areas of human vocational and relational responsibility of home, work, community, and church.

When faced with a decision, Luther encouraged people to ask three types of questions. "Is participation in this contrary to my conscience?" "Is this indicative of love for God's people?" "Is this indicative of faith in God's grace?" The ideas suggested by these questions can be summarized as the law of conscience, the law of love, and the law of faith, respectively. Luther taught that the wise, spiritual conscience could use these questions to ascertain direction and to experience confidence and freedom to live a life of faith active in love (Luther, 1516/1954).

Martin Luther's Practice Relative to Guiding

This section uses historic Christian guiding to analyze what Luther did when he attempted to assist perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul. Concerning historic guiding, Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) noted that the individual seeking help saw the helper as

representing the resources, wisdom, and authority of the individual's Christian community. In this view, authority resided in the Word, in the community, and in the person (pastor) representing the community.

This concept does not imply, however, that the spiritual director guided simply by telling or teaching. Historically, Christian spiritual direction included both directive and non-directive elements. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) labeled these inductive and eductive, respectively. Eductive guiding drew out insights from the personal experiences and resources of the one being helped; inductive guiding led an individual to adopt another's moral set of values by which to make decisions of the soul.

Three primary historical methods of guiding were advice giving (leading the perplexed person toward a set of values through which decisions may be made), devil-craft (examining the role of Satan and examining how to counter Satan's strategies), and listening (clarifying, sympathizing, and reflecting) (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Jones (1990) explained that these methods forged decision making wisdom in the heat of specific troubles and immediate circumstances, and strove to facilitate the use of wisdom in particular situations.

Luther put his theology of guiding into practice through: (a) inductive guidance by advice giving (educating the conscience) and devil-craft (enlightening the conscience), and (b) eductive guidance through listening (tracking the conscience), liberating (freeing the conscience), and encouragement (strengthening the conscience).

Martin Luther's Practice of Inductive Guidance

Advice Giving: Educating the Conscience

Inductive guidance tended to lead the individual to adopt an "a priori" set of values and criteria by which to make decisions (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Luther believed that useful wisdom, which resided in the Scriptures, gave meaning and direction to life (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 256-263). Wisdom was also gained from the experience of applying the Word to one's life. Thus it also resided in both the believer giving and receiving guidance.

Advice giving based upon the Word.

Luther used the Word of God as an authoritative source of wisdom for forging decision-making principles in the midst of specific troubles (LW, Vol. 48, p. 277). He strove to apply the Word so that wisdom principles could be useful in particular situations. In this manner, spiritual director and spiritual follower sought wisdom from the common values embraced by their mutually shared religious culture. They sought wisdom from a body of truth (the Word) independent of both pastor and parishioner.

Although Luther expressed faith in and obedience to the Word, he did not believe that all issues could be easily decided. Nor did he think that guidance was as easy as finding a verse and applying it to the current situation. He saw life as more complex than that, and he saw the Scriptures as

having a purpose—revealing Christ—greater than simply being a how-to book or answer manual.

He taught that when Scripture was dogmatic, then the counselor could be dogmatic. The spiritual director can say, "Thus saith the Lord," if it is clearly written in the Word (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 256-263).

Since the Scriptures purposely do not address every detail of life, wisdom is necessary. Luther wrote a letter to Melanchthon regarding this matter. In his letter, he responded to Karlstadt's theses regarding clerical and monastic celibacy, communion of both kinds, private mass, and the dynamics of faith. Concerning the marriage of priests, he was absolutely sure that the Bible spoke authoritatively on this matter.

In addition to this Paul speaks very openly concerning the priests. He says demons have forbidden them to marry. Since the voice of Paul is the voice of the Divine Majesty, I do not doubt that it must be trusted in this matter (LW, Vol. 48, p. 277).

Luther then explained that whereas the Bible directly addressed the issue of the marriage of priests, it never addressed the marriage of monks since it never addressed monks at all. Luther concluded that priests could marry based upon the Scripture. In the case of the monk, his advice was conscience-based, not Scripture-based. Monks could marry if they felt that their conscience was free.

Where the Bible could clearly be applied to a given situation, the pastor should state that application. Pastors are to teach the truth by every possible means (LSC, pp. 308-309), and preachers who preach the Word are to be heard and heeded (LW, Vol. 54, p. 13). Luther was not afraid to give direct advice from the Word when the Word clearly applied to a given situation. He did not provide direct advice when he was not convinced that the Word applied directly. In those cases, the law of conscience, the law of love, and the law of faith had to be consulted.

Advice giving based upon personal experience.

When these three laws were to be consulted, Luther used his resources and the resources of the person seeking help. Luther's experience as a Christian enabled him to help other Christians search for wisdom that could be applied to their situations.

Many of his letters provided very direct, active, and practical counsel; especially when he wrote to those suffering as he had suffered. To those suffering with spiritual depression, he would often write out of his own experience, sharing what he had found helpful.

I know all about this affliction. I was myself brought to the brink of eternal death by it. In addition to my prayer in your behalf, I should gladly counsel and comfort you, but it is difficult to discuss such matters in writing. Nevertheless, if God will grant me the necessary grace, I shall do what I can. I shall show you how God helped me out of this trouble and by what means I now protect myself against it every day (LSC, p. 115).

When writing about marriage or children, he again wrote out of his relational knowledge (LSC, pp. 258-294). Luther used himself and his experiences as a diagnostic indicator because he believed that the wisdom he gained in similar situations could be useful for others.

Devil-Craft

Devil-craft was the shared discovery of biblical principles for defeating Satan's temptations (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964). Luther taught that no one should struggle alone against Satan and that God instituted the church and the ministry of the Word in order that believers might join hands and help one another to thwart Satan (LSC, pp. 115-116).

Luther frequently wrote to those in need to share his insights concerning Satan's strategy of attack on the believer (LSC, pp. 109-138). When doing this, he provided advice from the authority of the Word, the authority of his own experience, and the experiences of other believers.

To Lauterbach he wrote that Weller had said, "The devil is a master at finding the spot it hurts most" (LSC, p. 100). Luther went on to share with Lauterbach about the devil's strategy. "He can fashion the oddest syllogisms. For example, 'You have sinned; God is wrathful toward sinners; therefore despair'" (p. 100). Luther not only shared Satan's strategy with Lauterbach, but he also shared God's strategy for defeating Satan. "Here it is necessary that we proceed from the Law to the Gospel and lay hold of the article of the forgiveness of sins" (p. 100).

To Weller (LSC, pp. 85-86) he explained how the devil goes about tempting the Christian to despair. He outlined a step-by-step procedure that Satan consistently used to wear down and eventually break down the strength of the believer. Luther then suggested numerous avenues of defense: do not debate him, ignore him, despise those thoughts he places in your head, hold him in contempt, laugh at him, flee solitude, mock him, joke and play games, drive out his diabolical thoughts and take courage.

In his letter to Barbara Lisskirchen (LSC, pp. 115-116), he combined his own experience with Scriptural references to advise her on how to respond to Satan's attacks. He used these two sources of authority to come up with four clear principles which he sent to her as advice in defeating the attacks of Satan.

Luther's Eductive Guidance

According to Clebsch and Jaekle (1964), eductive guidance drew out of the person's own experiences and values the criteria and resources for decisions. Wisdom and strength were drawn from within the troubled person and the troubled person was helped to draw on external sources of wisdom (the Word, the Christian community, etc.). Luther's writings evidence at least three methods of eductive guidance: listening (tracking the conscience), liberating (freeing the conscience), and encouragement (strengthening the conscience).

Listening: Tracking the Conscience

Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) indicated that listening, clarifying, and reflecting were key aspects of eductive guidance. Luther seemed to emphasize tracking the conscience because he desired to see what state the conscience was in: weak, strong, faithful, or doubting (LSC, pp. 230-244).

He also attempted to track the situation of the conscience. A clear example of this is found in his letter to Bernard Von Doelen (LSC, p. 101). Having only received a brief and vague letter from Von Doelen, Luther felt that he lacked sufficient information.

> Consider too that I do not know what sort of disturbance this is from which   you are suffering, what the cause of it is, whether it is a matter of conscience, whether it is due to weakness of faith, etc. Therefore I can write nothing in particular (p. 101).

The word "disturbance" is the word "perturbatio" which means a disturbance of conscience. Luther felt as though he must track the disturbance of conscience before he could give any particular advice. He needed to know the state of the conscience—whether it is due to weakness of faith, etc.

Luther also wrote to several individuals who sought advice about how to respond to persecution (LSC, pp. 230-234). His answers varied. To some he emphasized the law of conscience, to others the law of love, and to still others the law of faith. In specific cases he highlighted a certain aspect of the law of love and in other instances he stressed other facets of that same law. Luther consistently applied his theology in his letters, but the nature of his theological application was determined by the information he gained through tracking the conscience and the situation of the person.

He also tracked the conscience and the circumstances when discussing difficult marriage cases. It was recorded in a table talk that, "He declared that there are numerous and various matrimonial cases that ought to be judged by the circumstances and according to equity and the judgment of a good man" (LSC, p. 286).

The word "equity" means fair judgment based upon the spirit rather than the letter of the law. Luther did not suggest a uniform approach to guidance. Nor did he suggest that life was simple and that the Bible directly gave clear guidance for every detail of life. Rather, he taught that the spiritual director had to listen closely to the circumstances. He taught that the helper needed to listen attentively to the spirit (to the inner issues of the Word and of the person). "In such cases, therefore, attention must be paid to consciences according to equity and the judgment of a good man rather than according to the strict application of rules, laws, etc." (LSC, p. 286).

Liberating: Freeing the Conscience

In eductive guidance, the spiritual director desired to extract from the person the resources to make wise decisions. To do this, the director first had to understand the issues and the person, which was done through listening to and tracking the conscience. But even this was insufficient. Luther wrote that, in his day, women and men were not accustomed to thinking for themselves. They felt tremendous guilt and experienced great anxiety. Luther spoke of people making decisions and then

being "harassed afterward with continual anguish of conscience" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 294). So he sought to help them to experience the power to make wise choices for themselves.

Luther wanted to use the Word to liberate the conscience, which for him meant peace and confidence in decision making (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 291-296). He wanted his people to be able to ask and answer the question of conscience: "Will doing this or that enslave or free my conscience?", the question of love: "Will doing this or that be evidence of love for my neighbor?", and the question of faith: "Will doing this or that be evidence of faith in God?"

His first method for liberating or freeing the conscience was insisting that people know the Word themselves so that they could apply it (LSC, p. 308-309). He used the printing press to great success in spreading the Word to lay people (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 291-296). He also insisted that believers meet in small groups where they could learn how to encourage and strengthen one another. There they learned that they, too, not only the priest or pastor, could gain insight through the Word (LW, Vol. 53, p. 13). He wanted people to live life in all four vocational areas, for it is in the living of life (not in retreat from life) that one learns to trust his conscience (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 140-141).

Although Luther held dogmatic views about those doctrinal issues of which he had become convinced, he also believed that there was a great realm of freedom outside those doctrines (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 313-387). Within this realm of freedom, the believer was empowered by the Spirit to use her or his own reasoning to ask and answer the law of conscience, the law of love, and the law of faith. As he put it, "Christ did not only earn gratia, 'grace,' for us, but also donum, 'the gift of the Holy Spirit,'" (LW, Vol. 41, p. 114). According to Luther, when Christ died, he granted people grace which cleansed sinful souls, and he also granted the Holy Spirit as the divine counselor who directs souls. All believers, according to Luther's theology, had dwelling within them the Holy Spirit who guides them into all truth. Because of this, they could make confident decisions. Their consciences were free and liberated to decide how to live their lives based upon their interpretation of the biblical laws of conscience, love, and faith.

Encouragement: Strengthening the Conscience

According to Luther, the believer can decide what to do. They have a "road map" (the three "laws") and a guide along the road (the Holy Spirit). With this road map and with this guide, decisions could be made. Luther believed that the strength to carry out the decision and to do the wise, loving, and faith-oriented thing came from the grace that God had already placed within the believer (LW, Vol. 49, p. 97). The strength is there to love the Lord, to act wisely, and to love one's neighbor. This strength needed to be drawn out. Luther used the biblical art of encouragement to strengthen the conscience.

Luther pictured encouragement with the image of one believer coming alongside another believer, putting an arm around that believer and saying, "You can do this because of Christ within you." Luther saw encouragement as coming alongside, drawing out, and looking up (LSC, pp. 158-159).

In Luther's picture, the Christian is on a journey carrying a compass pointed to the pole of love.

They also have a road map with three geographic markers (the law of conscience, the law of love, and the law of faith). They have an internal guide (the Holy Spirit). But they are still afraid to use what they have at their disposal. So an experienced human guide comes alongside of them, walks with them as they walk, journeys along their path, puts an arm around them, and says, "I know that you can do this. I have seen you do it before. You have all the equipment that is necessary." Then this human guide says, "Look up. Trust Christ and the gifts He has given you." Then they walk away so that the traveler can use their own resources to find their own way along God's path for them.

This was Luther's approach in his letter to Lazarus Spengler (LW, Vol. 49, pp. 97-99). Spengler was to adjudicate a court case regarding four suspects. He forwarded to Luther some records of the investigation and asked Luther for advice regarding the treatment of these four people. In the middle of Luther's response, he shared some brief biblical principles. But he did not tell Spengler what to do. Instead, he started and ended his letter to Spengler by drawing out Spengler's own wisdom. He began by labeling him "prudent" (p. 98), so as to strengthen Spengler's image of himself. He then affirmed and validated Spengler's walk with Christ by expressing that he was "pleased that Christ is so active among you" (p. 98). He ended the letter without telling him what to do. He simply stated that he was sure that Spengler and his fellow leaders will know what to do. "No doubt, you gentlemen will know how to proceed in that situation" (p. 99). Luther drew out Spengler's strength and expressed confidence in him.

Luther frequently wrote letters of encouragement to Melanchthon. Some encouraged him to act strongly by using his resources. Others encouraged him to trust God once he had already acted.

On September 15, 1530, Luther wrote to Melanchthon after the conclusion of the Augsburg negotiations (LSC, pp. 158-159). Melanchthon had made many key decisions that would affect the ongoing course of the Reformation. He needed assurance and Luther provided it. "You have done enough and more than enough. Now it is time to leave the rest to God, and he will accomplish it. Only be a man and hope in God" (LSC, p. 158). Luther continued by commending Philip for having "done God's holy work in a worthy fashion, as becomes a saint" (pp. 158-159). He exhorted and encouraged him to "look up, and lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh" (p. 159). Repeatedly he spoke of Philip's faithfulness. He concluded his letter of encouragement with these words.

> I hope and pray that you may be strong and of good courage and undisturbed by the outward face and appearance of things present, for you know how fully everything is in the hand of God, who in a single moment can cover the heavens with clouds and clear them again. Indeed, he not only does this, but it pleases him to do it (p. 159).

In essence Luther affirmed Philip's decision and good judgment. His faith was active in love, so he should trust Christ and be at peace.

Summary of Research Findings

Summary of Martin Luther's Theory of Guiding

Luther based his guiding ministry on his theology of self-aware beings, social beings, spiritual beings, and faith active in love. The following conclusions may be drawn about Luther's theory of assisting perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul:

1. Luther taught that people were self-aware beings designed to reflect on their own existence. As Luther interacted with individuals from the perspective of the self-aware being, he had one overriding guiding principle: never do what is contrary to the conscience even in areas of freedom. He theorized that the wisest relational acts were those that arose out of confidence, freedom, and joy not out of doubt, guilt, and remorse.

2. Luther also saw people as social beings designed for relationship and fellowship with other social beings. His second guiding tenet arose out of his theology of social beings and stated that people should do only what was indicative of love for others.

3. Luther perceived that people were spiritual beings designed for relationship with God. As such, he said that people should be guided by the principle of doing only what was indicative of loving God by expressing faith in the grace of Christ.

4. Luther taught a relational theology of faith active in love in which the essence of Christianity involved encountering God's sacrificial love in Christ and living out that love toward others. His guidance was neighbor-centered as he focused upon living out the consequences of faith by loving one's neighbor in all of life's complexities and perplexities.

He developed his concept of faith active in love by emphasizing four arenas of human vocational and relational responsibility—home, work, community, and church. When faced with a decision, Luther encouraged people to ask three relational questions about these four areas of communal responsibility. Is participation in this contrary to my conscience? Is this indicative of love for God's people? Is this indicative of faith in God's grace?

Summary of Martin Luther's Practice of Guiding

In order to assist perplexed people to make confident choices in matters of the soul, Luther practiced the historic arts of inductive and eductive guidance. The goal of his guiding ministry was to free the conscience to make wise and loving decisions in the four communal areas based upon the three relational questions.

1. Through inductive guidance Luther sought to help people find a source of wisdom for decision making. Luther, believing that useful wisdom resided in the Word of God, encouraged believers to find biblical wisdom principles for their daily relationships. He challenged people to know the Word themselves and to use the three guidance questions to discern the wisest course of action.

2. Through Luther's eductive guidance he drew out insights from the personal experiences and resources of the person being helped. To help people find the resources to make wise decisions, Luther first tracked the conscience by listening so as to understand the person's resources and circumstances. Luther also desired that people feel a freedom in decision making so he sought to liberate the conscience by teaching people how to apply God's Word, by encouraging small groups to meet together to discuss the implications of God's Word, and by emphasizing the freedom one possessed in Christ. His eductive guidance also strengthened the conscience by expressing confidence not only in one's ability to make a decision but also in the ability to follow through with the implementation of the decision.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter reviews the method and purpose of the dissertation. Three models for presenting analogous historical implications are described and suggestions for theoretical and methodological implications for professional counselors and pastoral care givers are furnished. Discussion is provided, limitations of the study are proposed, and recommendations for future research are made.

The Method and Purpose of the Study

This dissertation has investigated spiritual care in historical perspective by examining Martin Luther as a historical case study in Christian sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. A model of Christian spiritual care that has substantial historical support and encompasses a variety of Christian faith traditions was selected and used as a probe into the theory and practice of one historical practitioner. The four tasks provided a lens for viewing spiritual care. These tasks were applied to Martin Luther's letters of spiritual counsel and table talks in order to identify theological perspectives and operational tasks used by Luther in his spiritual care.

The specific purposes for this historical case study have been: (a) to assist in the recovery of the tradition of Christian spiritual care as it has been exercised in the past, and (b) to assist pastoral care givers and professional counselors to become more spiritually aware and skillful by deriving modern implications from these recovered resources.

Models for Presenting Historical Implications

Many have studied the history of soul care and spiritual direction (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Edwards, 1980; Holifield, 1983; Jones, 1982; Kemp, 1947; Lake, 1966; Lane, 1984; Leech, 1985; and McNeil, 1951), but few have made current application their primary target. Therefore, this chapter includes descriptions of three models for presenting current implications of historical teaching on spiritual care: (a) Moore (1992), who studied Renaissance and Romantic writings on soul care, (b) Edwards (1980), who researched Catholic and Episcopal spiritual direction, and (c) Hiltner (1958), who analyzed Protestant pastoral care. Each author clearly stated a similar problem—the lack of historical wisdom for current soul care, a similar solution—research into a given historical tradition, and a similar methodology—speaking relevantly to modern society while speaking authentically (with historical veracity derived from time-tested paradigms drawn out of the experience of a given heritage) from ancient tradition.

Moore (1992) perceived that a lack of historical wisdom concerning the soul was a major societal problem.

The great malady of the twentieth century, implicated in all of our troubles and affecting us individually and socially, is "loss of soul." When soul is neglected, it doesn't just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence, and loss of meaning. Our temptation is to isolate these symptoms or to try to eradicate them one by one; but the root problem is that we have lost our wisdom about the soul, even our interest in it (p. xi).

Moore (1992) continued with his statement of the solution.

We have today few specialists of the soul to advise us when we succumb to moods and emotional pain, or when as a nation we find ourselves confronting a host of threatening evils. But within our history we do have remarkable sources of insight from people who wrote explicitly about the nature and needs of the soul, so we can look to the past for guidance in restoring this wisdom (p. xi).

Moore chose to turn to "our Renaissance and Romantic ancestors, as well as Freud, Jung, and Hillman and their colleagues . . ." (p. xvi). Through turning to the past he sought a "rebirth of ancient wisdom and practice accommodated to our own situation" (p. xvi) by assigning a degree of authority to these ancient voices.

Moore (1992) had one request of his readers and offered one methodology to them. His request was simple yet difficult: abandon any modern ideas you may have about what it means to care for the soul so that you can hear well the ancient message. His methodology was reflective yet authoritative—he presented his reflections on the Renaissance and Romantic message and method of soul care as a renewed way of thinking about nurturing the soul based upon the authority of a given historical tradition.

Edwards (1980) studied the history of Catholic and Episcopal spiritual direction in order to draw out modern implications. Like Moore (1992), Edwards saw a lack of historical foundation as a major societal problem.

Historically the Church always has utilized the current psychology of its culture. However, what it has borrowed, it has modified and transformed in the light of its own tradition. But if there is no deep awareness of the experiential, developmental anthropology of the tradition, then there is no real mutation, just a whole-hog graft. If the graft takes, it tends to take over. Sooner or later then the Church loses its unique experiential wisdom for the society; it finds itself more and more absorbed as an expedient base for someone else's "revelation," unqualified by its own (pp. 32-33).

Edwards (1980) expressed a companion solution to this perceived problem. "My plea is that we explore much more deeply the experiential tradition of the Church, lest we have no conscious unique inner heart left to offer, or just the very shrunken heart of the hard-shell fundamentalist or vague sentimentalist" (p. 33).

Edwards' (1980) method involved speaking relevantly yet authentically. The historian of soul

care speaks relevantly when language is "careful and broad enough not to cut people off unnecessarily" (p. 8). The student of spiritual direction speaks with legitimacy when he or she also realizes that "the Church, too, is accountable to the society, for drawing from its unique treasure what is needed by people today" (p. 33). Edwards urged Church historians to do all they could to be culturally relevant (stand beside society), while at the same time recognizing their responsibility to speak out of a historical tradition (stand outside society). Edwards' point was stated poetically when he wrote, "tradition is democracy of the dead, extending a vote to our ancestors, refusing to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who are walking around" (p. 35). Edwards assigned authority to the voice(s) of history.

Hiltner (1958) perceived that "we lack in pastoral theology a sense of identification with our pastoral roots and heritage. Unless such identification is present, it will be difficult to develop a systematic pastoral theology for our day" (p. 70).

Hiltner (1958) presented a solution to this lack of pastoral heritage.

> This situation demands that we inquire into some significant orders of shepherding data from the past as well as from the present . . . . If we should find matters of importance in past practice and theory that are being neglected in modern work, then we should have to judge critically the modern (p. 71).

Hiltner's (1958) method involved examining "our modern ways of shepherding in the light of some of the ways of the past" (p. 8). Those ways of the past became a "unifying theory" (p. 7) which served as a time-tested guide for critically evaluating modern theory and practice.

Together, Edwards (1980), Hiltner (1958), and Moore (1992) have suggested a consistent model for presenting the implications of this dissertation: (a) stand outside current society by speaking with the authenticity (assigned authority) of a past tradition, and (b) stand beside society by speaking with relevancy to the current situation. To derive and present analogous implications these authors: (a) extrapolated from their research into historical practitioners, (b) integrated data from current research, and (c) drew on their scholarly reflections, professional experience, and understanding of the current counseling milieu.

Analogous Implications for the Modern Practice and Theory of Spiritual Care

This section attempts to bridge professional counselors' current interest in spirituality and pastoral care givers' current call for renewed study of the history of Christian spiritual care. The historical Christian tradition of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding, as extrapolated from the theory and practice of Martin Luther, is used to suggest analogous implications that may assist professional counselors and pastoral care givers to become more spiritually aware and skillful.

It is not being proposed that Luther's theory and practice of spiritual care is normative for today. However, the study of Luther has surfaced historical categories of theory (spiritual awareness) and practice (spiritual skillfulness) analogous to the modern situation. Following Hiltner's (1958) model, decisions about analogous implications are derived from: (a) extrapolation from Luther

research, (b) integration of current research on spirituality and counseling, and (c) scholarly reflection, professional experience, and research into the current counseling milieu.

Varying Implications Dependent Upon the Type of Committed Client

This historical case study in counseling and spirituality has varying implications for at least four groups of clients: spiritually committed clients, religiously committed clients, committed Christian clients, and committed Evangelical Christian clients. Sharp distinctions between these terms are "neither sound nor constructive" (Kelly, 1995, p. 7) due both to areas of overlap between groups and to diversity within each grouping (Georgia, 1995). However, broad differentiation is possible and helpful (Frame & Williams, 1996).

Spiritually committed clients seek relationship with the ground and purpose of existence, however conceived (Wakefield, 1983). According to Kelly (1995), being spiritually committed typically involves an "active valuing of meaning in life, with a sense of purpose guided by an altruistic attitude toward others and a vision for the betterment of the world along with a serious awareness of the tragic side of life" (p. 139).

Religiously committed clients base their entire approach to life on their organized religion (Genia, 1994) and find a major source of strength in their relationship to God (Larsen & Larsen, 1993).

> Religiously committed clients hold their religious beliefs with an efficacious personal conviction. Their religious beliefs are consciously experienced and developed as a source of significant influence (actually or potentially) on their attitudes and behaviors in all important aspects of life as a vital inner base for spiritual growth (Kelly, 1995, p. 136).

Committed Christian clients long for a relationship to God through Christ (Alexander, 1988). Committed Evangelical Christian clients center their lives on the saving work of Christ (McGrath, 1993) and emphasize grace which they see as acceptance by God coming through forgiveness because of their faith in Christ's death on the cross for sin (Colson, 1992).

The four tasks explored in this dissertation express a Christian lineage and language. Martin Luther most closely represents the Evangelical Christian branch of that Christian lineage (McGrath, 1990; Oberman, 1994). Therefore, this case study in counseling and spirituality may be most easily generalized to the committed Evangelical Christian client. It is proposed, however, that—with appropriate variations in terminology and some shift in meaning of specific concepts—analogous implications from this case study can be adapted for work with people of spiritual backgrounds and religious traditions other than Christianity.

Varying Implications Dependent Upon the Level of Client Committedness

Appropriate and ethical implementation of these implications varies dependent upon the level of client committedness. The discussion of analogous implications assumes a committed client—be he

or she a spiritually, religiously, Christian, or Evangelical Christian committed client.

According to Kelly (1995), in counseling religiously committed clients:

> The counselor can expect that these clients will look at, or are prepared to look at, issues and problems from the perspective of their religious beliefs and values and bring these values into play in working on their problems and nurturing development (p. 137).

In counseling the spiritually committed client, "the counselor can expect the client to be ready to weigh and apply their spiritual values to understanding and resolving issues" (Kelly, 1995, p. 139).

Before applying analogous implications, practitioners are responsible to assess the degree of a client's committedness. The degrees of client committedness discussed by Kelly (1995) can assist the counselor in this task. In working with non-committed clients the presumption can be made that "they are not concerned about the potential spiritual/religious dimension of these problems; therefore it would be nontherapeutic and probably unethical for the counselor to initiate a consideration of the spiritual/religious dimension with these types of clients" (Kelly, 1995).

Varying Implications Dependent Upon the Counseling Setting

The setting of counseling or pastoral care also impacts the appropriateness of implementing these implications. "A fundamental goal of pastoral and spiritual counseling is to inspire deep commitment to Judeo-Christian ideals" (Genia, 1995, p. 149). Worthington and Scott (1983) noted that in pastoral, religious, and Christian counseling the expectation is conducive to raising spiritual religious issues. Though speaking specifically of Christian care, Clebsch and Jaekle's (1964) historical perspective coincides with Worthington and Scott.

> First and most simply, pastoral care is a ministry performed by representative Christian persons, persons who, either de jure or de facto, bring to bear upon human troubles the resources, wisdom, and the authority of Christian faith and life. They are taken by the parishioner to possess and exercise the resources of the Christian faith, the wisdom distilled from Christian experiences, and the authority of a company of believers (p. 4).

Clergy members and professional counselors who counsel from a specifically religious tradition (Christian counselors, Islamic counselors, etc.) are responsible to communicate this orientation to their clients, discuss whether clients view them as a representative person, and discuss whether clients desire counseling derived from that faith tradition.

Analogous Implications Derived From Historical Sustaining

The study of the four tasks of traditional Christian care has surfaced new categories to consider when contemplating the dimensions of counseling and spirituality. This section suggests ways counselors and pastors can become more spiritually aware and skillful when helping hurting people

to endure and transcend irretrievable loss (sustaining). Chandler, Holden, and Kolander (1992) conceptualized this area as spiritual emergency counseling. Berliner (1995) recognized its relevance for modern professional counseling and labeled it "soul healing" (p. 113).

Theoretical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Awareness in Spiritual Emergency Counseling

Luther conceptualized this task as sustaining people during spiritual despondency by empowering them to develop spiritual security through a shared faith perspective on suffering. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually aware by exploring how their clients' perspective on the ground of all being is shaped and impacted by irretrievable loss.

Modern counselors have recognized meaning making, the will to meaning, and purposefulness as essential components of spirituality (Sweeney & Witmer, 1995). Ingersoll (1995) found that the problem of meaning arises most frequently in times of loss and crisis.

The following list of questions provides a means for becoming more spiritually aware of the impact of loss on a client's spiritual perspective. The variant phrases in parentheses suggest how counselors might adapt the questions and comments in working with a variety of spiritually and religiously committed clients. "I would be interested in how your religious beliefs (spiritual values) relate to your presenting problem." "Has your loss (being sick, discouraged, worried, upset, distressed, unsure, confused, grieving, etc.) made any difference in your spiritual life (religious practices, prayer life)?" (Stoll, 1979, p. 175). "Has what happened (the problem, the issue you want to resolve) made any difference in your feelings about God (Christ, Higher Power)?" "To Whom (what source of strength, what spiritual tradition, Scripture, religious writings, inspirational material) have you turned in your distress (suffering, loss)?"

Practical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Skillfulness in Spiritual Emergency Counseling

Luther practiced two broad interventions when addressing spiritual emergencies: (a) he developed strategies for dealing with the potential hemorrhage in the relationship with God, and (b) he used a shared faith system to develop a faith perspective on loss in order to reshape the value and meaning the person assigned to her or his loss. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually skillful by: (a) developing strategies for addressing potential spiritual crisis related to traumatic losses, and (b) assisting clients to use their spiritual resources to develop a spiritual perspective on loss in order to reshape the meaning clients assign to their loss.

Strategies for addressing potential spiritual crisis.

Kelly (1995) found that severe life crises—serious illness, loss of a loved one, extreme financial crises, divorce—frequently provoked spiritual disequilibrium and doubt. Genia (1995) suggested that many spiritually and religiously committed clients experienced guilt due to their doubt. Hiltner

(1958), in his case study of Spencer, proposed that many Christian committed clients found it difficult to acknowledge and address spiritual doubts. Based upon these findings and analogous implications derived from research into Luther's spiritual care, it is proposed that modern practitioners develop therapeutic conversations designed to encourage people to talk openly about their spiritual and religious doubts.

"Have you come across any teachings from your faith system (Christian beliefs, spiritual studies) that illustrate how people of faith across history have expressed their hurts and doubts while experiencing loss?" "What are your beliefs about feeling anger or disappointment toward God?" "How does your religious faith (spiritual belief) fit into your feelings and thinking about this loss?" "What does your anger prompt you to say to God about this loss?" "As you go through this, do you perceive that God (Higher Power, Christ, the Holy Spirit) is for you or against you?" "What do you wish were happening instead of what you are now experiencing?" "What do you fear most in this situation?"

Stephens (1993) concluded from his research that suffering frequently distorts a person's image of God and reported that treatment of such distortions was an under-utilized aspect of modern counseling theories. Therapeutic questions have the potential to help clients clarify their image of God (ultimate spiritual realities). "If you painted a picture of God (the world, spiritual reality) as you see God right now, what would you paint?" "What impact is your suffering having on your image of God (Higher Power, sense of spiritual realities)?" "Who is God (Higher Power, Christ) to you in your suffering? "Do you perceive that God (the world) is for you or against you?" "Tell me your perspective on the age-old question of why bad things happen to good people." "What do you think? Is God good even when life is bad?"

Strategies for assisting clients to use their spiritual resources to develop a spiritual perspective on loss.

Suffering frequently causes spiritually/religiously committed people to reflect on issues of ultimate meaning (Smith, 1995). Bishop (1992), Frame and Williams (1996), and Smith (1995) all found that spiritual belief systems provide great promise for movement from despair to hope. Smith urged the maximum use of the spiritual assumptive world of the committed client based upon his belief that "theology may be the glue that holds their world together" (p. 118). Frame and Williams referred to theological and spiritual beliefs as the cultural frame or orientation and as influential realities with great potential for spiritual healing.

The following therapeutic questions may assist clients to use their spiritual resources to develop a spiritual perspective on loss. "What teachings (spiritual philosophy) could you (have you) turn to in order to gain a spiritual perspective on what you are experiencing?" "What Scriptures could you (have you) turn to in order to understand God's perspective on what you are going through?" "What spiritual support network could be helpful to you in your loss?" "If you did not have the beliefs that you hold, what do you think you would feel, do, think, and say?" "When else have you experienced suffering similar to this?" "How did you respond?" "What did you learn about your spirituality in that situation?" "What did you learn about God in that situation?" "What would you repeat and what

would you change about your response to that situation?"

Analogous Implications Derived From Historical Healing

This section suggests ways counselors and pastors may become more spiritually aware and skillful when restoring a debilitated person to a new level of spiritual insight and welfare (healing). Sustaining is analogous to spiritual emergency counseling where counselors seek to help faith (spiritual reality) survive—endure.

Healing is analogous to spiritual wellness counseling where counselors help faith thrive—mature (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992). Taken together, spiritual emergency counseling and spiritual wellness counseling imply that spiritual emergencies allow for greater spiritual emergence (Frame & Williams, 1996).

Theoretical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Awareness in Spiritual Wellness Counseling

Luther conceptualized spiritual wellness counseling as healing clients' spiritual disabilities by encouraging spiritual maturity through a greater awareness of the purpose of suffering. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually aware by exploring their clients' understanding of spiritual maturity, spiritual sickness, and the spiritual significance of suffering.

Luther used his awareness of his parishioners' beliefs about spiritual sickness and health to better understand how he could introduce them to God's way of maturity as contained in their shared religious tradition. In modern, non-sectarian counseling, counselors may want to use their understanding of their clients' views about the spiritual significance of suffering to better facilitate client exploration of the path toward maturity.

Bishop (1992) listed specific examples of clients' religious values relevant to counseling and spiritual wellness: (a) clients' views of sin and overcoming its influences, and (b) clients' views of the significance of spiritual commitment. He suggested that in working with individual clients, counselors could become more educated about these issues through research into the client's faith system, contact with clergy, and development of straightforward language with which to communicate to clients about their religious values.

Counselors are encouraged to develop therapeutic dialogue, such as the following, to explore their clients' beliefs about health, sickness, and the purpose of suffering. "I would be interested in discussing how your beliefs about spiritual health (Christian growth, religious maturity) relate to overcoming this issue." "I would be interested in understanding the basis you use to evaluate your actions as sinful (wrong, immoral)." "Please help me to understand your view of the purpose of suffering." "Are there any spiritual practices (disciplines) that are important to you (that you find helpful in achieving spiritual growth)?" "What spiritual (religious, inspirational) books or symbols are helpful to you in overcoming sin (growing spiritually, reclaiming good out of evil)?"

Practical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Skillfulness in Spiritual Wellness Counseling

To promote spiritual wellness, Luther encouraged people to explore how their spiritual beliefs about the purpose of trials could help them to work through suffering in order to come to a point of healing and growth. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners become more spiritually skillful by facilitating client exploration of the aspects of their spiritual beliefs that might help them to spiritually emerge (thrive, grow, mature) even during spiritual emergencies (suffering, trauma, loss).

Counselors have used the terms sacralization (Pattison, 1982) and resacrilization (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992) to describe the process of moving through suffering and doubt toward spiritual depth and faith. Coalition with the supernatural (Griffith, 1986) is a particular expression of sacralization with close ties to Luther's ministry. Spiritual figures such as God, Christ, or a Higher Power are drawn into the life of the one suffering in order to show the purpose of suffering and the way to spiritual growth.

Counselors are encouraged to develop their own repertoire from the following list of spiritual conversations which may promote resacrilization and coalitions with the supernatural. "How do you deal with the paradox of a good God (Higher Power) who uses bad things to produce good results?" "Can you tell me about any times of suffering where you have felt drawn closer to God (Higher Power)?" "How would you know that God was tuned into your distress?" "To what Scriptures (religious literature, inspirational material) have you turned to find hope and comfort (a sense of God's care, discernment of Who Christ is as you go through this)?" "What spiritual realities might be hidden beneath your present situation? What does your faith system teach about the purpose of suffering?" "Is there anything in your faith system that might help to explain why bad things happen to good people?"

Spiritual wellness may also be promoted when counselors challenge people to become reengaged in the world. Therapeutic conversations which strengthen clients to grow through suffering might include, "How have you worked through similar experiences of suffering before in order to come to a point of healing?" "What person has been most influential in your beliefs and values? Picture this person experiencing what you are going through. How do you imagine her or him handling this?" "Let's talk about a person from your Scriptures who felt like you feel. (Together the care giver and client could discuss a story from the client's faith system or spiritual background.) How do you react to this story? How is it different from your situation? How is it similar? What in this story would you like to add to your story? How do you think you could do that? How could your spirituality assist you to write your story the way you desire? How would your God work your story out for good? How would your God give you strength in your story?"

Analogous Implications Derived From Historical Reconciling

This section suggests ways counselors and pastors may become more spiritually aware and skillful when reestablishing broken relationships between people and God and between people and others. Luther conceptualized this task as helping to reconcile spiritual disharmonies by

enlightening people to understand and live according to their spiritual identities. Professional counselors have recently begun to explore the area of spiritual perceptions of God, self, and others (Genia, 1995; Propst, 1988; Riina, 1995) and are integrating spiritual perception counseling into cognitive- behavioral approaches (Propst, 1988), object relations approaches (Spero, 1992), and humanistic-existential approaches (Weinhold & Hendricks, 1993).

Theoretical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Awareness in Spiritual Perception Counseling

When attempting to reconcile spiritual disharmonies, Luther theorized that: (a) human beings were fundamentally worshiping beings, and (b) a breakdown in a biblical image of God was the core cause of spiritual disharmonies. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually aware by: (a) developing models of spiritual care that see spirituality as a core component of every aspect of the human personality, and (b) exploring the relationship between spiritual disharmony and clients' perspective on the ground of all being.

A theoretical model of spirituality.

Luther's theory of coram Deo spirituality compares well with the view proposed by Chandler, Holden, and Kolander (1992).

We suggest that spiritual health not be conceptualized as just one of six dimensions of wellness. Spiritual health should be considered as a component present, along with a personal component, within each of the interrelated and interactive dimensions of wellness (i.e., social, physical, emotional, intellectual, and occupational) (p. 171).

It is suggested that conceptualizing spirituality as just one dimension of life would be counter-productive when working with committed clients. Spiritually aware counselors understand that spirituality is both the core and the circumference of all of life for spiritually and religiously committed clients (Matheson, 1996), and that for these clients no aspect of life is non-spiritual (Altereb, 1996).

Exploring the relationship between spiritual disharmony and clients' perspective on the ground of all being.

In his spiritual diagnostic system of sin, Luther held that alienation resulting from sin caused human beings to fear the Father, flee from the Father, create false substitutes of the Father, and become controlled by addictive passions and selfish desires. These beliefs led Luther to theorize that the burning contextual question of his day was, How do men and women find peace with God?

Today's pastors and counselors are invited to ponder how they might integrate Luther's theory of spiritual estrangement into their own emerging models of counseling and spirituality. Possible points of integration might include research into: (a) the nature of today's burning contextual

question (the possibility of a central spiritual yearning typical of modern society), (b) the nature, definition, and understanding of sin and spiritual estrangement in various faith systems, (c) the validity of the fear of God's wrath as a controlling element in the human personality (Riina, 1995), (d) the validity of a longing for peace with God (Higher Power) as a central motivating concern in the human personality (Propst, 1992), and (e) the validity of spiritual estrangement as a causative factor in addictive behavior (Chapman, 1996).

In his spiritual diagnostic system of salvation, Luther believed that grace was the only power able to attract the human heart back to the Father and empower the human spirit to live a life of faith active in love. Those interested in counseling and spirituality are invited to research: (a) what power is capable of changing people, (b) the role that grace (acceptance, forgiveness, and love from the ground of all being) plays in spiritual wholeness (Morris & Robinson, 1996), and (c) the impact of maintaining an image of God as a loving, forgiving Father (Higher Power) (Imbrie, 1985).

Practical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Skillfulness in Spiritual Perception Counseling

To promote integrated spiritual identities, Luther explored people's image of God and self, compared those images to a shared authority (the Bible), and worked with people to bring perceived distortions into harmony with their shared source of authority. By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually skillful by implementing therapeutic conversations to assist clients to explore their image of God (view of the transcendent) in order to develop empowering spiritual identities.

Jung (1960/1981) wrote "it is not for psychology, as a science, to demand a hypostatization (i.e., make an actual real person) of the God-image. But the facts being what they are, it does have to reckon with the existence of a God image" (p. 278). Edwards (1980) found that parishioners' images of God affect their whole orientation. Morris and Robinson (1996) suggested that clients' images of the Ultimate Being can improve their sense of worth.

Counselors are invited to personalize and situationalize the following therapeutic conversations useful in exploring clients' images of God (Ultimate Being, transcendent reality, Higher Power, Christ). "What is your understanding or image of God (Christ, Higher Power)?" "How would you describe God (Higher Power, Christ) or what you worship?" "How is your own identity altered when you see Christ as a forgiving Friend?"

Edwards (1980) encouraged examining the history of these images of God. Clients may be asked to write what seems to be the "footsteps of God" (p. 140) in their lives: particular events, relationships, experiences, etc. "What are the patterns you notice?" "Do the footsteps appear to be primarily alone, with others, or in nature?" "How has your image of God and of yourself changed through all of this?" Clients may be asked to complete the sentence, "My spiritual journey now is like . . ."

When a client expresses that a given image of God is destructive to them or counter to their faith system, dialogue may progress as follows. "How have you found oneness with God in the past?" "Where were you recruited into this idea that God (Higher Power) is angry with you and rejects you (does not accept you, will not forgive you)?" "Instead of seeing God (Christ, the Holy Spirit,

Ultimate Being) as an angry Judge (harsh Parent, unforgiving Friend), how will you see Him now?"

For the committed Christian/Evangelical Christian client, useful questions might include, "When your soul shouts, 'God is angry with you!' and your Bible says, 'God forgives and loves you,' which do you believe? How do you go about choosing which to believe?" "How is life different for you when you see God as your loving Father and Christ as your forgiving Friend?" "The Scriptures teach that people can experience peace with God because of Jesus Christ. When do you experience this peace to the greatest extent? What are you doing differently when you experience this peace?" "When have you been able to experience Christ's forgiveness? What has it been like for you? How did this happen? What impact has it had for you?"

Luther taught that right relationship with God provided the energy necessary for right living with others, therefore, he practiced the art of empowering the conscience. Therapeutic conversations that strengthen and empower people to live out their spirituality might include, "How has the peace and wholeness you have found through your spirituality impacted your relationships?" "When you are relating to God (Higher Power, Christ) as a loving Father (caring Parent, forgiving Friend), what impact does this have on your other relationships?" Committed Evangelical Christian clients might be asked, "How has peace with God through Christ motivated and strengthened you to love others?" "How has the forgiveness you have received through Jesus' death and resurrection impacted your ability to grant forgiveness to others?"

Luther frequently used biblical images, metaphors, and stories to impact a person's image of God and spiritual identity. Frame and Williams (1996) suggested integrating modern narrative therapy with bibliotherapy by using biblical stories, images, and parables to help clients to weave a new story about themselves. Counselors working with committed Christian clients might use the biblical parable of the prodigal son. "How would you compare and contrast the prodigal son with yourself?" "In the parable, God is presented as a Father Who longs for His son, rushes out to meet him, embraces him, and celebrates with him. How is this image of God similar or dissimilar to your image of God? What do you suppose accounts for the differences?" "What difference would it make in your life if you saw God as a Father willing to forgive and longing to celebrate with you?"

Analogous Implications Derived From Historical Guiding

This section suggests ways counselors and pastors may become more spiritually aware and skillful when assisting perplexed people to make confident choices in spiritual matters. Luther conceptualized this task as guiding clients during spiritual perplexity by enabling them to make wise and loving decisions based upon their spiritual priorities. Professional counselors have recently begun to explore the area of spiritual guidance counseling (Witmer & Sweeney, 1996) by conceptualizing moral values as "those that guide our behavior in acting for our own well-being and demonstrating respect and compassion for the good of others" (p. 23).

Theoretical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Awareness in Spiritual Guidance Counseling

When attempting to explore spiritual priorities, Luther drew upon shared understandings of

moral values and helped people to apply those values through pondering three primary questions ("Is participation in this contrary to my conscience? Is this action or attitude indicative of love for others? Is this action or attitude indicative of faith in my God?") related to four life dimensions (home, work, community, and church). By analogous implication it is proposed that modern practitioners may become more spiritually aware by identifying life questions and categorizing life dimensions.

Witmer and Sweeney's (1996) proposals, integrated with those of Chapman (1996), bear a striking resemblance to Luther's conceptualizations. Witmer and Sweeny identified five life tasks of spirituality, self-regulation, work, love, and friendship. These life tasks, they suggested, dynamically interact with the life forces of family, community, religion, education, government, media, and business. Chapman proposed a three-tiered concept of spirituality comprised of affinity with others, sense of connection with self, and a higher power. Spiritually aware guidance counselors are invited to conceptualize decision making issues as life-enhancing beliefs about human dignity (the self), human rights (others), and harmonious relationships with God (Witmer & Sweeney) applicable to all dimensions of human existence (home, work, community, church, education, etc.).

Practical Implications for Increasing Spiritual Skillfulness in Spiritual Guidance Counseling

To promote integrative decision making based upon spiritual priorities, Luther dialogued with people about wisdom principles inherent in their shared belief systems, and he drew out insights from the experiences and resources of the person in order to help the person to live according to those shared beliefs. By analogous implication, modern practitioners may become more spiritually skillful by developing therapeutic conversations that: (a) encourage clients to find wisdom principles inherent in their belief systems, and (b) draw out insights from the personal experiences and resources of the client.

Strategies for encouraging clients to find wisdom principles inherent in their belief systems.

Luther considered guiding not simply a decision making process, but a way to empower people to live out their faith active in love. Therapeutic conversations that encourage people to find wisdom principles inherent in their belief systems might include, "To what beliefs or Scriptures (inspirational literature) could you turn to find guidance (perspective, direction) in this situation?" "What principles from your belief system might provide you with perspective and direction concerning this decision?" "What role is your relationship to God (Christ) having in how you will make this decision?" "In this home (work, school, community, or church) relationship are you doing anything which is contrary to your conscience?" "As you make a decision about this home (work, school, community, religious, spiritual) relationship how can you integrate your desire to love others and your desire to demonstrate faith in God (Christ)?"

Strategies for drawing out insights from the personal experiences and resources of the client.

In his spiritual guidance counseling, Luther drew out insights from the personal experiences and resources of the person being helped. Analogous therapeutic conversations might include, "In past situations, what have you found to be strengthening for you?" "In one sentence, how would you describe the purpose of your life?" "To whom do you tend to turn for wisdom?" "Do you sense that you have the freedom to participate in this?" "Would anything about participating in this produce guilt, doubt, or turmoil for you?" "How would this serve your neighbor in love?" "In what way would this action be indicative of love for others?" "In what ways is this action indicative of faith in God (adherence to your spiritual principles)?"

In drawing out resources, suggestive dialogue might include: "What unique gifts (abilities) have you allowed to lay dormant that you can now stir into action (use, renew) in order to decide and act on your decision?" "What spiritual (personal, group, church) resources have you turned to previously in order to decide and act on your decision?"

Discussion

This section discusses the relationship between Martin Luther, modern professional counselors, and modern pastoral care givers. Comparisons are made between this study and the findings of Edwards (1980), Hiltner (1958), and Moore (1992). A possible contribution to Luther scholarship is suggested.

Dialogue Between Martin Luther, Professional Counselors, and Pastoral Care Givers

This section is based upon the premise that the study of history and modern culture has the potential to expose where either or both are time bound and local (Brown, 1987; Edwards, 1980; Hiltner, 1958). Studies of the past may reveal matters of importance that are being neglected in modern work, and studying the past in light of present knowledge can disclose valuable areas missing from past theory and practice (Hiltner).

Modern Professional Counselors and Pastoral Care Givers Speak to Luther

Modern counseling and pastoral care reveals at least three areas where Luther appears to be time bound and local in his theory and practice: (a) premature closure of doubt, (b) universalizing of his experience, and (c) failure to discern whether he was perceived to be a representative person.

Luther's premature closure of doubt.

Current research in counseling (Genia, 1995; Kelly, 1995) and pastoral care (Allender, 1990; Allender & Longman, 1994) indicates that permission to express and explore religious doubt is crucial to faith development. While Luther granted believers permission to grieve and even to

complain to God, he granted them permission to doubt only for brief periods and only while in the company of other supportive believers.

This is both understandable and surprising in light of Luther's own experience. For Luther, religious doubt was the most excruciating suffering of all (LW, Vol. 48, p. 12). Yet he claimed that without his lengthy experience of spiritual doubt (anfechtungen) he would never have learned his theology (LW, Vol. 54, p. 50), nor understood "Holy Scripture, nor faith, the fear or the love of God. He does not know the meaning of hope who was never subject to temptations" (cited in Vallee, 1984, p. 294). It was in his doubts that he encountered God and God's grace (LW, Vol. 41, p. xi).

It took Luther time and solitude to move through doubt to hope, yet he pressed parishioners to avoid solitude and take short cuts through doubt. While other spiritual directors encouraged doubters to stay with the dark night of the soul (Edwards, 1980), Luther counseled them to race through it. Longing for his followers to worship God, it sometimes appears that instead he encouraged them to worship certainty and security (LSA, pp. 217-218). Insisting that true faith was personal trust in Christ, it sometimes appears that Luther asked people to swallow his faith instead of struggling to incorporate and integrate their own.

Luther's universalizing of his experience.

Kelly (1995) suggested that Martin Luther resembled the rare person in Fowler's (1991) sixth stage of faith—the homo religious person "for whom the final challenge of integrity is a lifelong crisis" (Wulff, 1991, p. 384). Had Luther understood the various stages of faith development, he might not have rushed people through doubt. He also might not have assumed that his experience of anfechtungen or spiritual crisis was universally true or universally deep.

Luther's counsel at times seemed almost monolithically single-minded as he found the demon of spiritual doubt lurking in every corner. Perhaps spiritual doubt was a common vocalizing experience in the culture of his day (Manchester, 1992) and perhaps in today's culture (Crabb, 1993). However, modern theory suggests that Luther would have been more helpful had he allowed clients to surface doubts on their own, in their own time. Parishioners also might have benefited had he dealt more readily with other issues that to them seemed to be core, even if they seemed less essential to Luther.

Failure to discern whether he was perceived to be a representative person.

Modern (Collins, 1995) and historic (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964) pastoral care insists that to perform pastoral care the care giver "must in some way possess and exercise, or be taken to possess and exercise, the resources of the Christian faith, the wisdom distilled from Christians' experiences, and the authority of a company of believers" (Clebsch & Jaekle, p. 4).

It appears that in all of his letters of spiritual counsel, Luther perceived himself to be a representative person for the recipient of the letter. The context of his letters indicates that many, if not most, of his recipients apparently perceived Luther in the same light. However, the context of

other letters (LSA, pp. 318-324) suggests that some recipients did not view him as representing their faith tradition. Traditional Christian definitions of soul care (McNeil, 1951) would imply that it would have been more ethical for Luther to defer to a truly representative care giver if he perceived the issue to be spiritual counsel, or to more honestly label his efforts "evangelistic" if he perceived the need to be spiritual conversion.

Luther Speaks to Modern Professional Counselors

This historical case study of Martin Luther's spiritual care reveals at least three areas where modern professional counseling may be perceived to be time bound and local: (a) artificial compartmentalizing of spirituality, (b) Western, individual-centered definitions of spirituality, and (c) modern, secular assumptions about the "best" image of God. This study of Luther also suggests that the bridge between professional secular counseling and Evangelical pastoral care may and perhaps never should be totally spanned.

   Artificial compartmentalizing of spirituality.

Kelly (1995) offered a typology of potential connections between clients' issues and spirituality. He proposed that some issues may be: (a) predominantly or specifically spiritual/religious issues/problems, (b) nonspiritual/nonreligious issues/problems with a significant spiritual/religious component, (c) nonspiritual/nonreligious issues/problems with a potential connection to the spiritual/religious dimensions, and (d) nonspiritual/nonreligious issues/problems with little apparent or close connection with the spiritual/religious dimension.

Luther and traditional Christian spiritual care (McNeil, 1951) would disagree with this compartmentalizing approach. Luther taught that for the committed Christian, Christ was Lord of every area of life (Luther, 1525/1957). By definition, for the committed person all areas are potentially and actually spiritual/religious (Chapman, 1996). Hiltner (1958) found that there is a religious dimension to every problem for committed Protestant clients. Edwards (1980) related that committed Catholic clients see every area of life as transcendent and spiritual. Frame and Williams (1996) reported that the spiritually committed see spirituality as the core of all of life, and Altareb (1996) reported that committed Muslims believe that all concerns are potentially religious issues.

It would be unethical and unhelpful for professional counselors working with committed clients to promote a dichotomy between the secular and sacred. Kelly's (1995) proposal that "many issues have little or no spiritual/religious connection to developmental and therapeutic counseling" (p. 152) might yield to the recommendation that counselors at least realize that for committed clients all issues have, as Luther proposed, a spiritual circumference.

   Western, individual-centered definitions of spirituality.

Edwards (1980) proposed that modern counseling, cut loose from religious roots, was dominated by modern Western thinking that is ego-centered and individual focused. Modern

definitions of spirituality tend to emphasize the individual's inner journey toward a relationship with a transcendent Being (Shafranske & Maloney, 1992).

In his theory of faith active in love, Luther developed the idea that spiritual care should be social, communal, and neighbor-centered. Modern spiritual identity counseling and spiritual guidance counseling may both benefit by integrating Luther's communal view. Mature spiritual identities could be developed in the context of relationships. This is similar to Frame and Williams' (1996) assessment that the African American spiritual tradition and worldview maintains a profound sense of communalism, a collective identity that manifests itself in strong kinship ties. From this perspective, individual identity is situated in a relational context creating a dynamic interplay between the community and the individual. Mature spiritual decision making could proceed from the perspective of what is best not simply for the client, but for the client in relationship to the community.

Modern, secular assumptions about the "best" image of God.

Gorsuch (1985) theorized that psychological functioning may be enhanced by changing religious attributions from a judging God to a forgiving God. Genia (1995) encouraged inducing changes in one's perception of God from an oppressive, punitive figure to a divine source of forgiveness and unconditional love.

Luther highlighted something seemingly similar but in reality quite different. He, too, emphasized the image of a forgiving God. But he did so in the context of an image of a holy God who judges sinfulness. For Luther, God's holy love was conditioned on the death of Christ and the repentance of the "sinner." Whether right or wrong, a God of holy love was Luther's image of the "best" image of God. The Islamic faith (Altareb, 1996), Christianity in the black church (Morris & Robinson, 1996), and the Catholic faith (Edwards, 1980) also emphasize the holy love of God. Counselors may find it more helpful for clients and ethically sound to refuse to project their preferred image of God onto their clients.

The inability and ill-advisability of spanning the bridge between professional secular counseling and Evangelical pastoral counseling.

This dissertation was prompted by the desire to bridge professional counselors' current interest in spirituality and Evangelical pastoral care givers' current call for renewed study of and identification with historic Christian spiritual care. The analogous implications provided several such bridges. However, Luther, to the degree that he is representative of modern Evangelical pastoral care givers (a large and diverse group themselves), suggests that this bridge may never and perhaps should never totally be spanned.

Modern professional counselors value cultural diversity in spirituality. They desire to keep the pathway wide (Maher, 1996). Luther believed that the way to full, free, and eternal life was narrow and the way to present and eternal separation from God was wide (Luther, 1525/1957). That is, he believed, as Evangelical pastoral care givers believe (Colson, 1992), that God's grace given in

Christ and received by faith was the fundamental answer to all of humanity's questions.

It would be inappropriate for professional counselors to present this narrow way in secular settings where they are not perceived to be representative of a given faith tradition. It would be equally inappropriate for Evangelical pastoral care givers in religious settings who are perceived to be representative of a grace faith tradition to present the broad way.

Luther Speaks to Modern Evangelical Pastoral Care Givers

This historical case study of Martin Luther's spiritual care reveals at least three areas where modern Evangelical pastoral care givers may be perceived to be time bound and local: (a) the failure to address the evils people have suffered, (b) the failure to address the sins people have committed, and (c) the failure to provide pastoral care and/or the failure to train lay care givers.

The failure to address the evils people have suffered.

Having studied the history of Christian care, Lake (1966) stated, "pastoral care is defective unless it can deal thoroughly both with the evils men have suffered and the sins men have committed" (p. 63). Luther dealt with the evils men and women suffered. In his sustaining and healing ministries he empathized with those who were hurting and encouraged them to cry out to God for help and hope.

Bobgan and Bobgan (1987, 1989, 1993) have claimed that Christian counselors who see clients as suffering people instead of as sinners have been seduced by the Trogan horse of secular psychology. Yet Luther treated parishioners as suffering people and he did it prior to the advent of modern psychology. It would appear that Bobgan and Bobgan are time bound and local. Modern pastoral care givers seeking to apply Luther's focus on healing hurting people might be wise to develop a theology of suffering (Powlison, 1988).

The failure to address the sins people have committed.

Colson (1992) charged Evangelical pastors with having sold their souls to secular counseling by refusing to engage parishioners in honest discussions about sin. Luther addressed sin. Historic Christian pastoral care has always addressed sin issues (McNeil, 1951). Perhaps modern pastors are time bound and local because they have forgotten their role as representative persons. Luther would suggest that those who are perceived to represent an Evangelical faith tradition have the right and responsibility to deal thoroughly with the sins (as defined by their shared source of authority) people have committed.

The failure to provide pastoral care and/or the failure to train lay care givers.

Crabb (1997) reported that Evangelical pastors have abandoned their historic calling to train lay people to provide spiritual care. Peterson (1997) stated that Evangelical pastors had replaced the

role of spiritual care giver with the role of CEO. Luther was both a pastoral care giver and an encourager of lay care giving. His model suggests that Evangelical pastors and churches would benefit from a renewed emphasis on the pastor as a spiritual care giver and an equipper of lay spiritual care givers (Edginton, 1994).

<div align="center">*Comparisons and Contrasts Between Luther, Hiltner, Edwards, and Moore*</div>

This section discusses comparisons and contrasts between this study and the findings of Edwards (1980), Hiltner (1958), and Moore (1992).

Comparisons and Contrasts with Hiltner

Hiltner (1958) analyzed Protestant pastoral care by studying the writings of Ichabod S. Spencer, a Presbyterian minister. During his pastorate in Brooklyn, New York, from 1840 to 1853, Spencer compiled letters and reports of his pastoral care with individuals and families.

Like Luther, Hiltner (1958) found that Spencer considered spiritual doubt and anxiety about God's acceptance humanity's greatest problem. Spencer entitled his collective letters "A Pastor's Sketches" and subtitled them, "Conversations with Anxious Inquirers, Respecting the Way of Salvation." Hiltner (1958) interpreted this subtitle to mean that Spencer sought to record his efforts to help those who had doubts about their salvation, concerns about their acceptance by God, and anxiety about their ultimate destiny.

Spencer wrote that he spoke to those who felt they were aliens from God and His enemies. Of one woman he wrote, "Her very anguish consisting in this—that she loved Him no more, and could not get assurance of His love toward her" (cited in Hiltner, 1958, p. 107).

Also like Luther, Spencer's foundational remedy was the assurance of God's love through faith in Christ's grace.

> Spencer had no hesitation with Mrs. N., as with others, in recording his primary perspective. This is communicating the gospel in such a way that the Holy Spirit will make persons into anxious inquirers, and they will then turn to God and Christ and find peace, joy, and solemnity in the faith (Hiltner, 1958, p. 108).

Hiltner (1958) proposed that Spencer followed the historical Protestant tradition in his accent on spiritual doubt and grace.

> For all Protestants conviction about how the true cure of souls is wrought was central. The grace which Protestants believe to receive from the Word is the divine assurance of the forgiveness of sins which freely given by God through Christ makes possible a new *personal* relationship between man and his maker (p. 41, emphasis added by original author).

It can at least be stated that studies of two Protestant pastoral care givers—Luther and

Spencer—exposed a preliminary pattern of emphasis upon spiritual doubt about acceptance by God and spiritual security through the grace of Christ. Further study of other Protestant care givers might explore how consistent this pattern is and how it varies or does not vary dependent upon particular strands of the Protestant tradition.

Hiltner (1958) noted that Spencer's emphasis on grace led him to a preoccupation with change and conversion. Hiltner applauded this in one respect as a virtue because Spencer never gave up on people, "never felt any situation beyond the power of the Holy Spirit" (p. 140). However, Hiltner also saw in this a weakness: Spencer raced through sustaining people in doubt and pushed for healing of doubt through faith in Christ.

The realization that Luther can be interpreted in a similar light may serve as a caution to (Evangelical) Protestant care givers. An emphasis on conversion and grace may create a tendency to push parishioners toward premature closure of doubt, thus robbing them of potential growth experiences that may occur when facing "the dark night of the soul" (Edwards, 1980, p. 128).

Spencer and Luther diverged on at least one aspect of spiritual care—the role of the "body of Christ" (Hiltner, 1958). Hiltner found that Spencer interpreted the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (the belief that every Christian has direct access to God through Christ without the need of a mediator-priest) to mean parishioners must be pushed toward autonomy and independence under God alone. Spencer feared that lengthy sustaining without movement to Christ for healing could create idolatry—human dependency rather than God dependency.

Luther, on the other hand, interpreted the priesthood of all believers to mean that parishioners should be pushed toward community and interdependence. He feared that isolation, being fertile ground for Satan's temptations to doubt, could create lack of faith—a failure to depend upon God. Thus both Luther and Spencer sought God dependency, but wrought it by opposite means. One possible explanation for this difference may be that Spencer reported that his life had been rather free from spiritual anxiety. Luther's was not. It can be wondered whether either man might have viewed Christian community differently had their personal experiences been different.

Comparisons and Contrasts with Moore

Moore (1992) studied Renaissance and Romantic writings on soul care. Moore's focus may provide a means to further clarify Luther's focus. Moore identified self-knowledge and self-acceptance to be the very foundation of soul care, and taught that the aim of soul work was to connect the soul to self and others. Luther taught that connection with God, which could lead to connection with self and others, was the aim of soul work and identified God-knowledge and acceptance by God to be the very foundation of soul care. Thus the Renaissance emphasis on the centrality of humanity (Lucas, 1960) may be seen to erect a very different foundation for soul care than does the Reformation emphasis on the centrality of God in Christ (McGrath, 1990).

Moore (1990) summarized soul care as "the application of poetics to everyday life" (xix). By this he implied that human imagination and creativity were fertile ground for human growth and potential. Luther summarized soul care as the application of grace to everyday life. By this he implied that God's re-creation of the human heart and renewal of the human imagination (LW, Vol.

42, p. 165) were the most fertile ground for human growth and potential.

These theoretical differences led to methodological differences. Moore (1990) highlighted assisting people to listen to the voice of their soul; Luther highlighted assisting people to attend to the voice of God speaking to their soul. Moore attempted to reconcile the soul with the soul—to connect the soul with its deeper, ignored parts. Luther sought to reconcile the soul with God which he proposed would then lead to a soul integrated with self and others.

Moore (1990) presented Renaissance soul care as entering the shadows. For example, he called depression a gift and encouraged people to enter, listen to, and learn from their depression. Luther, though he learned much from his (spiritual) depression, feared it and raced others through it. He encouraged people to embrace many forms of suffering as a gift sent from God—His schoolhouse for learning more about Christ. Perhaps he could have learned from Renaissance thinkers of his day that even spiritual depression was a gift from God.

Luther and Moore (1990) do converge somewhat on their thinking about the relationship between religion and spirituality. Both choose not to distinguish between the two and both saw corporate religion as the exercise of communal spirituality. Moore believed that "church teaches us directly and symbolically to see the sacred dimension of everyday life" (p. 214), and that "religion is a week-long observance that is inspired and sustained on the Sabbath" (p. 215). Luther's spiritual guidance counseling emphasized that every area of life was spiritual (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 256-263) and that the role of Sabbath worship and fellowship was to encourage the believer to live out his or her faith active in love throughout the week (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 140-14; LW, Vol. 44, pp. 234-236).

Comparisons and Contrasts with Edwards

Edwards (1980) researched Catholic and Episcopal spiritual direction. Edwards (1980) and Luther converge on the issue of mutual spiritual friendship. Both exalted the role that lay Christians could and should play in the art of soul care. "The paucity of famous Protestant directors I think refers not to any lack of Protestant spiritual depth but to their focus on the priesthood of all believers, involving countless historically anonymous persons in mutual and informal guidance" (p. 67).

Though agreeing on the need for mutual care, they expressed divergent opinions on the benefits of solitude. Edwards, tracing the lives of the "desert fathers" (p. 57) (men and women who practiced the art of spiritual solitude), more readily than Luther emphasized a need both for spiritual community and spiritual solitude.

Edwards (1980) presented a greater emphasis on "being with" (p. 153) and quietly listening to people in need of soul care. Luther did listen and access the situation, background, disposition, and personality of those he counseled (LSA, p. 41). And some perceived lack of "being with" may be attributed to the one-sided nature of written communication. Yet Luther's strong convictions about people's common core malady and his repetitive suggestions of a common core solution could be perceived as a failure to sometimes hear the individual and a failure at times to counsel idiosyncratically.

A Possible Contribution to Luther Scholarship

This section discusses a possible contribution of this study to the broader field of Luther scholarship. McGrath (1990) proposed that Luther occupies a place of major importance in the history of the Christian Church, the history of Europe, and the history of religious thought. His significance in part derives from his wrestling with a major theological problem. According to McGrath, what that problem was, and how he resolved it, are of the greatest interest to historians and theologians alike.

McGrath (1990) labeled that problem and resolution Luther's "theologia crucis" (p. 1), his theology of the cross. "In the theologia crucis, we find Luther's developing theological insights crystallized into one of the most powerful and radical understandings of the nature of Christian theology which the church has ever known" (p. 1).

The crucified God was not merely the foundation of Luther's Christian faith, but also the key to a proper understanding of the nature of God.

> For Luther, Christian thinking about God comes to an abrupt halt at the foot of the cross. The Christian is forced, by the very existence of the crucified Christ, to make a momentous decision. Either he will seek God elsewhere, or he will make the cross itself the foundation and criterion of his thought about God (McGrath, 1990, p. 1).

McGrath's (1990) findings from his historical study of Luther's theological writings have been duplicated in the findings from this historical study of Luther's letters of spiritual counsel. In sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding, the cross of Christ, which pointed to the God who suffers with and for humanity, was preeminent.

Luther's consistent sustaining theme when writing to suffering people was the suffering God epitomized in the crucified Christ. When people asked, "God, Who are You to me in my suffering?" Luther answered for God: "The suffering God Who cares." When people asked, "God, where are You in my suffering?" Luther answered for God: "I am on the cross suffering for you."

Luther's consistent healing theme was to point people to a faith perspective on the purpose of suffering. Suffering enabled people to participate in the sufferings of Christ. That is, in their agony they could better sense the passion of a God Who would suffer on the cross to pay the penalty for their sin. This awareness, thought Luther, produced spiritual maturity—a greater awareness of God, self, and others and a greater love for God and others.

Luther's consistent reconciling theme was to point people to their spiritual identity as loved children of the Father and forgiven friends of the Son. In Luther's eyes, all people were prodigal children of the Father. The only bridge back home was the cross of Christ. To reenter a relationship of friendship with Christ, prodigal children had to seek and accept the forgiveness offered in the cross.

Luther's consistent guiding theme emphasized faith active in love. The person clinging to the cross gained a new spiritual priority—loving others. Luther taught that every life decision amounted to determining what action would most reflect and express the love of the crucified and resurrected

Christ.

McGrath (1990) believed that Luther's great theological question was primarily concerned with "what man must do if he is to enter into fellowship with God" (p. 8). Luther answered that human beings must place their faith in the grace (undeserved forgiveness and eternal acceptance by God) of God provided for by the cross of Christ.

> For Luther, the entire gospel could be encapsulated in the Christian article of justification—the affirmation that man, a sinner though he is and sinner though he will remain throughout history, really can enter into a gracious relationship with God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (p. 8).

McGrath (1990) asked, "Was Luther really stating anything other than the common Christian gospel?" (p. 21). McGrath answered that Luther was stating something different from the beliefs of the church of his day.

> Even as late as 1535, Luther stated unequivocally that he was still prepared to acknowledge the authority of the pope on the condition that he acknowledge in turn that the sinner had free forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not through the observance of the traditions of the church (p. 21).

Thus in his theological writings, Luther insisted that there was only one means of spiritual healing—the cross. Luther's letters of spiritual counsel were nothing more and nothing less than the application of this theology. Whereas the culture of his day pointed suffering people to the fourteen relics of the fourteen church saints (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-124), Luther pointed people to fourteen spiritual consolations, every one of which emphasized a unique aspect of the cross of Christ (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 124-166).

This historical study of Luther's letters of spiritual care lends support to conclusions McGrath (1990) drew from his historical study of Luther's theological writings. Both suggest that humanity's core problem, according to Luther, was broken fellowship between people and God. Both suggest that the only answer to humanity's core problem, according to Luther, was faith in the grace of God supplied by the Christ of the cross.

<center>Limitations</center>

In the historical case study method, primary and secondary resources make available the raw material for research. Access to such historical facts is limited by the reliability of the sources to which appeal is made (Brown, 1987). Thus the resources used in this study suggest some limitations that should be considered when pondering the research conclusions and analogous implications made.

Primary writings at times suffer through translation (Brown, 1987). All of Luther's letters of spiritual counsel and his table talks used in this study were translations from German, Greek, or

Latin originals. All resources used were complied by other authors and any biases in compilation must be considered.

Access to facts is limited by the partial recovery of facts (Brown, 1987). The translated primary sources used in this study represent only a portion of the letters and table talks that are available in the original languages. Also, Luther's table talks involved witnesses to proposed facts who must be judged for trustworthiness since not all testimony stems from efforts to achieve historical accuracy (Brown).

These factors were considered whenever conclusions were drawn or implications suggested. These factors not withstanding, the consistency among all the documents suggests that the materials studied fairly represented the breadth and intent of Luther's works. That is, consistent themes arose and patterns emerged regardless of the compiler (Krodel, 1963, LW; Nebe, 1893/1894; Smith, 1911; Smith & Jacobs, 1918; Tappert, 1955) and regardless of the type of source (letter versus table talk). Additionally, the depth and breadth of translated resources used in this study, as catalogued in chapter one, blunts some of the impact of these limiting factors.

Another potential limiting factor relates to the choice of the letter form. By their very nature, letters present a monologue rather than a dialogue. Letters cannot suggest non-verbal cues, nor can they indicate emotion through silence. Thus the impression that Luther did not emphasize "being with" clients or that he practiced premature closure may be more the result of the form of communication than the intent of communication.

The letter form also lacks the ability to access responses to and the impact of what was written. This limitation is mitigated somewhat by two factors: the inclusion of the table talks and the study of some letters representing responses to Luther's letters. The table talks have the advantage of recapturing more of the concrete situation through their reports of dialogue rather than merely of indirect discourse. The source materials contained a few letters that expressed, from the perspective of the recipient, the positive impact of Luther's letters of spiritual counsel.

Since the four tasks express a Christian lineage and since Luther most closely represents the Evangelical branch of that lineage (McGrath, 1990), this case study may be most easily generalizable to the committed Evangelical client. Attempts to draw conclusions or make implications for non-Evangelical clients would require variations in terminology and shifts in meaning of specific concepts as illustrated in each of the analogous implications in this chapter.

The small data base—one historical practitioner—also limits the study. Other Christian pastors presumably might have highlighted other aspects of historic spiritual care. However, the fact that Hiltner's (1958) study of Spencer, and Boisen's (1937) study of Bunyan uncovered several major themes uncovered in this study could at least indicate an emerging pattern drawn from Evangelical pastoral care.

A final limitation of this study relates to the lack of empirical evidence concerning Luther's effectiveness or ineffectiveness. For that reason decisions about suggested analogous implications were derived not only from extrapolation from Luther research, but also from integration of current research on spirituality and counseling, and from scholarly reflection, professional experience, and research into the current counseling milieu.

Recommendations for Further Study

Potential areas for further studies might entail the following:

1. Compose a Q-sort using the definitions of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. Pastoral care givers from a variety of faith traditions and professional counselors from a variety of counseling models could be studied. Their rank ordering of items could be examined for correlations among the responses of the different individuals from the various groups.

Contrasts and comparisons could be made between groups. For instance, evangelical pastors could be compared with evangelical professional counselors. Mainline pastors could be compared with evangelical pastors. Professional counselors could be compared with pastoral care givers and with professional counselors from other schools of thought. Insight could be gained into the association between theory and practice. Practitioners and theoreticians might better understand their own tendencies and traits as thinkers, pastors, and counselors.

2. The analogous implications suggested in this chapter could be empirically studied. Operational definitions could be described. Then the results from counselors using these methods could be compared and contrasted with counselors using other methods.

3. The operational definitions of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding could be used to analyze current models of pastoral care and professional counseling. The ten-step conceptual analysis case study method could be used to better understand current models, relate current models to historical soul care, derive further implications for current theory and practice, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of current models, and determine which of the four areas these models highlight or minimize.

4. Luther's model of soul care and spiritual direction could be studied in more detail. Each of the four areas of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding could be studied individually in order to glean a more advanced awareness of Luther's model of pastoral care.

Luther could also be studied over time. That is, one could compare and contrast Luther's early pastoral care with his later pastoral care. Implications could be drawn concerning the effect of maturity, of environment, and of life situation on the development of a pastoral care approach.

Luther's letters of spiritual counsel could be studied from a narrative therapy perspective. In fact, various pastors throughout history maintained extensive letter writing ministries. Many effective approaches for narrative therapy and the writing of letters of spiritual counsel could be gleaned from a study of Luther and other pastors.

5. Other historical physicians of the soul could be studied using the historical case study method. McNeil's (1951) work on the history of soul care could be suggestive. Early church fathers like Origin, Tertullian, and Gregory the Great could be studied. Saints like Francis, Dominic, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avilla could yield tremendous insight. Pastors like Bucer, Baxter, Edwards, and Calvin, to name a few, could be studied. Their use of the four-fold model could be compared and contrasted to Luther. Findings could be added to a growing storehouse of historical wisdom.

6. The history of soul care in other faiths could be studied using the historical case study

method. Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and other religious providers of soul care and spiritual direction could be examined.

7. Further study would be warranted in the area raised in chapter one concerning religiously non-committed counselors and religiously committed clients. Outcome-based studies might help counselors to determine when referral is appropriate. Further study may be called for concerning the effectiveness of training programs in preparing graduates to counsel those who are religiously committed.

Summary

Chapter seven reviewed the method and purpose of this dissertation. Three models for presenting analogous historical implications were described and suggestions were given for theoretical and methodological implications for pastoral care givers and professional counselors. Discussion was provided, limitations of the study were proposed, and recommendations for future research were provided.

APPENDIX A

A BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER

1452	Leonardo da Vinci born
1453	Turks capture Constantinople
1455	Guttenberg completes printing the Bible using movable type
1469	Erasmus born
1473	Copernicus born
1478	Spanish Inquisition set up
1483	Martin Luther born at Eisleben, November 10
1484	Parents, Hans and Margaretha, move family to Mansfield where Hans works in copper mines
1484	Ulrich Zwingli born
1485	Treaty of Leipzig divides Saxony
1491	Henry VIII born
1492	Luther attends school in Mansfield
1492	Columbus' first voyage to the Americas
1493	The pope divides the New World between Spain and Portugal
1495	Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper"
1496	Menno Simmons born
1497	Melanchthon born
1497	Luther attends school (Brothers of the Common Life) at Magdeburg
1498	Luther attends school (St. George) at Eisenach
1498	Savonarola burned at the stake in Florence
1501	Luther enters University of Erfurt (about May)
1502	Luther takes the degree of bachelor of arts at Erfurt (September 29)
1502	Frederick, elector of Saxony, founds Wittenberg University
1505	Luther earns M.A. at Erfurt (January 7)
1505	Luther begins law studies
1505	John Knox born
1505	Thunderstorm and vow (July 2)
1505	Luther enters Augustinian cloister at Erfurt (July 17)
1506	Pope Julius orders work on St. Peter's in Rome
1506	Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa"
1507	Luther ordained priest in the spring
1507	Luther celebrates first Mass on May 2
1508	Luther called to teach one semester at the University of Wittenberg (teaches Aristotle's Ethics)
1508	Michelangelo begins painting Sistine Chapel ceiling

1509	Luther earns bachelor of Bible
1509	John Calvin born
1509	Henry VIII begins reign and marries Catherine of Aragon
1509	Erasmus writes "In Praise of Folly"
1509	Luther called to teach Lombard's Sentences at Erfurt (Autumn)
1510	Luther journeys to Rome in November, spends December in Rome
1510	First shipload of African slaves arrives in Hispaniola (Haiti)
1511	Luther returns to Erfurt in April and is transferred to Wittenberg
1512	Luther takes the Doctor of Theology (October 19)
1513	Luther begins lectures on Psalms
1513	Leo X (Giovanni Medici) becomes pope
1515	Luther begins lectures on Romans (April)
1515	Luther elected district vicar of his order (May)
1516	Luther begins lectures on Galatians
1516	Erasmus publishes Greek New Testament
1516	Thomas More publishes "Utopia"
1517	Tetzel hired by Albert of Mainz to sell indulgences
1517	Luther posts the Ninety-five Theses on indulgences on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg (October 31)
1518	Melanchthon becomes professor of Greek at Wittenberg
1518	Luther's disputation at Heidelberg (April 26)
1518	Pope cites Luther to Rome (August 7)
1518	Luther appeals to Frederick (August 8)
1518	Luther starts for Augsburg (September 26)
1518	Luther interviews with Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg (October 12-14) but refuses to recant
1518	Luther leaves Augsburg (October 20) and arrives back in Wittenberg on October 30
1518	Frederick the Wise refuses to hand over Luther (December 18)
1519	Luther interviews with Miltitz at Altenburg (January 4 and 5)
1519	Death of Emperor Maximilian (January 12)
1519	Charles I of Spain is elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (June 28)
1519	Leipzig debate between Luther and Eck
1520	Suleiman I becomes sultan of the Ottoman Empire (Turks)
1520	Luther's "Sermon on Good Works" (May)
1520	Pope Leo X signs papal bull "Exsurge Domine" threatening to excommunicate Luther within 60 days
1520	Luther writes three seminal documents: "To the Christian Nobility," "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and "The Freedom of a Christian"
1520	Luther burns the papal bull on December 10
1521	Diet of Worms opens (January 27)
1521	Luther goes to Worms (April 16 to 26) and refuses to recant

1521	Luther goes into hiding in Wartburg (May 4)
1521	Edict of Worms actually issued (May 25) and Luther is excommunicated by the papal bull "Decet Romanum Pontificem"
1521	Pope Leo X dies
1521	Religious unrest in Wittenberg
1521	Luther returns to Wittenberg (March 1-6)
1521	Luther's German New Testament published in September
1521	Hadrian VI elected pope (September 14)
1522	Magellan's expedition circumnavigates the globe
1522	Zwingli's first Reformation debates
1522	Ignatius Loyola begins work on "Spiritual Exercises"
1523	Luther writes "On Civil Government" and "On the Order of Worship"
1523	First martyrs of the Reformation are burned in Brussels (July 1)
1523	Clement VII elected pope (September)
1524	Luther writes "To the Councilman"
1524	Luther debates Karlstadt on the Lord's Supper
1524	Staupitz dies
1524	Erasmus writes "On the Freedom of the Will"
1524	Peasant Wars begin
1524	Diet of Nuremberg fails to enforce Edict of Worms condemning Luther
1525	Anabaptist movement begins in Zurich and spreads to Germany
1525	Luther writes "Against the Heavenly Prophets," "Admonition to Peace," "Against the Robbing and Murdering Horde," "Open Letters Concerning the Hard Book Against the Peasants," "The German Mass," and "On the Enslaved Will"
1525	Frederick the Wise dies on May 5
1525	Charles V defeats Francis I
1525	Luther weds Katherine von Bora (June 13) who was born at Lippendorf on January 29, 1499, and entered the Nimbschen Cistercian Cloister in 1508; took the veil October 8, 1515, and left the cloister April 4-5, 1523
1526	Reformation spreads to Sweden and Denmark
1526	Luther writes "Exposition of Jonah"
1526	Hans Luther is born on June 7
1527	Luther writes "Whether Soldiers Too May Be Saved" and "Whether These Words: This Is My Body"
1527	Luther experiences intense depression and severe illness
1527	Luther writes the song "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"
1527	Elizabeth Luther is born on December 10
1527	Luther writes against Zwingli's views on the Lord's Supper
1527	First Protestant University (Marburg) founded
1527	Plague strikes Wittenberg
1527	Imperial troops sack Rome

1528	Luther writes "Instruction for Visitors" and "Confession of the Lord's Supper"
1528	On August 3, Elizabeth Luther dies
1528	Bern, Switzerland becomes Protestant
1529	Protest at the Diet of Speyer (April 19)
1529	Magdalene Luther born on May 4
1529	Marburg Colloquy with Zwingli and other theologians (October 1-4)
1529	Luther publishes "Large and Small Catechisms"
1529	Name "Protestant" first used
1530	Luther's father, Hans, dies (May 29)
1530	Diet of Augsburg, Luther, as outlaw, cannot attend
1530	Presentation of the Augsburg Confession (June 25)
1531	Luther writes "Warning to His Beloved Brethren"
1531	Luther's mother, Margaretha, dies (June 30)
1531	Luther's son, Martin, born on November 9
1531	Zwingli killed in battle
1531	Schmalkaldic League, a body of German Protestant groups, forms in self-defense against Charles V
1532	Luther writes "On Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers"
1532	Luther is given the Augustinian cloister in Wittenberg for his home
1532	Completion of the translation of the Bible (begun in 1521)
1533	Luther's son, Paul, is born on January 28
1533	Pizzaro conquers Peru
1533	Ivan "the Terrible" (age 3) ascends Russian throne
1534	Publication of the German Bible
1534	Luther's daughter, Margaret, born on December 17
1534	Henry VIII becomes supreme head of Church of England
1534	Paul III becomes pope
1535	The papal legate Vergerio comes to Wittenberg and has a conference with Luther
1535	Anabaptist uprising at Munster put down and Anabaptists executed
1535	Emperor forms Catholic Defense League
1535	Thomas More beheaded for opposing Henry VIII
1536	Wittenberg Concord with the Swiss concerning the Lord's Supper
1536	First edition of Calvin's "Institutes"
1536	William Tyndale burned at the stake
1536	Denmark and Norway become Lutheran
1536	Erasmus dies
1537	Luther draws up the Schmalkaldic Articles as his "theological last will and testament"
1537	At the Schmalkaldic conference Luther becomes very ill with the stone
1538	Luther writes "Against the Sabbatarians"
1538	Calvin expelled from Geneva
1539	Bigamy of the Landgrave Philip

1539	Luther goes to Leipsic to inaugurate the Reformation in Albertine Saxony
1539	Luther writes "On the Councils and the Church"
1540	Catherine Luther very ill
1540	Luther attends the conference at Eisenach
1540	Society of Jesus (Jesuits) formed
1541	Luther writes "Admonition to Prayer Against the Turks"
1541	Calvin returns to Geneva
1541	At the Conference of Regensburg, Melanchthon and Bucer reach agreement with Catholics on most important doctrines, but Luther and Rome reject their work
1541	Karlstadt dies
1542	Magdalene Luther dies on September 20
1543	Luther writes "Against the Jews"
1543	Publication of the Genesis Commentary (lectures delivered from 1535-1545)
1543	Copernicus writes that the earth revolves around the sun
1544	Luther writes against Schwenckfield's interpretation of the Lord's Supper
1545	Luther writes "Against the Papacy at Rome Founded by the Devil"
1545	Council of Trent for the reform of the Catholic Church
1546	Luther dies on February 18, at Eisleben
1547	Henry VIII dies
1552	December 20, Catharine von Bora Luther dies
1555	Peace of Augsburg allows rulers to determine religion of their region

APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL TRIALS AND THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS:
PRIMARY FACTORS SHAPING LUTHER'S PASTORAL CARE

According to Luther, two primary factors shaped his approach to pastoral care. The first factor he called anfechtungen or his spiritual trials (LW, Vol. 54, p. 50). Luther reported that his theology was the second element that shaped his pastoral care (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46). Appendix B examines these two foundational areas which helped to fashion Luther's craft of soul care.

Anfechtungen or Spiritual Trials as a Primary Shaping Factor in Luther's Pastoral Care

Luther, the pastor, can best be grasped from an autobiographical viewpoint. His own personal struggle for perfection before God predated his concern for those under his pastoral care (Oberman, 1989). His struggle was an elemental religious one in which he searched for the assurance that God was gracious to him even though he was a sinner (D'Aubigne, 1950). Luther's personal quest for God's grace determined his Reformation agenda, and his personal religious experience focused his pastoral work (Steinmetz, 1995).

Luther called his spiritual trials anfechtungen (the plural form for spiritual trials) or anfechtung (the singular form of the same word). He clearly connected these strivings to his theological development. "I didn't learn my theology all at once. I had to ponder over it ever more deeply, and my spiritual trials were of help to me, for one does not learn anything without practice" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 50).

Bainton (1960) emphasized the importance of anfechtung, while he also provided a working definition.

> Toward God he was at once attracted and repelled. Only in harmony with the Ultimate could he find peace. But how could a pygmy stand before divine Majesty; how could a transgressor confront divine Holiness? Before God the high and holy Luther was stupefied. For such an experience he had a word. The word he used was Anfechtung, for which there is no English equivalent. It may be a trial sent from God to test man, or an assault by the Devil to destroy man. It is all the doubt, turmoil, pang, terror, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man (p. 42).

Ji (1989) attempted to outline the meaning of anfechtungen. His research indicated that it derived from an old military term for battle or struggle. It then came to be used for a complex inner struggle or anguish in the human heart which could either be a stretching assault from God or a shrewd, strategic attack of Satan. Either way, it was experienced by Luther and others as a longing to be in a holy state before a holy God. This longing, according to Ji, followed a logical order. First, existence before God was called into question. Then there was a sense of estrangement from God followed by a deep experience of despair and isolation. When faced positively, the next step was

contrition and repentance followed by the joy of being liberated and accepted.

Luther felt that these experiences were central to his Christian life.

> If I live longer, I would like to write a book about anfechtungen, for without them no person is able to know Holy Scripture, nor faith, the fear or the love of God. He does not know the meaning of hope who was never subject to temptations (cited in   Vallee, 1984, p. 294).

Anfechtung was the existential place from which Luther thought, wrote, and pastored. It was the place, far from tranquil, where he encountered God. Speaking of his battle with anfechtungen, Luther wrote, "living, dying and being damned make the real theologian" (LW, Vol. 41, p. xi).

Luther was convinced that he could not have understood grace apart from his anfechtungen. "I can say nothing about grace outside of those temptations" (cited in Vallee, 1984, p. 294). "Theology is not learned on a peaceful path, or through tranquil reflection: it is acquired per afflictions" (cited in Vallee, p. 294). Anfechtung was essential to Luther's appropriation of the Biblical message. "Anfechtung is the touchstone which teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting the Word of God is, wisdom beyond all wisdom" (cited in Vallee, p. 294).

The "sitz im leben" of Luther's time explains why spiritual trials played such a predominant role in Luther's life and thought (Steinmetz, 1995). Luther saw the conscience as standing naked before a holy God (McCue, 1983), and believed that "all men naturally know that there is a God" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 45). He felt that true knowledge of God and his will could only be found in Christ. Luther was "homo religiousus," to whom Christ was everything, God was central, and grace was foundational (Lortz, 1939).

The Reformer used the Latin term coram Deo (meaning before or in the presence of deity) to denote the person's direct relationship to God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43). Luther pictured men and women as living face to face with God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43). The milieu of his day and the ideology of his heart both maintained this spiritual focus (Blayney, 1957).

Luther saw the Christian life as conflictual. People were designed to live face to face in a peaceful relationship with God, but because of human sin and God's holiness humanity lived in separation from God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 77). Luther's personal knowledge of the terrors of such distance from God enabled him to meet, to receive, and to preach the Gospel more authentically as grace and peace (Althaus, 1966).

Luther's personal knowledge and experience of the terrors of distance from God also shaped his view of spirituality. In turn, he provided soul care through the eyes of his own anfechtungen. His anfechtungen were a shortcut for understanding his pastoral care (Begalke, 1982). Years of a terrified conscience led to a humbled sinner who focused on knowing a God of justification (acceptance in Christ) who was no longer angry with sinners, but rather accepted sinners freely because of Christ (LW, Vol. 19, p. 79). Justification by grace through faith (acceptance by God based upon trust in Christ) was the core of his cure, and anfechtung, or the fear of rejection by God, was the context of his care (Begalke, 1982).

Luther as Physician of His Own Soul

Nebe (1893/1894) related Luther's spiritual strivings to his spiritual care giving. In his study of Luther as a spiritual advisor, Nebe discussed the statement, "physician, heal thyself" as it applied to Luther.

> No one can properly advise and care for another, unless he has beforehand advised and cared for himself. He who wishes to help others as a physician of souls, must first of all have conscientiously used the true remedy. Therefore, Luther as a spiritual advisor, had first to care for his own soul (p. 9).

Begalke (1982) concurred with Nebe's assessment. He saw in Luther's sermons, table talks, and letters, consistent evidence that Luther related intimately to the human condition. "The words he shares pastorally are drawn from the Scripture, tempered by his own deep and varied experiences with the anfechtungen. In his dialogues with others, he offers essentially what he has found helpful himself" (p. 16). Luther was a physician of souls, who began as a physician of his own soul. To understand how he cared for others, one needs to understand how he cared for himself, how he diagnosed his own soul, and what prescriptions for soul care he gave his own soul.

Luther was asking, "How do I find a gracious God?" He wanted to know how he could find rest for his soul—how he could be sure that he was acceptable to God.

> When I was in spiritual distress (anfechtung) a gentle word would restore my spirit. Sometimes my confessor said to me when I repeatedly discussed silly sins with him, "You are a fool. God is not incensed against you. God is not angry with you, but you are angry with God" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 15).

Luther was concerned with how to calm his terrified conscience. As he wondered about the state of his soul before God, he was asking, "How can my tortured soul handle the despair it encounters over a sense of separation from God due to my sin?"

> It is not as reason and Satan argue: See there God flings you into prison, endangers your life. Surely he hates you. He is angry with you; for if He did not hate you, He would not allow this thing to happen. In this way Satan turns the rod of a Father into the rope of a hangman and the most salutary remedy into the deadliest poison (LW, Vol. 16, p. 214).

The Reformer longed to know how he could face the terrible trouble of not being able to satisfy God at any point. "I was very pious in the monastery, yet I was sad because I thought God was not gracious to me" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 95). "How can I face the terror of the Holy? The words 'righteous' and 'righteousness of God' struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous I thought, he must punish me" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 193).

Luther was utterly terror stricken at the thought of Christ the righteous Judge of sinful people.

"He (the devil) can make the oddest syllogisms: 'You have sinned. God is angry with sinners. Therefore despair!' Accordingly we must proceed from the law to the gospel and grasp the article concerning the forgiveness of sin" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 275).

To read Luther is to read of an individual who saw his soul and the souls of others in despair. His pastoral care of his own soul and of others, therefore, focused upon spiritual struggles such as religious disquiet, spiritual depression, terror, spiritual restlessness, spiritual despair, tortured soul, alienation from God, spiritual doubt, turmoil, pangs, tremors, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation (LW, Vol. 48, p. 12).

Luther's diagnosis of his own soul is quite consistent. He personally experienced deep spiritual turmoil and he identified this turmoil as resulting from his inability to be sure that a holy God was gracious to him, a sinful person (LW, Vol. 54, p. 95). His central motivating concern was to discover how a sinful person finds relationship with a holy God (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. xix, 28-29, 77, 87-88).

Luther's Narrative of the Cure of His Own Soul

Luther attempted to cure his own soul through methods common in the Medieval Church of his day (Ozment, 1980). These included special service (the monastery), spiritual discipline, the mediation (merits) of the saints, and the confessional (Oberman, 1989).

Luther's Attempt to Cure His Soul through Entrance into the Monastery

Luther made no statements in any of his recorded writings which suggested any other motive for entering the monastery other than the turmoil in his soul. In a letter to his father, Hans Luther, dated November 21, 1521, Luther reflected back on his entrance into the monastery. He wrote to his father that he entered the monastery because he was called by the terrors of heaven, being walled in by the agonies and terror of death (LW, Vol. 48, p. 332).

Bainton (1960) described Luther's experience leading to his entrance to the monastic life.

On a sultry day in July of the year 1505 a lonely traveler was trudging over a parched road on the outskirts of the Saxon village of Stotternheim. He was a young man, short but sturdy, and wore the dress of a university student. As he approached the village, the sky became overcast. Suddenly there was a shower, then a crashing storm. A bolt of lightning rived the gloom and knocked the man to the ground. Struggling to rise, he cried in terror, "St. Anne help me! I will become a monk" (p. 21).

Bainton (1960) noted that there was nothing whatever to delineate Luther from his contemporaries regarding his response to the fear of God, other than the intensity of his experiences. Like his contemporaries, Luther believed what the Church taught. And the Church taught that no sensible person would wait until their deathbed to make an act of contrition and plead for grace (Oberman, 1989). Rather, from beginning to end, the only secure course was to lay hold of every

help the Church had to offer: sacraments, pilgrimages, indulgences, and the intercession of the saints. These were ideas on which Luther and his peers were nurtured. There was nothing peculiar in his beliefs or his responses save their intensity (Oberman, 1989).

Luther entered the monastery to find peace with God. Though driven there for rest for his soul, monastic life failed to ease his guilt (D'Aubigne, 1950). "Then, bowed down by sorrow, I tortured myself by the multitude of my thoughts. 'Look,' exclaimed I, 'thou art still envious, impatient, passionate! It profiteth thee nothing, O wretched man, to have entered this sacred order'" (cited in D'Aubigne, 1950, p. 31).

Luther's Attempt to Cure His Soul through Spiritual Discipline

Luther entered the monastery to quiet his soul. It did not work. The occasion of saying his first mass was like another thunderstorm; this one in his spirit (Ji, 1989). Luther took his place before the altar and began to recite the introductory portion of the mass. Then he came to the words, "We offer unto Thee, the living, the true, the eternal God." At that very moment, the terror of the holy stroke him like lightning.

At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, "With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround him. At his nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable little pygmy, say 'I want this, I ask for that?' For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal and the true God" (cited in Bainton, 1960, p.   41).

Years later he reflected on his experience.

When at length I stood before the altar and was to consecrate, I was so terrified of the words "to Thee the eternal, living, and true God" that I thought of running away from the altar. So terrified was I by those words! Already I had forebodings that something was wrong (LW, Vol. 54, p. 156).

Later Luther reported that he was unable to speak when he came to the point in the mass where he was to offer the bread to God as a sacrifice. He was terrified at the thought of speaking to God without a mediator, and wondered who could bear the majesty of God without Christ as mediator. He concluded his table talk by stating, "In short, as a monk I experienced such horrors; I had to experience them before I could fight them" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 234).

Luther desperately longed to know where and how fellowship with God occurred (McGrath, 1990). Since he did not believe that he could appear before the tribunal of a terrible God with an impure heart; he must become holy. Thus, he had a great thirst for spiritual purity but unanswered questions about where he could find it. His quest for such fellowship through holiness took him through the path of spiritual disciplines (Lucas, 1960).

There was no better place to practice spiritual disciplines than in the monastery of his day (Begalke, 1980). Here one found heroic athletes who rigorously attempted to take heaven by storm (Blayney, 1957). One of the privileges of monastic life was that it freed the sinner from all distractions and allowed the person to save their soul by practicing all the spiritual disciplines: charity, sobriety, love, chastity, poverty, obedience, fastings, vigils, and mortifications of the flesh (Oberman, 1989). Luther became a monk among monks. As Bainton (1960) noted, "Whatever good works a man might do to save himself, these Luther was resolved to perform" (p. 45).

Luther's own words declared this commitment. If the Apostle Paul could say that he was a Hebrew among Hebrews, then Luther could certainly proclaim that he was a monk among monks.

> I was a good monk, and I kept the rules of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work (cited in Bainton, 1960, p. 45).

In his table talks, Luther spoke of how strictly he observed his routine of prayers.

> When I was a monk I was unwilling to omit any of the prayers, but when I was busy with public lecturing and writing I often accumulated my appointed prayers for a whole week, or even two or three weeks. Then I would take a Saturday off, or shut myself in for as long as three days without food and drink, until I had said the prescribed prayers. This made my head split, and as a consequence I could not close my eyes for five nights, lay sick unto death, and went out of my senses (LW, Vol. 54, p. 85).

Fasting was another form of spiritual discipline. In later years Luther commented that "only truly afflicted consciences fasted in earnest" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 339). He was certainly referring to himself as he noted, "I almost fasted myself to death, for again and again I went for three days without taking a drop of water or a morsel of food. I was very serious about it" (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 339-340).

Luther failed to find peace for his anguished soul in his works of righteousness, for all his strivings simply increased his despair (McGrath, 1990). The purpose of his good works were to compensate for his sins, but he could never believe that the ledger was truly balanced (Brecht, 1994). The trouble was that he could not satisfy a holy God at any point. Later in life, when studying the Sermon on the Mount, Luther expressed the disillusionment of his early years. Referring to the words of Christ, he penned:

> This word is too high and too hard that anyone should fulfill it. This is proved not merely by our Lord's words but by our own experience and feeling. Take any upright man or woman. He will get along very nicely with those who do not provoke him, but let someone proffer only the slightest irritation and he will flare up in anger . . . if not against friends, then against enemies. Flesh and blood can not rise above it (cited in Bainton, 1960, p. 46).

Luther's Attempt to Cure His Soul through the Merits of the Saints

The great desire of Luther's soul was to find assurance for his own salvation. However, all the rigor of the ascetic life could not quiet his conscience. "I saw that I was a great sinner in the eyes of God and I did not think it possible for me to propitiate him by my own merits" (cited in D'Aubigne, 1950, p. 32). So he fled to the merits of the saints. For moderns to understand this, they must understand first the thinking of the common person of the Middle Ages. Bainton (1960) summarized this thinking.

> The Church, while taking an individualistic view of sin, takes a corporate view of goodness. Sins must be accounted for one by one, but goodness can be pooled; and there is something to pool because the saints, the Blessed Virgin, and the Son of God were better than they needed to be for their own salvation. Christ in particular, being both sinless and God, is possessed of an unbounded store. These superfluous merits of righteousness constitute a treasury which is transferrable to those whose account are in arrears. The transfer is effected through the Church, and particularly, through the pope, to whom the successor of St. Peter have been committed the keys to bind and loose. Such a transfer is called an indulgence (pp. 46-47).

Luther, wanting to take full benefit of such a transfer, felt himself highly privileged when an opportunity arose for him to go to Rome (Ozment, 1980). Rome, like no city on earth, was richly endowed with spiritual indulgences so Luther would seek to appropriate for himself and his relatives all the enormous benefits available (Oberman, 1989).

But doubts assailed him. He was climbing Pilate's stairs on hands and knees repeating a Pater Noster for each and kissing each step for good measure in the hope of delivering a soul from purgatory (Oberman, 1989). At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, "Who knows whether it is so?" (cited in Bainton, 1960, p. 51). He later espoused that he had gone to Rome with onions and returned with garlic (Bainton, 1960). Now another tenet of hope was shattered for Luther. He did not find the merit to earn the grace of God, nor did the Church have the means to quell his conscience and to free his soul.

Luther's Attempt to Cure His Soul through Confession

Luther thought that if he could not acquire heaven by becoming a saint, or by the merits of the saints, then perhaps by the confession of every known sin. This too became a futile remedy for Luther, as his own words attest.

> While I was a monk, I no sooner felt assailed by any temptation than I cried out—"I am lost!" Immediately I had recourse to a thousand methods to stifle the cries of my conscience. I went everyday to confession, but that was of no use to me (cited in D'Aubigne, 1950, p. 24).

For a Christian of his time and place, the whole sacramental system was designed to mediate

God's help to people. The sacrament of penance, or confession, was particularly designed not for the saint, but for the help of the sinner (McNeil, 1951). Luther, seeing himself as the chief of sinners, made quick use of this means of forgiveness. He confessed frequently, often daily for as long as six hours. He believed that every sin, in order to be absolved, was to be confessed. Therefore, the memory must be searched for sins of action and sins of motivation. Luther would review his entire life, to be sure of remembering everything, until his confessor grew weary (LW, Vol. 54, p. 15).

The great difficulty experienced by Luther was his lack of assurance that everything had been recalled. His soul would recoil in horror when, after six hours of confession, a new sin would come to mind which he had not remembered (LW, Vol. 54, p. 15). Even more frightening was the realization that some sins were not even recognized as such by sinners. Luther's despair only escalated.

> I often made confession to Staupitz, not about women but about really serious sins. He said, "I don't understand you." This was real consolation! Afterward when I went to another confessor I had the same experience. In short, no confessor wanted to have anything to do with me. Then I thought, "Nobody has this same temptation except you," and I became as dead as a corpse . . . I was very pious in the monastery, yet I was sad because I thought God was not gracious to me. And yet my conscience could never give me certainty, but I always doubted and said, "You did not perform that correctly" (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 94-95).

It was at this time that a very important figure entered Luther's life. His name was John Staupitz, who was provincial of his order in Thuringia and Saxony, and became vicar-general of the Augustines for all Germany (Begalke, 1980). The anguish of soul and the internal struggles of which Luther had fallen prey were evident to Staupitz upon their first introduction. D'Aubigne (1950) described Luther when he was first encountered by Staupitz.

> He was a young man of middle height, whom study, fasting, and prolonged vigils had so wasted away that all his bones might be counted. His eyes, that were in later years compared to a falcon's, were sunken; his manner was dejected; his countenance betrayed an agitated mind, the prey of a thousand struggles, but yet strong and resolute. His whole appearance was grave, melancholy, and solemn (p. 37).

By this point, Luther had probed every resource of the contemporary Church for assuaging the anguish of a spirit alienated from God. When Staupitz met him, he met a man in the midst of the most frightful insecurities. Panic had invaded Luther's spirit. His soul was tortured by despair due to his sense of separation from God over sin (Begalke, 1980).

Luther's Spiritual Trials and His Spiritual Care

Luther's own narrative of his life clearly suggests that he saw his problem as personal spiritual

alienation from God due to his sinfulness. His soul longed for an answer to the question, "How do I find a gracious God?" Luther's essential motivating concern was to find a way to be received by God (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 12-14). Luther's entire theology developed in response to this quest (McGrath, 1990), and his pastoral care ministry was the outworking of his theological answer to this existential question (Ivarson, 1962).

Peter Manns (1983) noted that it was Luther's religious experience which canonized his pastoral work. Luther strove to bring a consolation of a terrified conscience to himself and to those to whom he ministered. He concluded that one finds relief from an anxious conscience only through the unconditional forgiveness of sin granted as a gift of grace from God through His Son, Jesus Christ (McGrath, 1990). This was to be the focus of his ministry of soul care and spiritual direction (Begalke, 1980).

McCue (1983) concurred. He saw the solution to understanding Luther's whole career as reformer and pastor to be Luther's search for a cure for a terrified conscience. His answer or cure, as codified in the Augsburg Confession, was the doctrine of justification by grace through faith (the belief that God joyfully accepts sinners when they place their trust in Jesus as their Savior). McCue noted that Luther's ministry grew out of his diagnosis of the major ills of the Church of his time and out of his diagnosis of the major angst of his own soul. The burning contextual question for Luther was, "How do men and women of my day find peace with God?"

Tappert (1955) came to a similar conclusion. He saw Luther's work as a ministry of the Gospel of grace for a troubled soul struggling with a lack of faith. For personal sin, Luther's soul care beckoned the sinner to God's remedy of grace. For those suffering because they have been sinned against or live in a sinful world, Luther's ministry guided them to the goodness and love of God. Luther's idea was that, if an individual is sure of God's grace, then everything would be well with his or her soul.

Other Luther researchers have also described the connection between Luther's spiritual strivings and his pastoral ministry. Blayney (1957) believed that Luther's pastoral reforms were the direct result of the spiritual struggles which unceasingly beset him. Nebe (1893/1894) drew the identical conclusion, observing that Luther the pastor was driven by the question, "How do sinners bridge their separation from God?" Luther was driven to the monastery because he was compelled to find rest for his soul. He was moved to the ministry of reformer and pastor because he desired to help others to find rest for their troubled souls through the grace of God in Christ (Oberman, 1994).

Kittleson (1983) believed that the key to understanding Luther as an educational reformer was to be found in understanding his view of sin and his attempt to answer the question, "How do I find a gracious God?" His was a theology of the cross which saw a person's problem as spiritual (sin) and the answer as spiritual (grace). In order to understand Luther, Kittleson believed that one must understand his concept of coram Deo or fear in the presence of a holy God which is remedied only by faith in Christ—God's prescription for the cure for sin and fear.

Kolb (1983) believed that Luther's reforming ministry was designed to meet the pastoral care crisis caused by what Luther perceived to be the failure of the Medieval Church to address the spiritual needs of his contemporaries. Luther's personal spiritual experience of anfechtungen provided the individual context for his pastoral care. Out of this context came a theology; out of this

theology came an approach to soul care.

Theological Convictions as a Primary Shaping Factor in Luther's Pastoral Care

Luther came to believe that he could never satisfy God through himself or through the Church (Althaus, 1966). This realization led him to continue his search for a right relationship with God. For Luther, this search would be a theological one (Klug, 1993).

Luther was asking, "How can the conscience of an unrighteous person find peace before a righteous God?" Later he would teach that a healthy conscience was one which was at peace with God and with one's fellow human beings (Luther, 1535/1988). Once Luther came to a freeing conviction about peace for the sinful conscience (his personal and theological quest), the rest of his life focused on the pastoral care work of empowering a peaceful conscience to flourish (LW, Vol. 48, p. 12).

Luther found his peace with God through a personal quest that led to a theological answer. In one of his earliest extant letters, Luther wrote with forcefulness about his theological conviction. In this letter, he addressed George Spenlein who was an Augustinian friar in the monastery at Wittenburg. Luther wrote with great confidence as he presented his admonitions concerning answers for the soul.

> Now I should like to know whether your soul, tired of its own righteousness, is learning to be revived by and to trust in the righteousness of Christ. For in our age the temptation to presumption besets many, especially those who try with all their might to be just and good without knowing the righteousness of God, which is most bountifully and freely given us in Christ. They try to do good of themselves in order that they might stand before God clothed in their own virtues and merits. But this is impossible. While you were here, you were one who held this opinion, or rather error. So was I (LW, Vol. 48, p. 12).

The dispatch continues for several more pages. Luther's focus in those pages held the seminal ideas which he would develop over the rest of his lifetime: trust in the crucified and resurrected Christ, the grace and love of Christ, Christ's death as an atonement or substitution of His righteousness for the sinfulness of humanity, damnation for those who do not believe these doctrines, and temporal and eternal peace for those who do so believe (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 12-14).

This letter was written in 1516. In 1510, Luther had just returned from his trip to Rome. By this point, he realized that the religious answers of his day would not quiet his soul. Years later (1537), in his table talks, he summarized his experience in Rome. There, his chief concern was that he "might make a full confession of my sins from my youth up and might become pious" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 237). But all he found was the shamelessness, godlessness, and wickedness of the people, himself included (LW, Vol. 54, p. 237).

Something happened during the six years between his return from Rome to the writing of his letter to Spenlein. To understand Luther's theology and ministry, one must clarify what transpired during those six years in Luther's life and soul to transform his life and his theology.

The Transfer to Wittenberg under Johann von Staupitz

Upon his return from Rome, Luther came under new influences due to a change of residence. He was transferred from Erfurt to Wittenberg, where Luther lived in the Augustinian cloister at the opposite end from the Castle Church (Lucas, 1960). The chief glory of the village was the university. In 1511 Luther was invited to be one of the new professors (Oberman, 1989).

By reason of the move, he became acquainted with the vicar of the Augustinian order, Johann von Staupitz, who was to have a significant influence upon Luther. Of Staupitz, Bainton (1960) wrote:

No one better could have been found as a spiritual guide. The vicar knew all the cures prescribed by the schoolmen for spiritual ailments, and besides had a warm religious life of his own with a sympathetic appreciation of the distresses of another. "If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz," said Luther, "I should have sunk in hell" (p. 53).

For a time Staupitz was Luther's confessor. During this time Staupitz pointed Luther away from the idea of confessing individual sins, and taught Luther that to focus on particular offenses was a counsel of despair.

Luther discovered that there was something more drastically wrong with people than any particular list of offenses that could be enumerated, confessed, and forgiven. The very nature of a person was corrupt; the whole nature needed to be changed (Lucas, 1960). For Luther, the penitential system failed because it was directed to particular lapses (Hower, 1983). Luther had perceived that the entire person was in need of forgiveness (LW, Vol. 48, p. 68). Thus confession was no solution, it only exacerbated the already insecure conscience.

Now Luther's whole person stood exposed before a holy God and he became obsessed with the picture of Christ the avenger (Oberman, 1989). So Staupitz cast about to find some way to console Luther. Plainly argument and comfort were ineffectual; some other way had to be found (Oberman). The solution was paradoxical. Luther would study for his doctor's degree so that he could undertake preaching and assume the chair of Bible at the University. Bainton (1960) noted the audacity of such a move. "A young man on the verge of a nervous collapse over religious problems was to be commissioned as a teacher, preacher, and counselor to sick souls. Staupitz was practically saying, 'Physician, cure thyself by curing others'" (p. 60).

The solution was also practical. Luther committed himself to learn and expound the Scriptures. On August 1, 1513, he began to lecture on the Psalms. In 1515 he began to lecture on St. Paul's epistle to the Romans. The Epistle to the Galatians was treated from 1516 to 1517 (Begalke, 1980).

Bainton (1960) called the study of Romans Luther's "Damascus Road" (p. 60). He compared it to two earlier events in his life. Bainton saw these events as three great spiritual crises. The first upheaval was in the thunderstorm; the second tremor was at the saying of his first mass; the third crisis was much more quiet—it came as he studied the Word of God.

Through these studies, Luther began to see God in a different light. His image of God was radically altered—where God had been an angry enemy, He was now a loving Father. Where Christ

had been an avenging judge, He was now a gracious Savior (LW, Vol. 48, p. 66). This change occurred through Luther's study of the Word coupled with his involvement with two men of God.

Luther wrote of an old, pious monk, whose name is unfortunately lost, to whom he told his agonies of conscience. This monk guided Luther to that principal article of faith, in which it is said, "I believe in a forgiveness of sins" (LSA, p. 10). He explained that this article meant that sinners are not only in general to believe that some receive pardon, but that God commands every person individually to believe that his or her sins are forgiven. "'Son, what are you doing?'" said the venerable teacher to his pupil, who with many tears was deploring his temptations, "'Do you not know that the Lord has commanded us to hope?'" (LSA, pp. 10-11). Later while working on Psalms 51:9, Luther was to say, "By this one word, 'commanded,' I was so strengthened that I knew that the absolution was to be believed" (LSA, p. 11).

Dr. Staupitz continued to give his aid while Luther worked on the Psalms. He summarized the dilemma of Luther's soul with these words. "There is a great mountain. 'You must cross it'—says the Law. 'I will cross it,'—says presumption. 'You cannot,'—says the conscience. 'Then I won't attempt it,'—says despair" (LSA, p. 11). Those were words that Luther would never forget. Staupitz encouraged Luther by speaking of a Christ who does not alarm, but who comforts. Staupitz would say, "Look at the wounds of Christ and at his blood shed for you." (LSA, pp. 11-12).

The Reformer was further liberated from his morbid consciousness of sin by the statement:

> You want to be an imaginary sinner and to regard Christ as an imaginary Saviour. You must accustom yourself to think that Christ is a real Saviour and that you are a real sinner. God does nothing for fun nor for show, and he is not joking when he sends his Son and delivers him up for us (LSA, p. 12).

John von Staupitz also impacted Luther's view of the penitential system of his day. Several years later (1518) Luther wrote to Staupitz to thank him for his wonderful consolation (LW, Vol. 48, pp. 64-70). This consolation came from their discussion of the term poenitentia. Luther's new understanding of poenitentia became a key concept in Luther's personal spiritual transformation.

Poenitentia meant either the remorse of the sinner or the penance imposed on the sinner by the Church (McNeil, 1962). The penitential system of the Medieval Church fused both meanings into the term "do penance" which meant both a contrite heart on the part of the sinner and the fulfillment of satisfactions.

Luther's desperation in the monastery was partially caused by this understanding. On the one hand, he realized that he could never completely atone for his sins despite his constant struggle to do penance properly. On the other hand, he believed that without poenitentia no one could stand before God free of guilt (LW, Vol. 48, p. 65).

Luther praised Staupitz for relieving him of the distress of his tortured conscience. "Therefore, I accepted you as a messenger from heaven when you said that poenitentia is genuine only if it begins with love for justice and for God . . ." (LW, Vol. 48, p. 65). Thus, under Staupitz, Luther learned that poenitentia began with love for God, that is, with a heart turned to God. A further central concept learned by Luther was that a heart may be brought to this love and repentance only by the

God of grace and love who reveals Himself in Jesus Christ and not by servile fear and guilt (McGrath, 1990).

Upon coming to this understanding, Luther wrote a letter to Staupitz which was filled with the joy of discovery.

> . . . biblical words came leaping toward me from all sides, clearly smiling and nodding assent to your statement. They so supported your opinion that while formerly no word in the whole Scripture was more bitter to me than poenitentia . . . now no word sounds sweeter or more pleasant to me than poentenia (LW, Vol. 48, p. 66).

Luther spoke further to Staupitz in this letter of the sweetness of the Savior and of the wounds of Christ. This sweetness was reflected in the grace of God by which the change of mind or repentance was brought about.

The Reformer concluded his letter by connecting these discoveries to the writing of the Ninety-Five Theses. He explained, how in his joy, he began to teach this new understanding. But such teaching met resistance. So what did Luther do? "Since I was not able to counteract the furor of these men, I determined modestly to take issue with them and to pronounce their teachings as open to debate" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 68). What Luther considered "modest," was none other than the Ninety-Five Theses which began the Reformation movement.

The Study of the Word of God

During these same years, Luther made additional discoveries (Oberman, 1989). In studying Psalm 22, he found that Christ Himself had experienced anfechtungen. For in this Psalm was the verse cited by Christ on the Cross, "My God, My God, why hath thou forsaken me?" Christ had suffered what Luther had suffered and Luther wanted to know how this could be, for he did not understand why the sinless Christ should have known such desolation. Luther, yes. Christ, no. Christ was neither weak, nor sinful (Oberman).

Luther concluded that the only explanation must be that Christ took to Himself the iniquity of the human race. "He who was without sin, for our sake became sin for us and so identified Himself with us as to participate in our alienation" (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 75-77). A new picture of Christ was emerging for Luther.

A new view of the Father was also developing. The All Terrible was now the All Merciful. Wrath and love came together on the cross of Christ (McGrath, 1990). Somehow in the utter desolation of the forsaken Christ, God the Father was able to reconcile the world to Himself (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 28-29).

The contemplation of the cross had convinced Luther that God was not malicious, but there still remained the problem of the justice of God. Bainton (1960) described the dilemma now facing Luther. "Wrath can melt into mercy, and God will be all the more the Christian God; but if justice be dissolved in leniency, how can he be the just God whom Scripture describes?" (p. 64).

The study of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans proved to be of inestimable value to Luther in

answering this final question. In the fall of 1515, Dr. Martin Luther, now professor of Sacred Theology at the University of Wittenburg, Saxony, began to expound to his students the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Oberman, 1989). This was three years after he had joined the Wittenburg faculty and two years before he posted his famous Ninety-Five Theses. The lectures were begun on November 3, 1515, and continued till September 7, 1516. As Luther prepared his lectures, he gradually came to a clear knowledge of what he saw as the central teaching of Scripture, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ without works (Forde, 1988).

In his preface to the written edition of his lecture notes on Romans, Luther wrote:

This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xiii).

In Romans, Luther found the answers that he had been searching after for so long. Here he found that the route to God led through the path of faith. "Hence it comes that faith alone makes righteous and fulfills the law . . ." (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xv). In Romans, he found the essence of sin to be unbelief or lack of faith.

Hence Christ calls unbelief the only sin, when He says, in John 16, "The Spirit will rebuke the world for sin, because they believe not on me." For this reason, too, before good or bad works are done, which are the fruits, there must first be in the heart faith or unbelief, which is the root, the sap, the chief power of all sin (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xvi).

Here, also, he uncovered the meaning of faith. In that meaning he found the implication of faith—life lived freely and powerfully for God and others.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace and knowledge of it makes all men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures; and this is the work of the Holy Ghost in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace; and thus is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fires (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xvii).

Most importantly for Luther's struggle and for the development of his Reformation theology, it was in Romans that Luther found the meaning of righteousness. "Righteousness, then, is such a faith and is called 'God's righteousness' or 'the righteousness that avails before God,' because God gives it and counts it as righteousness for the sake of Christ, our Mediator, and makes a man give to every man what he owes him" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xvii).

His lectures on Romans provided all subsequent generations with a theological description of his Reformation thinking. His descriptions of his tower experience of conversion provides the

researcher with a much more personal portrait of his Reformation thinking. They provide the reader with Luther's answers to the questions, How can the conscience of an unrighteous person find peace before a righteous God? How does a good conscience flourish? (LW, Vol. 54).

The Tower Experience

Luther's tower experience is so called because it occurred in the tower of the Black Cloister in Wittenburg (later Luther's home) at an undetermined date between 1508 and 1518 (Oberman, 1989). In later years Luther often reflected on this experience and saw it as the break through for which he had been searching.

The tower experience focused on the righteousness of God.

The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous (I thought), he must punish. But when by God's grace I pondered, in the tower and heated room of this building, over the words, "He who through faith is righteous shall live" (Rom. 1:17) and "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:21), I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous men, ought to live from faith and if the righteousness of God should contribute to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation won't be our merit but God's mercy. My spirit was thereby cheered. For it's by the righteousness of God that we're justified and saved through Christ. These words (which had before terrified me) became more pleasing to me. The Holy Spirit unveiled the Scriptures for me in this tower (LW, Vol. 54, pp. 193-194).

The very expression at which Luther had trembled, "the justice of God," now became his friend. He had taken it to mean that justice whereby God was just and dealt justly in punishing the unjust. Luther, the impeccable monk, saw himself as standing before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, having no confidence that his merit would assuage God's justice. He would say that on account of this he did not love this just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him and likewise "hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17)" (LW, Vol. 54, p. 309).

Daily, he pondered the phrases from Romans 1:16-17 about the righteousness of God and the just living by faith (Becker, 1969). Then, he grasped that the justice of God was that righteousness by which, through grace and sheer mercy, God justified sinners through faith (Luther, 1516/1954). This Pauline passage became Luther's gateway to heaven, as he felt himself reborn and transported to paradise. Whereas previously the righteousness of God had filled him with hate, now it became to him inexpressibly sweet (LW, Vol. 54, p. 309).

Staupitz, Psalms, and Romans all converged to provide Luther with a new view of Christ, of God, and of himself. He saw Christ as a gracious Savior instead of an avenging judge. He viewed God as a loving Father instead of a wrathful enemy. He perceived himself as loved by God and free to love instead of being hated by God and consumed with hate (LW, Vol. 54, p. 70).

Bainton (1960) summarized the lasting impact these new views had on Luther.

Luther's new insights contained already the marrow of his mature theology. The salient ideas were present in the lectures on Psalms and Romans from 1513 to 1516. What came after was but commentary and sharpening to obviate misconstruction. The center about which all the petals clustered was the affirmation of the forgiveness of sins through the utterly unmerited grace of God made possible by the cross of Christ, which reconciled wrath and mercy, routed the hosts of hell, triumphed over sin and death, and by the resurrection manifested that power which enables man to die to sin and rise to newness of life. This was the theology of Paul, heightened, intensified, and clarified. Beyond these cardinal tenets Luther was never to go (p. 68).

Luther's quest for personal peace and theological answers was finally complete. He came to the conviction that the conscience of an unrighteous person finds peace before a righteous God through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Having found such personal spiritual peace, Luther now experienced freedom of conscience (McGrath, 1990). This energized him to shift his focus from his own spiritual state to a focus on the spiritual state of those to whom he was called to pastor. This shift began the theological and pastoral career of Martin Luther (McNeil, 1951).

The Ninety-Five Theses

Luther's Ninety-Five Theses are both the logical and historical bridge between Luther the individual and Luther the pastor. In his letter to Staupitz, Luther explained that he was motivated to speak and write about true repentance after he understood and experienced the scriptural meaning of poenitentia. When he did speak out on this matter, Luther was not well received. "While this thought was still agitating me, behold, suddenly around us new war trumpets of indulgences and the bugles of pardon started to sound . . ." (LW, Vol. 48, p. 68).

Other priests and monks still clung to the prevailing view of poenitentia with its insistence on acts of penance to gain pardon and merit before God. Of these men, Luther wrote, "Finally, they taught impious, false, and heretical things with so much authority—temerity, I wanted to say—that if anyone muttered anything in protest he was immediately a heretic for the stake and guilty of eternal damnation" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 68). It was at this point that Luther wrote his "modest" response—the Ninety-Five Theses.

According to the officially sanctioned practice of the Medieval Church, absolution of sin was granted to the sinner who had repented, upon his confession and penance (such as fasting, prayers, pilgrimages) (LW, Vol. 48, p. 43). Yet the sinner who was reconciled to God through absolution still had to experience purgatory. This was considered a place and state of temporary punishment wherein the sinner would expiate his venial sins and experience punishment for mortal sins already forgiven. Indulgences relaxed or even commuted the punishment that the penitent would have to undergo both in this world and in purgatory (McNeil, 1962). Indulgence letters were granted for certain religious works such as participation in a crusade, the visiting of certain shrines, praying in sanctuaries where relics of saints were kept, ordering and paying for the celebration of masses, or simply for the payment of money to the church, a practice which became extremely popular in

Luther's day (LW, Vol. 48, p. 43).

The treasury of the merits of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of all the saints made available sufficient benefits to compensate for all the sinners' punishment. This treasury was entrusted to the Church and made available to the faithful by the granting of indulgences. During the Middle Ages, indulgences were considered a way of shortening one's own suffering in purgatory as well as abbreviating the suffering of loved ones already in purgatory (LW, Vol. 48, p. 44).

Since purgatory was to cleanse the sinner of any guilt as yet unatoned, people increasingly viewed indulgences as a means of canceling their guilt (McNeil, 1934). This inflamed Luther as he had broken free from guilt and was concerned that others also find such freedom from guilt in grace (LW, Vol. 48, p. 45).

When Luther first dealt with the indulgence issue, the papacy had issued various decrees concerning the understanding and handling of indulgences. In 1506, Pope Julius II proclaimed a plenary indulgence which was renewed by Pope Leo X. The proceeds were directed to the construction of the Church of St. Peter in Rome (Manchester, 1992). These indulgences were being handled just outside of Luther's parish. Many of his "flock" journeyed to the Dominican John Tetzel to purchase their freedom from guilt. Moved by deep pastoral concern, Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg on October 31, 1517. That same day, a cover letter was sent by Luther to Cardinal Albrecht (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46). In it, Luther's motivation for his Reformation ministry was outlined.

Luther expressed great concern for the common people. "I bewail the gross misunderstanding among the people which comes from these preachers and which they spread everywhere among common men. Evidently the poor souls believe that when they have bought indulgence letters they are then assured of their salvation" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46).

The Reformer then directly addressed the Cardinal. "O great God! The souls committed to your care, excellent Father, are thus directed to death. For all these souls you have the heaviest and a constantly increasing responsibility. Therefore, I can no longer be silent on this subject" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46).

Even at this early stage of his reforming career, Luther insisted that the pure Gospel of grace be preached. "The first and only duty of the bishops, however, is to see that the people learn the gospel and the love of Christ. For on no occasion has Christ ordered that indulgences should be preached, but he forcefully commanded the gospel to be preached" (LW, Vol. 48, p. 47).

Three years later Luther wrote a third letter to the Cardinal. His position had only strengthened as had his rhetoric.

> My humble supplication to Your Electoral Grace is, therefore, that Your Electoral Grace refrain from leading the poor people astray and from robbing them, and present yourself as a bishop and not as a wolf. It is sufficiently well known that indulgences are nothing else but knavery and fraud and that Christ alone should be preached to the people (LW, Vol. 48, p. 341).

Luther's pastoral and theological concerns merged at this point. He was convinced that indulgences were positively harmful to the recipients because they impeded salvation by diverting one from the

grace of God in Christ received by faith. They further induced a false sense of security. Luther reasoned that since Christ came to save sinners, then the person who feels all his sins atoned for by indulgences will no longer see him or herself as a sinner. In this state of self-deception, the need for faith in the sacrifice of Christ for sin is lessened (LW, Vol. 48, p. 46).

Luther's personal and pastoral theology was now developing. For himself and all people, the great issue was finding right standing before a righteous God. "How does the unrighteous conscience find peace with a righteous God?" Peace was experienced neither through indulgences, nor through any means other than faith in the grace of God in the person and work of Christ (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 89-92). Luther's personal experience determined the reforming agenda of his theological and pastoral work. His personal experience centered on the question, "How can I find a gracious God?" He longed to gain the conviction that God loved and accepted him (Zietlow, 1969).

Luther achieved such conviction for his own soul when he experienced acceptance by God based upon trust in Christ. He now sensed that right relationship with God was found in Christ (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 295). The sinner is justified (accepted) by the grace of God in Christ. According to Luther, in justification God the Father looks at the believer and sees only Christ the Son. Since Christ is both perfect and perfectly loved by the Father, the Christian is now seen as perfect and is perfectly loved and accepted by the Father (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 28-29, 77). This acceptance, or justification by grace through faith in Christ, results in peace (relationship, harmony, rest, confidence, assurance) with God (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 87-88).

Luther's doctrine of justification by faith made all the difference in how he provided soul care (Oberman, 1989). In the remainder of this appendix, stress will be laid upon understanding the core of Luther's theology relative to his soul care and spiritual direction.

Luther's Relational Theology

In order to understand justification by faith, an underlying question must be addressed: "Why is justification by faith needed?" This question can be answered when one understands what might be called Luther's theology of life, or his theological philosophy of life. Earlier this was labeled coram Deo. This Latin phrase means "in the presence of God" (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 273). It concentrates the mind's attention on the idea of humanity living face to face with God (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 274).

For Luther, coram Deo faith was the very center of life and ideology (McGrath, 1990). All of existence found its final meaning and object in God. All emotions, thoughts, and actions had God as their circumference: the deepest questions were questions about God and the deepest issues were issues relating to God (Luther, 1516, 1954, p. 43). For Luther, life is God-saturated and Christ-centered. All reality is ultimately the person face to face with God because life is a story of personal encounter with God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43). Luther's story was the story of relationship with God and his vocalizing questions were God-focused (Galli, 1993). If not for this, then the question of "How am I doing with God?" would be mute. It would never have carried such weight for Luther. For him, religious life embraced and permeated all of life, for sacred and secular were not dichotomized (Kolb, 1982).

Luther's relational theology was inclusive of all people, not just Christians. Two of his key theological works make this very plain. Both in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525/1957) and his *Commentary on Romans* (1516/1954) he emphasized that everyone is an in-relationship-to-God-being. The relationship to God was held to be primary. Apart from Christ, in-relationship-to-God-beings are moving-away-from-God-beings. Or, as he put it in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525/1957), "men-holding-down-the-truth-in-unrighteousness" (p. 274). He saw all people as in relationship to God. Pre-Christ, this relationship is one in which people are under the wrath of God.

Further, Luther taught that every individual ever born had a clear knowledge of God, especially of the Godhead and of God's omnipotence (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43). There is in every heart a knowledge of a divine sovereign Being. "Manifestly they knew that God is mighty, invisible, just, immortal and good. But they erred in ascribing to their idols the divine attributes (that belong only to the true God)" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43).

There were no atheists in Luther's world. "He who rejects the Creator needs must worship the creature" (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 45). According to Luther, all people are worshiping beings and every person has a knowledge of the true God, but chooses to not retain that knowledge, consequently, this knowledge is suppressed. Such suppression never equals absence of relationship, since everyone is an-in-relationship-to-God-being. It is just that those without Christ are moving-away-from-God-beings and under-the-wrath-of-God-beings (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 45).

Luther's very personal question can be transcribed into theological language. The personal question was, How can I find peace with God? The theological question was, How can in-relationship-with-God-beings who are moving-away-from-God-beings and under-the-wrath-of-God-beings become moving-toward-God-beings and under-the-grace-of-God-beings? (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 43).

The Reformer taught that people can live in one of two ways. They can live in opposition to God, which is called sin, or, they can live in trust in God, which is called faith (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 78). Comprehending this theological conviction is essential in attempting to understand Luther since his anthropology stressed orientation. As he provided soul care, he was asking himself the question, Is this person oriented toward God or away from God? His anthropology was holistic in the sense that he saw the whole person in every aspect of life being confronted by the reality of God. The flesh-oriented person was oriented away from God; he or she had his or her back to God (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 43-46). The spirit-oriented person was oriented to God; she or he had her or his face to God.

> Another thunderbolt is Paul's statement that the righteousness of God is manifested and avails "unto all and upon all them that believe" in Christ, and that "there is no difference." Here again in the plainest words he divides the whole human race into two. To believers he gives the righteousness of God; to unbelievers he denies it . . . In Rom. 8, dividing the human race into two, "flesh" and "spirit," as Christ does . . . . (Luther, 1525/1957, pp. 290, 299).

Humanity lives coram Deo because everyone exists in relationship to God. That was not debatable in Luther's theology. What was up for debate in Luther's day was how the relationship to

God became peaceful.

Luther's Doctrine of Justification by Grace through Faith

Luther suggested a simple answer: peace with God comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His introduction to Romans 5:1, in his commentary on Romans, explains his view.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom we have access by faith . . ." Since God now has justified us by faith, and not by works, we have peace with Him both in heart and conscience . . . . (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 87-88).

What had been a lifelong battle, now became a lifelong mission. With the zeal of a missionary, Luther proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith.

Then he begins to teach the right way by which men must be justified and saved, and says they are all sinners and without praise from God, but they must be justified, without merit, through faith in Christ, who has earned this for us by His blood, and has been made for us a mercyseat by God, Who forgives us all former sins, proving thereby that we were aided only by His righteousness, which He gives in faith . . . God certainly desires to save us not through our own righteousness, but through the righteousness and wisdom of someone else or by means of a righteousness which does not originate on earth, but comes down from heaven. So, then, we must teach a righteousness which in every way comes from without and is entirely foreign to us . . . . Very well, then, we know of ourselves that we are unrighteous; we also know that we are inclined to evil and that inwardly we are enemies of God. We believe therefore that we must be justified before God, but this we desire to achieve by our prayers, repentance and confession. We do not want Christ, for God can give us His righteousness even without Christ. To this the Apostle replies: Such a wicked demand God neither will nor can fulfill, for Christ is God; righteousness for justification is given only through faith in Jesus Christ (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. xix, 28-29, 77).

Combining Luther's doctrine of justification and his relational theology involves seeing Christ in every piece of the human puzzle. To Luther, Christ was the missing piece because he was the God-man—God incarnate (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 89-92). Luther became fascinated by this concept as he studied Psalms 22 and noted the anfechtungen of Christ. For Luther, Christ is God in the flesh, dwelling among His creation and experiencing all that humanity experiences. He is the God-man who lived a perfect sinless life and died a substitutionary death for His children.

Relationship between God and man and woman can only be found through the God-man (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 89-92). The Reformer insisted that the bridge of separation between sinful people and the sinless God could only be spanned by the way of the Cross of Christ. Since Luther saw Christ as the mediator between God and God's children, he believed that peace with God and freedom in life was experienced only in Christ (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 79).

Luther saw sin as a relational issue, not simply a matter of actions or behaviors. Luther, 1525/1957, pp. 272-278). Apart from Christ, human beings stand before God as sinners. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (3:23). Men are altogether without any virtue in which they may glory (before God). They have no righteousness at all of which to boast before God . . ." (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 77).

The essence of sin, for Luther, was the failure to acknowledge one's need for Christ's righteousness. According to Luther, this sense of adequacy in self kept women and men separated from God. People remain moving-away-from-God-beings as long as they are without-faith-in-Christ-beings (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 77).

Luther taught that until a person recognizes his or her status as a sinful person separated from a holy God and hopelessly inadequate in self, he or she will remain relationally apart from God (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 77). Therefore, faith is required. Faith meant more for Luther than mental knowledge. Rather, it meant deep heart trust in the God Who personally speaks to His children through the Bible. Faith was a person's reaffirmation of their absolute reliance upon God for acceptance (Luther, 1535/1988, pp. 89-92). According to Luther, it was by faith in Christ that one again becomes a moving-toward-God-being and an accepted-by-God-being.

The grace of Christ is the means by which the individual moves from being an under-the-wrath-of-God-being to an under-the-love-of-God-being. Grace is the sinner's acceptance by God independent of personal merit (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 295). It is extrinsic righteousness whereby the righteousness of Christ is imparted to the believing sinner. God looks at the person of faith and sees only the merit and righteousness of Christ (McGrath, 1990).

Central to Luther's theology and ministry was his reformulation of grace as personal relationship (Althaus, 1966). Grace and faith involved a radical dependence upon God in Christ. Thus the divine-human relationship was eternally changed because the encounter with God was no longer an encounter with a wrathful Judge. Instead, the person encountered God in all His self-giving love (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 313). This was the essence of Luther's Reformation. God's justice is satisfied because Christ paid the penalty for sin, therefore, it is no longer necessary to pay any penalty, since the price has been paid.

> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:24). God does not justify us freely by His grace in such a way that He did not demand any atonement to be made (for our sins), for He gave Jesus Christ into death for us, in order that He might atone for our sins. So now he justifies freely by His grace those who have been redeemed by His Son (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 78).

Luther had found the answer to his elemental and lifelong struggle: in Christ he encountered God in love. When one scrutinizes his letters of spiritual counsel, the joy of this discovery is everywhere evident (LSC, pp. 108-138). His longing to help others to find this same peace became the core of his soul care and spiritual direction. Always and everywhere he dealt with people as in-relationship-to-God-beings and attempted to move them to an encounter with the love of God in Christ (see chapters three through six for numerous examples of such letters). He believed that such

an encounter would have tremendous impact both on their temporal relationship to God and to people and on their eternal relationship to God (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 119-121). As a soul care giver, he described this impact as "faith active in love" (Luther, 1535/1988, p. 313-387).

Luther's Theology of the Christian Life: Faith Active in Love

Faith active in love was central to Martin Luther, to his pastoral care, and to his theology of the Christian life. His theology of the Christian life is the final bridge to a clear contextual understanding of Luther's pastoral care.

Justification: A Dynamic Relational Event

The roots of Luther's perspective lie in his understanding of justification. Justification is that act of a gracious God who declares righteous the unrighteous (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xix). The key word is "declares." When one places faith in Christ, God never again looks upon that individual without seeing the righteousness of Christ because one is no longer in self but now is in Christ. The entire life is bound up with Christ (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 83).

For Luther, there was a tremendous dynamic released in this relational transaction and unusual personal power ramifications resulted from the justification event. For example, Luther displayed personal excitement even years later when he recounted his experience of the justification event:

> At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith . . . Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy (LW, Vol. 34, p. 337).

Luther confronted God in love in Christ. Through the Word, he was confronted by God Himself. For Luther, "The Word exposes the system of hideouts that the person has constructed from the awareness of her/his own helplessness" (Miles, 1984, p. 242). Christ meets the individual as Savior as that person sees their own helplessness and casts him or her self upon Christ's mercy.

Thus, for Luther, salvation by grace through faith was insistently existential—personal, practical, and experiential. It was not primarily philosophical, metaphysical, or theological in the sense of mental knowledge alone. For example, when responding to Erasmus on the debate concerning free will, Luther accused Erasmus of not taking the debate seriously due to his apathy; consequently, his heart was not in it. Luther charged Erasmus with finding theology wearisome, chilling, and nauseating. The Reformer went on to explain that for theology to have personal meaning, it requires feeling as will make a person vigilant, penetrating, astute, and determined (Luther, 1525/1957).

Sanctification: The Dynamic Outworking of the Justification Event

For Luther, the Christian is simultaneously sinner and saint ("simul justus et peccator") (Luther, 1516/1954, p. 113). The person of faith is not righteous, perfect, or sinless. Before God, the person is totally justified and the same person is in himself or herself a sinner.

There is, then, in the Christian life, a lifelong struggle to live out the justification event. One Luther scholar, Gerhard O. Forde (1988), explained Luther's view of the Christian life as "the art of getting used to the unconditional justification wrought by the grace of God for Jesus' sake" (p. 13).

Justification was encountering God in love in Christ, while sanctification was getting used to justification (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xx1). Justification was being declared righteous by God on the basis of faith in Christ, while sanctification was faith active in love (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xxii). Justification was a response to the Good News of the Gospel that "You are accepted in Christ; you are God's beloved child." Sanctification was living out the Good News of the Gospel that "you are God's marvelous workmanship; designed to do loving works" (LSC, p. 126).

Understanding how one gets used to the justification event is important in grasping Luther's concept of relational theology. Luther felt that the Christianity of his day had been ritualistic since sanctification or daily Christian living had come through ritual (prayer, pilgrimage, fasting, spiritual disciplines, meditation, monastic life, etc.) (Olivier, 1983). In his pastoral care, Luther made sanctification a relational experience through faith activated in love (Oberman, 1989).

Faith Activated by Love through Personal Encounter with Christ

Chapters three through six describe the practical methodology behind Luther's strategy. The current study examines the philosophy behind Luther's approach to the Christian life as he attempted to teach how faith was activated.

For Luther, faith in daily Christian living was activated the same way saving faith was activated—through personal encounter with God in His Word (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 119-121). In Luther's commentary on the Epistle to Romans (1516/1954, pp. 99-106), the Reformer presented his view that all of life is personal encounter with God. Justification is personal encounter with God in which the individual affirms by faith his or her absolute reliance upon God in Christ for salvation. Sanctification is personal encounter with God in which the individual affirms by faith her or his absolute reliance upon God in Christ for daily living. What Luther wanted to do in his spiritual counsel was to transform the existential situation of the hearer into the presence of God. He sought to stretch the person to a deeper level of relational trust in God (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 124-146).

The Reformer believed that the Christian could experience life's difficulties with faith in God, if they could live on the basis of their justification. Because of justification, the Christian can rise, facing each day knowing that God is saying, "It is all right. I accept you." The one who receives the gift of Christ's healing forgiveness can affirm life (LW, Vol. 42, p. 141). He or she can say, "I can live." The question of "How am I doing with God?" is answered. Therefore, each individual can face life with honesty, courage, personal power, and freedom to serve others in love (Bayer, 1990).

Faith Activated by Love in the Consciousness

This new way of approaching life begins in the depths of the heart. Luther used the Latin word sententia to denote the place where God's Word met God's children (LW, Vol. 12, p. 377). Miles (1984) translated sententia as "consciousness" which she stated, "designates a subjective activity in which thinking and feeling are coordinated in the construction of a world view and self image that govern, in turn, the formation of one's perceptions, values, and behaviors" (p. 239).

Consciousness is where God encounters people and speaks to their human need. The justification event has the capacity to "constellate altered and more accurate reality-oriented values, perceptions, and emotions . . ." (Miles, 1984, p. 239). In other words, faith is activated by love through the conscious awareness of being loved by God.

In his commentary on Romans 12, Luther developed his belief that Christian living involves Christian thinking (Luther, 1516/1954, pp. 165-169). Luther taught that the Christian was enabled to have a radically different sense of self because the sense of self, of who one was, came to lie in another; in Christ. One's understanding of the circumference of oneself was changed. No longer was the individual bound up in self, but in God—and this God was the self-giving, loving, gracious Father (LSA, pp. 179-182).

Luther was convinced that the consciousness of being loved by God the Father through Christ the Son was the only power capable of changing persons (LSA, pp. 183-202). This is why the essence of his soul care involved moving people to an encounter with God in Christ. Life's difficulties were never to be ignored, but were to be viewed through the lens of God's loving purposes. Suffering was never to be minimized, but was to be brought to the suffering Savior Who cared, comforted, and healed the heart (LSA, pp. 183-186).

For the Reformer, both justification and sanctification required transforming the existential situation of the hearer into the presence of the God Who loves. In suffering and in sin, Luther's spiritual counsel sought to bring the counselee coram Deo, face to face with God, so that the counselee could encounter the life-giving love of God in Christ (LSA, pp. 181-203).

This was not a naive quoting of verses nor a quaint statement of platitudes (Ivarson, 1962). If Luther's own life had taught him anything, it had taught him that life in Christ was still a psychic war and the consciousness was a battle ground between the flesh and the spirit. Speaking of the Apostle Paul, Luther penned:

> Then he shows how spirit and flesh strive with one another in man . . . This contention within us lasts as long as we live . . . For the Spirit sighs within us and the creation longs with us that we may be rid of the flesh and of sin. So we see that these three chapters (6-8) deal with one work of faith, which is to slay the old Adam and subdue the flesh (Luther, 1516/1954, p. xxiii).

The Christian life was viewed as a battle—a war fought in the inner depths of the heart. It was a war, Luther taught, that was won only by faith; only as the depths of God's love and Christ's grace penetrated the heart of the individual.

Faith Activated by Love in Community

Letter of spiritual counsel after letter of spiritual counsel contained the same message: do not fight this battle alone (LSA, 209-221). Since Luther's theology of justification and sanctification were relational, it is not surprising that his doctrine of the Church was relational. Luther taught that the Church was the Body of Christ; every person who placed their faith in Christ was a member of His Body; and every member was a minister (LW, Vol. 53, p. 13). Luther taught the priesthood of all believers by which he exhorted every Christian to provide soul care and spiritual direction to their fellow Christian. This was radical theology for his day (Manchester, 1992).

It was in the communion of the saints, or in community, or in relationship that faith was activated by love.

> This is my only and best advice: Don't remain alone when you are assailed! Flee solitude! Do as the monk did who, when he felt tempted in his cell, said, "I won't stay here; I'll run out of the cell to my brethren." So it's reported of Paul in the book of Acts (27:33; 28:15) that he suffered fourteen days from severe hunger and from shipwreck and afterward was received by his brethren and took courage. This is what I do too . . . (LW, Vol. 54, p. 277).

The mutual conversation and consolation of the community of faith was essential for the development of faith.

Luther's emphasis on community included more than the Body of Christ. He never suggested that the Christian become cloistered from the world. Instead, his emphasis upon community also stressed that spirituality happens within the world and not apart from it.

> Relationship to and in the world is seen not as a sacrifice but as the arena in which a "new person" is being formed. Formation takes place in the world where faith is needed, where one is forced to learn to trust God, where all is unclear and uncertain. My "spiritual self" is being hammered out in the exchanges of everyday life (Seabright, 1986, p. 8).

Faith, for Luther, was activated by love as one encountered the community of faith and participated in relational exchanges with the larger community of the world.

Faith Activated in Love

The last three headings included the phrase "faith activated <u>by</u> love." God's love is what draws people to Him for salvation. The current heading refers to the idea of faith activated <u>in</u> love. Once drawn to God by His love, people are freed to love others. The Reformer taught that God's love experienced in justification was what activated faith to love others (Begalke, 1980).

Luther, in his teaching on faith activated in love, had a "neighbor-centered" focus. Bayer (1990) pointed out how Luther's entire work could be summarized by the Christian's call to freely love others.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (self-seeking), but through love be servants of one another (Galatians 5:1-2, quoted by Bayer, 1990, p. 127).

Bayer (1990) felt that Luther had conceived a model of counseling that at once dealt with all spheres of human relationships: to God, to self, and to others. The person-to-God question was, "What is my standing before God?" The person-to-person question was, "What sort of person should I be with my neighbor?" Spirituality, for Luther, involved faith active in love within the household of the world. He did not disassociate faith from daily living. Each Christian was called on to be a taste of Christ (His love and grace) to his neighbor (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 230-242).

Luther's approach to pastoral care highlighted grace, faith, and love. His pastoral care was God-centered or grace-oriented; his thinking was conscience-centered or faith-oriented; and his focus was neighbor-centered or love-oriented.

Summary

Appendix B has described two factors which shaped Luther's approach to pastoral care: spiritual trials and theological convictions. Luther's personal spiritual experience of anfechtungen provided the individual context for his pastoral care. Out of this context, came a theology. Out of this theology, came an approach to soul care. An understanding of these two areas will provide the reader with the necessary background to evaluate the theory behind Luther's practice of soul care and spiritual direction.

APPENDIX C

SPIRITUAL CARE FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE

Overview

A careful reading of chapters three through six provides the reader with a wealth of specific operational tasks found in Martin Luther's pastoral care which might be suggestive of methods for dealing with issues of the soul. Appendix C uses Luther's pastoral operations to describe a motif and outline a method which can be instructive for modern pastoral care givers and professional counselors when addressing spiritual issues.

In this dissertation, themes emerged while exploring Luther's pastoral operations. Two predominant themes were: (a) the deeper story of the Fatherly presence of God—coram Deo, and (b) the larger story of the Son's gospel of forgiveness—grace. In his spiritual direction, Luther sought to sustain people in their story by sympathizing (entering, understanding, and experiencing) with their situation. As the Reformer moved toward an understanding of their suffering or their sin, he aspired to stretch people to God's story. In suffering, his goal was to stretch the person to the deeper story that God is good (Fatherly and loving) even when life is bad. In sin, his ambition was to stretch people to the larger story that Christ is gracious (a Savior Who is forgiving, accepting, and loving) even when the person is sinful (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-166).

Martin Luther's Faith Perspective of God's Story of Life

Luther's letters of spiritual direction provide evidence supporting the value he placed upon a faith perspective. Luther saw faith as the divine perspective on life from which a platform could be erected to respond to suffering and sin (LW, Vol. 42, p. 133). Luther believed that the scriptural narrative, or the perspective on life found in the Word of God, was the key to integrating people on a higher spiritual level (LSC, p. 28). In the faith narrative of reason redeemed by grace (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124), Luther employed the language of pictures and images to encourage new interpretations of life events and new perspectives on suffering and sin. Luther believed that how a person viewed life made all the difference in life. "The Holy Spirit knows that a thing only has such value and meaning to a man as he assigns it in his thoughts" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124). Therefore, Luther sought to help people reshape their perspective or interpretation of their life situation.

This approach is illustrated in Luther's letter of spiritual counsel to the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise. In 1519, the Elector was stricken with a serious illness and his court feared for his life. Frederick's chaplain, George Spalatin, suggested that Luther prepare some writings of spiritual comfort for Frederick. Indebted to the Elector for firm protection against his enemies, Luther felt a special sense of obligation to comply with Spalatin's suggestion and thus penned "The Fourteen Consolations: For Those Who Labor and Are Heavy-Laden" (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 119-166).

Luther derived the structure of his writing from a cult popular in medieval Germany. According to the legend behind the cult, a Franconian shepherd in 1446 had a vision of the Christ Child

surrounded by fourteen saints. In the course of time, the fourteen saints acquired names and each became identified as a protector against a specific disease. Luther devised fourteen consolations arranged in the form of fourteen frescos or altar screens similar to the altar screens depicting the fourteen saints (LW, Vol. 42, p. 119).

Luther's altar screens had a specific purpose and method. His purpose was to bring "spiritual consolation to uplift and strengthen the pious heart" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123) to trust in God's love and good purposes in suffering. Luther's method was to use spiritual screens, images, portraits, pictures and thoughts to enable people to contemplate life from a new, divine perspective (pp. 123-124). "Luther thus effects a literary altar screen, the first panel or section of which is devoted to the contemplation of seven evils; the second, to the contemplation of seven blessings which God's grace bestows upon the faithful believer" (p. 119). Luther used this literary device in counseling Frederick to consider life from the viewpoint of a basic theme or story line that could alter his perspective.

Strohl (1989) examined the Fourteen Consolations in detail and summarized how Luther rooted his approach to soul care in nurturing alternative ways to view life.

> This whole treatise is concerned with what one sees. It presents fourteen images for contemplation, and their purpose is to renew our sight. The consolation offered by the Word is a new vision, the power of faith to see suffering and death from the perspective of the crucified and risen Lord. It turns our common human view of these matters upside down, lifting us as Luther puts it, above our evils and our blessings, making them res indifferentes. This does not eradicate the pain or the fear of our misery, but it robs it of its hopelessness (p. 179).

The words that Luther chose in writing to Frederick demonstrated the value he attached to changing people's perspective and interpretation of events. He urged the Elector to "be mindful" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 126), "remember, meditate, ponder" (p. 131), "comfort yourself by the remembering of God's works" (p. 132), "perceive the blessings of Christ" (p. 147), and "try to attain to the knowledge and love of this blessing" (p. 149). Luther selected similar words when he explained how to change perspective: "if we consider this (the broader rule and plan of God) rightly, we shall see how greatly we are favored by God" (p. 135), "we thus see that all our suffering is nothing when we consider and ponder the afflictions of men" (p. 139), "oh, if we could only see the heart of Christ as he was suspended from the cross, anguishing to make death contemptible and dead for us" (p. 143), "this (delighting in suffering) will come to pass if this image (of Christ's resurrection) finds its way into our heart and abides in the innermost affections of our mind. This is the first panel" (p. 145). Luther focused on changing the faith perspective because he believed:

> If only a man could see his God in such a light of love . . . how happy, how calm, how safe he would be! He would then truly have a God from whom he would know with certainty that all his fortunes—whatever they might be—had come to him and were still coming to him under the guidance of God's most gracious will (p. 154).

Summarizing his method, Luther wrote "by means of such splendid symbols the mercy of God shows us in our infirmity that even though death should not be taken away, its power has been reduced by him to a mere shadow" (p. 150).

Luther wanted Frederick's non-faith or earth-bound, human story of suffering to give way to God's narrative of life and suffering.

> He who does not believe that he is forgiven by the inexhaustible riches of Christ's righteousness is like a deaf man hearing a story. If we considered it properly and with an attentive heart, this one image—even if there were no other—would suffice to fill us with such comfort that we should not only not grieve over our evils, but should also glory in our tribulations, scarcely feeling them for the joy that we have in Christ (LW, Vol. 42, p. 165).

Luther encouraged Frederick to consider a new way of looking at life. "All that remains is for us now to pray that our eyes, that is the eyes of our faith, may be opened that we may see. Then there will be nothing for us to fear" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 163). Luther taught the Elector that it was not what happened to him that mattered most, but how he framed what happened to him. "And it is equally true that we measure, feel, or do not feel our evils not on the basis of the facts, but on the basis of our thoughts and feelings about them" (p. 127).

Martin Luther's Context for Developing a Faith Perspective: The Scriptural Basis of Faith

In Luther's theory of helping people, he believed that the Scriptures were the context for realigning one's faith perspective. In the preface to his letter to Frederick, Luther contrasted scriptural consolation with the consolation popular in his day. "The Fourteen Consolations are to replace the fourteen saints whom our superstition has invented and called 'The Defenders Against All Evils.' Now this is a spiritual (scriptural) screen and not made of silver" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 123).

Luther expressed his high view of Scripture even more forcefully in his introduction to the Fourteen Consolations.

> In speaking of the consolations which Christians have, the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4 writes, "Brethren, whatever was written, was written for our instruction, so that through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." In this passage he plainly teaches us that our consolations are to be drawn from the Holy Scriptures (LW, Vol. 42, p. 124).

Luther held a theology that taught that the Bible provided God's story of and explanation for the human condition. Thus the Bible was his source book for developing a faith perspective concerning suffering. He felt so strongly about this that he quoted or referred to Scripture no less than 169 times in his 45-page letter to Frederick.

Martin Luther's Theme for Developing A Faith Perspective: The Cross of Christ

If the Scriptures were Luther's main text, then the Gospels of Christ were his theme text for renewing a faith perspective. Specifically, when Luther conceptualized his Christian view of suffering and sin, he focused on the suffering of Christ on the cross. Theologians have named this "Luther's theologia crucis, the theology of the Cross" (McGrath, 1994, p. 1).

The events of life made no sense to Luther apart from Christ's death on the cross "on behalf of sinners" (Althaus, 1966, p. 173). The Christian must suffer, because Christ also suffered.

Did Christ not offer himself? It is true that he offered himself on the cross for every one of us who believes in him. But by this very act he at the same time also offers us, so that it is necessary for all those who believe in him to suffer too and to be put to death according to the flesh, as happened in this case (LW, Vol. 30, p. 111).

According to Luther, Christ is so connected to the Christian in suffering that He literally suffers with the believer. Luther wrote to Frederick,

Thus, Most Illustrious Prince, since I saw that your Lordship has been stricken with a grave illness and that Christ also is sick in you, I have deemed it my duty to visit your Lordship with this little writing. I cannot pretend that I do not hear the voice of Christ as it cries to me out of your Lordship's body and flesh, saying, "Look, I am sick." Such evils as sickness and the like are borne not by us Christians, but by Christ himself, our Lord and Saviour, in whom we live (LW, Vol. 42, p. 122).

Luther saw Christ suffering everything the Christian suffered. Rather than viewing Christ as uncaring, Luther saw Christ as the Son of God who cared so much that He felt His children's infirmities.

Luther wanted to help Frederick to understand that the death of Christ for him and the suffering of Christ with him could change Frederick's perspective.

How does this come to pass? Surely, it comes to pass when you hear that Jesus Christ, God's Son, has by his most holy touch consecrated and hallowed all sufferings, even death itself, has blessed the curse, and has glorified shame and enriched poverty so that death is now a door to life, the curse a fount of blessing, and shame the mother of glory. Suffering has been touched and bathed by Christ's pure and holy flesh and blood and thus have become holy, harmless, and wholesome, blessed, and full of joy for you. There is nothing, not even death, that his passion cannot sweeten (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 141-142).

Luther urged Frederick to not "fail to perceive" (LW, Vol. 42, p. 162) the implications of Christ's passion. He counseled the Elector that in his pain and suffering he should turn to the image of Christ, "firmly believing and certain that it is not we alone, but Christ and the church who are in

pain and are suffering and dying with us" (p. 163).

A Method for Using Martin Luther's Faith Perspective

Luther's understanding of God's story was the pyramid upon which he built his interactions with parishioners. He worked to help them assign meaning to life based upon their joint interpretations of their faith system communicated in the Scriptures (LW, Vol. 42, pp. 124-142).

Narrative therapists (Gilligan & Reese, 1993) have suggested that people organize their life experiences in order to give meaning and make sense out of their lives. In order to make sense out of life and to express themselves, experience must be "storied" (Gergen & Gergen, 1984). Storying determines meaning and the meaning people attribute to events determines their behavior (White & Epston, 1990).

The arrangement of life events into a coherent account can be referred to as a story or self-narrative (Gergen & Gergen, 1984). Narrative therapists like White and Epston (1990) and Gilligan and Reese (1993) have suggested therapeutic conversations in which stories are drawn out by the use of dialogue and questions. During the therapeutic exchange, people can "reauthor" themselves by generating alternate stories that enable them to perform new meanings which the person will experience as more helpful, satisfying, and open-ended (White & Epston).

Luther's operations illustrate ways in which the therapeutic conversation might move toward a spiritual reauthoring of persons. From Luther's perspective, this reauthoring would be based upon scriptural interpretation and images and would draw the person to the deeper and larger story applied to the individual's own view of their life and situation.

This appendix provides questions which might be helpful in dealing with a person's story from Luther's spiritual perspective of God's deeper and Christ's larger story. The use of questions should not be taken to imply that questions are the only or best way to promote therapeutic conversations. The questions are meant to be instructive and illustrative of the type of content that might be highlighted in "spiritual narrative."

The reader is encouraged to view the following questions as beginning points upon which to build. Because each client's story is unique, the therapeutic conversation will be unique to every client. Themes and questions will vary dependent upon the client's level of religious committedness. Given that the questions proposed have arisen from a study of traditional Christian pastoral care, the wording of the themes and questions advanced here might lend itself more to the religiously committed Christian client or parishioner. However, the questions are broad enough that they could be easily modified for use in dealing with spirituality with a broad range of clients.

Spiritual Narrative Conversations Designed to Sense a Person's Life Story:
Sustaining through Empathizing

Luther's concept of "coram Deo" can be used as the centerpiece for a model of narrative sustaining and would suggest that therapeutic conversations address the theme: "Where is God in my suffering?" Sustaining would also seek to help the person to embrace suffering and face how

they experience God in suffering. Questions suggestive of therapeutic dialogue might include the following.

What are you doing with God in your suffering?

If you painted a picture of God as you sense Him right now, what would you paint?

In what ways have you sensed that God has not heard the cry of your soul?

What is it like for you when God seems deaf to your cry?

When your soul shouts, "Where is God now? Where are His great and precious promises when I need them?" and the Scriptures teach that God is every where present and always faithful, which do you believe? How do you go about choosing which to believe?

What are your beliefs about feeling anger or disappointment toward God?

What are your beliefs about expressing your anger, disappointment, or complaint toward God?

Have you come across any Scriptures which illustrate how God's people across history have talked to God when they felt that He was not hearing their cry?

If you were to write a Psalm 13 (a psalm of lament or complaint to God), how would it sound? What do you wish were happening instead of what you are now experiencing?

If you knew that God would say, "Yes," to your prayers about this situation, for what would you be praying?

If God were to immediately answer, "Yes," what would your response be? How would things be different for you? What would you be doing differently?

When else have you experienced suffering similar to this? How did you respond? What did you learn about God in that situation? What would you repeat and what would you change about your response to that situation?

If you were not a believer, what do you think you would feel, do, think, and say?

What Scriptures could you (have you) turn to in order to understand God's perspective on what you are going through?

What passages have you found helpful in: Gaining a new perspective on your situation?

Comforting you as you go through this?

If you did not have the Scriptures to turn to, how would your perspective on this situation be different?

If you were to write a Psalm 109, how would it sound? (Many Psalms and other passages of Scripture present a frank discussion of inner struggle in the midst of suffering.)

What do you fear most in this situation? What might the worse case scenario be?

Narrative Conversations Designed to Stretch a Person's Life Story:
Healing through Encouraging

The theme of God's deeper story is that God is good even when life is bad. Healing is designed to stretch a person to this deeper story. In Luther, healing and stretching were accomplished by encouragement. Luther pictured encouragement as a person coming alongside a fellow struggler, putting an arm around him or her, and pointing him or her toward God's deeper story. Therapeutic conversations which stretch, encourage, and heal would revolve around the theme of: "Who is God to you in your suffering?" Questions indicative of such therapeutic conversations might include the following.

To whom have you turned in your distress/suffering?

What do you think God is like?

When have you felt closest to God?

In what ways have you sensed that God has heard you?

The Scriptures present God as loving (Fatherly, accepting, gracious, and good), what potential impact might this view of God have as you face this issue?

What is it like for you when God hears your distress?

How would you know that God was tuned into your suffering?

How have you worked through similar experiences of emptiness (fear, suffering, etc.) before in order to come to a point of healing?

To what Scriptures have you turned (could you turn) in order to: Find hope and comfort? Sense God's care? Discern Who Christ is to you as you go through this?

What passages have you found helpful in: Gaining God's perspective on this situation? Strengthening you to deal with this? Comforting and encouraging your soul? Deepening your relationship to God?

What do you believe the Bible says about: God's purposes in suffering? How the Christian can grow through suffering?

What are you learning in God's school of suffering about: Yourself? Others? God? Christ? Life?

What would it be like to worship God in the middle of this situation?

What would it be like for you to turn to God in the middle of this?

If you were to write a Psalm 42, how would it sound? (This psalm pictures the psalmist moving from despair to worship.)

What might it say about your view of God that you are not turning to Him?

What happens in your soul when you ignore God?

How has God evidenced His goodness to you?

The Bible presents God as loving (Fatherly, caring, concerned, etc.), what potential impact might this view of God have upon your healing process?

How might it impact you to envision Christ suffering with you?

A person in the Bible felt like this. (Together you could discuss a biblical story.) How do you react to this biblical story? How is it different from your situation? How is it similar? How have you been responding: Differently? Similarly? What in this story would you like to add to your story? How do you think you could do that?

If you were to write your own story, somewhat like the biblical story we just discussed, what would the theme of your story be? How might your story turn out? What role would you play in your story? What role would God play in your story? Who else might be in your story? What would your relationship to Christ look like in your story? How would God work your story out for good? How would God give you strength in your story?

What person has been most influential on your beliefs and values? Picture this person experiencing what you are going through. How do you imagine him or her handling this?

What spiritual realities might be hidden behind your present situation? What might God be wanting to do in your life through these circumstances?

If you had one word or image to describe Who God is to you right now, what would it be?
If Christ came walking into this room right now, what would He look like? What would the expression on His face be? What would He say to you? What would you want to say or do?

If Christ were in this chair as your pastor/counselor, what do you think you would be talking about? What would you want to ask, or say, or do? What do you imagine Him saying or doing?

As you have gone through this, what thoughts or feelings have you had about God?

How has this situation: Impacted your relationship to God? Your feelings toward God? Your image of God?

What does the image "Father" conjure up for you? What does the word "Father" mean to you?

In the middle of what you are going through, how do you relate to the image of God as your loving Father?

Martin Luther used to say that, "God's friendship is worth more than all the world." What do you think he meant by that? What is your opinion of Luther's statement? How would his viewpoint impact your perspective on what you are experiencing?

How is life different for you when you see God as your Father and Christ as your Friend?

God promises to work all things together for good for His children (Romans 8:28). What are your thoughts about that promise? What do you think about a passage like this? What good purposes has God already provided to you or in you through these events?

God reveals Himself as good, even when life is bad. What are your thoughts about the goodness of God as you go through this experience? How do you attempt to reconcile in your mind a God Who presents Himself as good, in light of what you are experiencing?

Narrative Conversations Designed to Strip a Person's Life Story:
Reconciling through Exposing

The theme of God's larger story is that Christ is gracious even when people are sinful. In Luther's approach, people needed to recognize their sinfulness; upon the recognition of sinfulness, people needed a recognition of God's graciousness. Luther wanted to expose sin and grace. He sought to strip a person of self-righteousness and lead him or her to God-righteousness. He

frequently used the imagery of battle, struggle, and victory. Following Luther, Romans 7, and narrative therapy, many of the questions recorded below externalize sin by talking about it as something with which the person is struggling and doing battle. Whenever "sin" is mentioned in a question, it can be assumed that the pastor and parishioner or client and therapist have identified some specific "sin."

In using these questions, it is suggested that the specific "sin" be labeled and used. For instance: "How might it make a difference in your struggle with the sin of lustful thinking (the label) if you saw yourself as a loved child of God the Father?" Therapeutic conversations which strip and expose in order to reconcile (help persons to find peace with God) focus around the theme of finding the grace of Christ while struggling with sin. Questions indicative of such therapeutic conversations might include the following.

On what basis are you evaluating your actions as wrong or sinful?

What Scriptures could we look at that might clarify God's position on the "rightness or wrongness" of this issue?

What does God's Word seem to say concerning your current way of relating?

What passages have you found helpful: In gaining God's perspective on this sin? In strengthening you to overcome this sin? In deepening your relationship to Christ even as you do battle with this sin?

Throughout the Scriptures (Romans 8, etc.) God tells us that we have peace with Him because of Jesus Christ. When do you experience this peace to the greatest extent? What are you doing differently when you experience this peace? Tell me about your experience of peace, what is it like for you?

When have you been able to experience Christ's forgiveness? What has it been like? How did this happen?

The Bible talks so much about God's grace, forgiveness, and acceptance on the basis of Christ's death for sinners (Romans 1-8, etc.). When are you most aware of and impacted by these ideas? What does God seem to do to bring you to a strong awareness of His grace? How do you tend to be cooperating with God as He brings you to these points of awareness? How are you allowing other Christians to help you to enjoy, magnify, and appreciate God's grace? In what ways are you using prayer and Bible study to help you to appreciate God's grace?

Martin Luther used to say that when a Christian sins, he or she imagines that God is angry with them. What do you think about his assessment? Have you struggled at all in your battle with sin with thoughts that God is angry with you?

When your soul shouts, "God is angry with you!" and the Scriptures say, "God loves you," which do you believe? How do you go about choosing which to believe?

Where were you recruited into this idea that God is angry with you and rejects you when you sin? Where was this idea modeled for you? Does it seem to square with your understanding of the Bible?

Instead of seeing God as an angry Judge, how will you be seeing Him now?

Martin Luther used to say that when we feel like God is angry with us, we should shout at the devil, laugh in his face, and remind him that Christ died for our sins and that God can never again be angry at His children. What do you think about this? How would you say it differently? What might you add or subtract?

When you begin to feel overwhelmed with guilt and thoughts that God no longer loves or can forgive you, what do you do? What have you done before to fight these thoughts? How might it help if at these times you perceived Christ as saying, "Father, forgive him/her"? How might it help if you saw Christ as your merciful best Friend with His arm around you saying to you, "I love you"?

In the Scriptures (Psalm 1, etc.) and throughout Church history, Christians have meditated on images of God and Christ. What images could you meditate upon to increase your conviction that God is gracious even when you are sinful? What mental pictures have you used to keep the fact that God always loves and accepts you because of Christ in the forefront of your mind?

To what Scriptures could you (have you) turn to find Christ's: Forgiveness? Grace? Acceptance? Love?

What do you think a person should do when they feel overcome and overwhelmed by sin?

What does the Bible (your church, your minister, your Christian friend) suggest you do when your conscience feels assailed and overburdened by sin?

Narrative Conversations Designed to Strengthen a Person's Life Story:
Guiding through Empowering

The theme of God's larger story is that Christ is gracious even when people are sinful. Guiding serves as a follow-up to reconciliation. Luther believed that reconciliation with God (loving encounters with God) was the primary source of strength which could empower people to live loving lives. Luther dealt with guiding not simply as a decision making process, but as a way of empowering people to live out their faith active in love—how to live out the implications of grace.

Therapeutic conversations which strengthen and empower emphasize faith active in love. Questions indicative of such therapeutic conversations might include the following.

What are the results, influences, and impacts of these sins on your life? Would you like to work cooperatively toward negating these effects in your life?

What unique gifts have you allowed to lay dormant that you can now fan into flame and stir into action in order to prevail against sin?

What spiritual (personal, group, church, or scriptural) resources have you previously used in order to prevail against sin?

In the Bible (Romans 1-8, etc.), God associates sin with the devil, the flesh, and the old person we were before Christ entered our lives. How is the flesh, sin, the old person, or the devil influencing you in your relationship to others? How have you managed to tap into God's spiritual resources to be effective against the flesh? How does this victory reflect on you as a Christian? How does it reflect on God's power, grace, and forgiveness at work in your life? What spiritual gifts, resources, and attitudes were you tapping into and relying upon in these victorious times? What ideas about further steps to reclaim spiritual control over the flesh do these victories suggest? What difference would knowing what you now know about the flesh, yourself, and God make to your future relationship to the flesh?

How have you worked through similar struggles with sin before in order to come to a point of victory? How did you manage to resist the influence of sin on this occasion? What does your success at resisting sin say about: God's power in your life? Your love for God? The spiritual resources God has given you? Your potential to continue to resist sin? Your cooperation with the work of God? Your commitment to serving and loving God? What difference will these new views of yourself and God make during your next encounter with this sin? In what ways do you think these discoveries might alter your attitude toward: God? Yourself? Others? How might this new discovery impact your relationship with God? In refusing to cooperate with sin (the flesh, the devil, or evil) are you supporting it or undermining it?

Instead of giving into sin, what will you be doing? As you leave here today on track toward victory over the flesh, what will you be doing differently? How specifically will you be doing this? How will you keep this victory going? How will you be thinking and relating differently? When you do not give into sin, what is different about these times? How are you thinking differently?

What difference might it make in your struggle with sin if you saw yourself as: A loved child of God the Father? A forgiven friend of Christ?

How might you find the strength to overcome this sin?

What impact does Christ's suffering and death have upon you as you attempt to overcome this sin?

What does God provide which you might use to overcome the ways of relating which are destructive to those you love?

To what Scriptures could you (have you) turn: To find Christ's strength to overcome this sin? To find Christ's direction for combating this sin?

To what Scripture could you (have you) turn to find God's guidance in this situation?

In past situations like this, what have you found to be strengthening for you?

To whom do you tend to turn for strength?

What role is your relationship to God playing in how you will make this decision?

What role is your relationship to God playing in how you relate in your marriage? As a parent?

Do you sense that you have the freedom to participate in this? Would anything about participating in this produce guilt, doubt, or turmoil for you?

How would this serve your neighbor in love? In what way would this action be indicative of love for people?

In what ways is this action indicative of faith in God's grace?

In your home, work, community, and church relationships are you doing anything which is: Contrary to your conscience? Indicative of love for others? Indicative of faith in God's grace?

What principles in the Bible might you turn to for perspective and direction concerning this decision?

Summary

Appendix C has provided the reader with specific methods which pastoral care givers and professional counselors could use in exploring spirituality with parishioners and clients. Luther's faith perspective motif was integrated with the four tasks of historic Christian care to illustrate potential therapeutic conversations useful for renewing a client's faith perspective on God's narrative of life.

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