

The Enquiry

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy;
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy
But he
Beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

W. Wordsworth

"Intimations of
Immortality"

POLICY

*****THE ENQUIRY*****

Any person involved with the seminary may submit material (i.e. articles, letters, creative writing, reviews, reports on individual seminary group events, etc.) to The Enquiry.

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Material longer than one page typed double spaced may be cut if necessary. Everything must be signed.

Because we want to publish as diverse a selection of perspectives as possible, any subject is welcome. Naturally, the items will reflect the opinion of the author, and may in no way reflect the ideas of the editor or her staff.

It is with deep love and appreciation that I dedicate this issue of the Enquiry to two "new" people in my life who have helped my father and myself experience new life and hope. Even as they walked through their own time of grief with dignity and courage, they strengthened us.

So it is with this issue, I hope to thank my husband, Lon, and my gracious step-mother, Louise Yelvington Denham, by helping others to learn to deal with death and life-even as they helped my father and myself.

Priscilla Palmer

A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO DEATH: PERSONAL ESCHATOLOGY

Is There An Afterlife?

by Larkin Rossitter

"The notion of the complete extinction of the personality at death is often difficult to reconcile with our daily experience. A man who has been a boon companion for days and years leaves at death a great void in our lives; our habits must be adjusted to his absence; we think of him often; his influence lingers with us; our visual and auditory memories are for some time so vivid that the mere thought of him gives him back to us in living presence; at night we dream that we see him and talk to him."¹ A person can mean so much to us that we cannot believe this one to be completely non-existent. Such an experience has lead pre-historic, historical and modern human beings to postulate or conclude that there is an afterlife. Another existential reason for believing in an afterlife is the inability of people to accept their own individual personal destruction. I find it hard to believe that it's all over for me when I die. These two experiences of personal incredulence suggest a theory: There is a dimension to each person's human existence which transcends that person's body and environment. But there is a frightening corollary to this theorem which I state in the form of a question: Does this transcendent dimension have any meaning without the body and its environment?

To respond to the theorem and its questioning corollary requires first a probe into the nature of human existence--the body, the environment, the transcendent dimension. From an analysis of the New Testament witness, Oscar Cullman proclaims that the "Body and soul are both originally good insofar as they are created by God; they are both bad insofar as the deadly power of the flesh has hold of them. Both can and must be set free by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit."² Cullman, here speaking within the Christian tradition, suggests that there are two dimensions to each human nature (hereafter referred to as the "living soul"). His transcending dimension is called soul--to prevent confusion I will refer to this as human spirit. The other dimension is the human body. The living soul is plunged into an existence under the potential influence of the flesh/evil or of the Holy Spirit--such is the environment. If one accepts this schema of life's dimensions and their relationships, one has a problem. One must agree with Dale Moody that "Man is a living soul, and the severance of the human spirit from the human body is physical death."³ Herein lies the crisis: What happens to the human spirit at death? Apparently the human body decays to dust and eventually to the chemicals of which it is made. But no one really knows whether the human spirit decays with the body, goes into non-existence, or becomes immortalized. Is the transcendent dimension of human existence personal and eternal? Does one say with Henry J. Cadbury "Any future life, like every present life, is the individual work of God. Man as man is not inherently immortal, nor indeed is any part of him. His body and soul both come into being and they both can go out of being and can both come back into being"⁴

There seems to me to be three alternatives regarding the afterlife: 1) when you're dead you're dead, total non-existence--this view is held by a very few participants in organized religions, it is usually believed by atheists and agnostics; 2) immersion into some non-personal unity--this position includes the Eastern religions' idea of Nirvana, Judaism's concept of living on in one's posterity, and Alfred Whitehead's "memory of God"; 3) personal, individual, conscious spirit--most Moslems, most Christians and a few Jews adopt this view. (continued)

("An Afterlife? continued)

The first alternative I find terribly inadequate. The second makes sense in our current experience of the universe. But perspective three meets some real personal needs--knowing my love is not transitory but everlasting; accepting that I must take responsibility for my actions and all their ramifications, believing justice and mercy are paradigms for my own imitation because somewhere, somehow, someday these will be fulfilled.

For the final need which a personal afterlife fulfills, I return to the crisis out of which the question developed: death. Belief in an afterlife can make death less threatening and destructive. Ray Summers suggests that Jesus' reference to death as sleep was so that his contemporaries could see "death as something which brought quiet and rest rather than something which was to be feared as a great enemy."⁵ We are liberated from the fear of death, liberated to get on with living, and if we must lay down our life for our brother or sister--we can do it. I cannot believe that the dimension of my life which transcends this body and world will be allowed to decay. If there really is a God who created me and my current environment, then that same God can create a new existence for me after my death. Besides even if there is no afterlife, such a conception has made sense out of my existence and gives me hope for a future--the very power to live a full life now.

1. Man's Religion's by John B. Noss, 4th edition, (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969) p.20.
2. "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" by Oscar Cullman in Immortality and Resurrection edited by Kristen Stendahl, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) p.27.
3. The Hope of Glory by Dale Moody, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) p.41.
4. "Intimations of Immortality in the Thought of Jesus" by Henry J. Cadbury, in Immortality and Resurrection (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) p.148.
5. The Life Beyond by Ray Summers, (Nashville: Broadmen Press, 1959) p.9.

* * * * *

Lord,

I never understood before
the impact of your humanity.

Until. . .

the tears of a friend
seen through tears of my own. . .
the knowledge that, like us, you also
lost a parent before you were thirty. . .
and the realization grasped
that you did not cheerfully will
our grieving into being,
but cried with us -- sharing our pain.

Your purpose was not a virgin birth
or a dramatic cross
but a daily living
so I can know
we do not cry alone.

P. Lane

SYMPOSIUM "ON DEATH AND DYING" SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 24, 1975

10:00 A.M. Charles K. Robinson, Professor of Philosophical Theology, Divinity School, Duke University. "Some recent Philosophical/Theological Approaches on the Problem of 'Death and Dying'."

7:30 P.M. Thomas E. Dougherty Jr., Visiting Professor of Pastoral Care, Associate Director of Pastoral Counseling Center, North Carolina Baptist Hospital. "Dying As Experience--Personally and Pastorally".

Three Films on Death and Dying will be shown in the Library Thursday, April 24, at 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M.:

1. How Could I Not Be Among You? by Thomas Reichman (28 minutes)
2. The Dying Patient (10 minutes)
3. Until I Die by Kubler-Ross (28 minutes)

You will be able to see all three films at each of the three times.

Friday, April 25, 1975

10:00 A.M. During this hour there will be a panel discussion on "Biblical, Theological, and Christian Issues of Death and Dying" led by Professors John I. Durham, Thomas A. Bland, John Colin Harris and others.

This symposium is sponsored by the "Sons of the Prophets".

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Letter: To Editor

STUDENT PASTORATES

&

INTERESTS OF OTHERS

As a woman unequivocally involved in ministry, it was with interest that I read the March 21 issue of Enquiry.

Robert
Richardson

It was much to my dismay and chagrin, however, that the total presentation was the antithesis of what you apparently purported to present.

Noting the editor's objective of this issue as stated on Cover IV, that being "...to celebrate two events in life," i.e., the Resurrection and the role of women in ministry, it became quite obvious which of the two took precedence. The elimination of the Resurrection theme serves as a proof-text for those who would question the theological responsibility of women. Could not the women who wrote re: the "role" have rather fulfilled that role practically by presenting some fresh and vital meditation and insight into the Easter theme?

Personally, during our furlough year here at SEBTS, I have spoken some 40 times, sharing Christ, His mission, and practical Christian truth. As a woman who has found total fulfillment in this capacity, I confess that never once have I found it necessary to defend myself as a woman; rather, people listen when we have something to say.

Exploring anew the eternal truths embodied in the Resurrection, it is impossible for me to stand in the glorious light of His Love and His Life and speak of anything other than--HIM.

Elaine Herrin

The SCIENTIFIC & PROFESSIONAL ENTERPRISES will make available to any interested readers an information sheet of summer jobs searching. This is absolutely free, and all that is necessary is that the student request this from them and enclose a stamped self addressed envelope. They do research in this area, and are more than happy to release this to students in search of summer jobs.

College Division
2237 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Since I began my work in the Field Education Office two years ago, the number of students at Southeastern Seminary has greatly increased. The number of Baptist churches in the vicinity of Wake Forest has not. This means that the proportion of the student body that is able to find remunerative work in the churches is going down as the number of students is going up.

This situation calls for even greater effort on the part of the seminary to discover every opportunity for student employment in the churches. It also calls for increased efforts on the part of students to help one another. Some of the ways in which students try to help one another--such as recommending one's own successor--are questionable in terms of ministerial ethics. One way in which a student can ethically help his fellow students is to put any church looking for a minister in touch with the Field Education Office.

Another way in which students can help their fellow students is to remain in the churches which they were serving before entering seminary. When a student who is already serving a church within a couple of hundred miles of Southeastern tries to get located closer to school, he places himself in competition with students who have no church and who would be happy to have one even that far away. If the student does succeed in getting closer, it is unlikely that the church he is leaving will call another student from the seminary.

Students can also help themselves and others by seeking church work in the area from

cont.

THE ULTIMATE REMINDER
(In Memory of Charles R. Evans, Sr.)

EDITORIAL

When someone very special has been taken away from us by death, we must face this and deal with it. We must not deny the very thing that is causing us grief, but we must face it and accept it. We can face it and accept it.

Because of what has happened to us, we will not be the same. Depending on the way we respond to this death of our loved one, we will be either stronger or weaker. The deceased would want us to come out of this experience stronger, not weaker. He would want us to live on, head high, representing him the best we know how, the best we possibly can.

A little girl and her father together planted a tree. To the little girl this was a very special tree; it reminded her of her father. We can be thankful for those things that together we planted with our love one. We can be thankful for those things we did together that have special meaning to us. We can be thankful for those things that we planted together that will remind us of our deceased love one and be a memorial to him.

We can be thankful that we do not have to go through times of grief like these alone. We have friends standing by to comfort us. We have God to comfort us.

We can be comforted by the revelation in Jesus Christ that God is not a vindictive or mean God, but that He is a God of love, A God of understanding, a God of forgiveness, and a God of grace. Jesus revealed to us that God is like a loving Father who welcomes his children home.

We can be comforted that God is not Someone we need to be afraid of, but He is Someone we can trust. He is a God we can trust even with our biggest problems, our biggest doubts, our biggest worries and our biggest needs.

We can be comforted that because of God's love, our love one not only will live on in our memories, but he will also live on with God.

Death is not a pleasant subject. It is always a difficult thing to discuss--even on a purely intellectual level. I think this is because we are all aware that death is something we must all experience, through the death of loved ones and finally our own. Death is even more fearsome because it is not only inevitable, but the timing is uncertain. The paradox of knowing /not knowing heightens our discomfort. Many have opted for an ostrich approach "If I don't see it, it can't hurt me." Others have decided they will wait until they are forced to confront the issue, and then they will deal with the emotional adjustments. Some can say "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh," and avoid ever having to come to grips with the deep problem of understanding. Unfortunately, none of these solutions are sufficient for a Christian who is called to minister and comfort others in all areas of Life. We of all people must accept death as a part of life--as necessary to deal with and as inexplicable as birth. There are no complete answers, no sure-fire formulas for coping with fear and grief. But we as Christians have been called to "the abundant Life." We must learn to seek understanding in every aspect of that Life--or sadly accept that fear of death is only another form of death, and that we have said yes to one more death than was necessary.

Priscilla Palmer

Death is our ultimate reminder of our need of God.

Jesus Christ is our ultimate reminder that God is a God of love.

Bobby Evans April 14, 1975

Student Pastorates: cont.

which they come and in which they are known. A student usually has personal contacts in the area from which he comes which will make it easier for him to find a church there than elsewhere, and easier for him to find a church there than for a student from outside the area. One thing is certain: if we are to maintain anything like the percentage of student pastors which we have had in the recent past, more students must be willing to go greater distances.

In making these suggestions, I have been thinking mainly of student pastors, and there are more students looking for pastorates than for all other categories of work combined. Summer work is the only category where the demand for workers is greater than the supply of students available. Music is the ability which is in the shortest supply the year round. Thus, another way in which students can help themselves and each other is for those who have the talent for specialized ministries or the flexibility to move away for the summer to pursue opportunities for which other students might not be able to qualify.

These are just some of the ways in which students can help themselves and one another. Some of them call for no personal sacrifice at all. Others call for a willingness to give up what might be a more desirable opportunity for oneself in order that others might have opportunities. "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4 RSV).

From the Book: Brian Piccolo-A Short Season By Jeannie Morris

Brian and I had such a short time together after our marriage, and we were so overwhelmed with football and the babies coming that sometimes I feel I was cheated.

But I know I was also very lucky. I knew my husband was special to me but it wasn't until after his death that I began to realize fully that he had great dimension, despite his youth.

He must have had fears-we all do. But he didn't burden anyone-not even me-not even during his terrible illness. Not once did Brian let up in his fight against cancer. Not once did he acknowledge the possibility of defeat.

My Brian was such a participant in life, every ounce and phase of it. He would make the most ordinary things special. Just taking Lori, Traci, and Kristi to buy shoes was an event, a chance to laugh and play.

Because Brian was self-reliant and willing to make all of our decisions, I depended on him greatly. Now I must learn from him. And I think I'm making progress. Brian believed in himself. He knew he could make things happen. He had no conceit, but he was brazen in his self-confidence.

If someone gives you a compliment, he used to tell me, say 'thank you'-don't pretend modesty. If you know you can do something, do it.

Now when our attorney, Irwin Jann, calls and tells me about some sticky legal or financial thing I have to take care of and he says, "Do you think you can handle it?" I tell him, "Don't worry Irwin, I'll be great."

Joy Piccolo, (Brian's
August, 1970 wife)

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON GRIEF

by Priscilla Palmer

A minister is expected to play a supportive role in every area of the lives of his or her congregation. The realm of death is often the most difficult sphere in which he must work, especially if he has never been personally confronted by the death of a loved one. With this awareness, I have written this article out of my own experience and from my observations of those close to me who have worked through a significant loss in their lives. I want at this time to thank my father, Dr. William E. Denham, Jr., for many of the ideas expressed in this article. As a father and a counselor, he aided my understanding of grief--particularly as my family worked through the mourning associated with the death of my mother. I hope this article may aid any minister as he helps a family understand, express, and ultimately pass through grief.

There are several aspects of grief of which one should be aware. Sensitivity to the possibility of certain elements of mourning may be invaluable in guiding a minister through that area of pain which is not his own but which he must share. I have listed ten components which may be a part of one's grieving pattern. These should be understood as generalizations which would have shadings of difference with everyone who grieves. Perhaps most basic and important to know is that while certain expressions of pain may be unexpected, almost nothing is abnormal within the area of grief.

1. Each person's reaction to death is highly individual. Even within a family unit, the expressions of grief are often markedly different. The differences may cause problems if one person in the family feels another is not "showing enough respect" for the dead. Or if one member sees his expression of grief as "odd" in relation to the rest of the family, he may feel guilty. In both cases, each person should be made to understand that the differences are very normal. There is no "correct" expression of grief, any more than any expression is incorrect. Each person has had a unique relationship with the dead one, and each person will cope with his loss in an individual way.

2. The only "wrong" way to handle grief is to try to suppress it. Grief will not go away by ignoring it. Stifling tears or emotions may be possible to a certain extent, but the result may be a grief that continues over a prolonged period of time. (There are instances of people who have never fully "gotten over" the death of a loved one until 10-20 years later when they finally allowed an honest expression of their grief.) Grief will not dissipate by plugging dam of our emotion; it will only be gone when we have poured it all out in full expression.

3. The length of mourning varies as greatly as does the mode of expression. An "average" time span for grief is from 6 months to two years, although even this should not be taken rigidly. The length will be determined by the willingness to give free expression to grief, whether or not the death was ^{UNEXPECTED} the general attitude about death surrounding the mourner, the areas of shared experiences (see #7), and the personality of the one who grieves. Very often there will be extreme grief at the first knowledge of the death (even if the death is still projected in the future), then the expressions will gradually subside in intensity and frequency until the full extent of grief is spent. It is not rare for a person to have worked through two years of mourning and not to have had any extreme moments of grief for 4-8 months and suddenly be overwhelmed by one final very intense grieving spell. The time length is not predictable or controllable. It simply must be lived through.

4. Grief can become a habit or can be artificially prolonged if a person comes to use it as a crutch for evading the loneliness that comes with the full acceptance of the death. Usually if the time of mourning is much over 2 years and is still very intense some counseling may be needed. (continued)

("Grief" continued)

Even here, an individual's own timing must be taken into consideration, but the death should not be allowed to take the life of the mourner too.

5. The extended period of grief may be due to an unwillingness to confront the emotional impact of separation. There is a time when the mourner must "say good-bye" to the loved one. This does not mean a cessation of grief or memories, but it does mean a shift back into coping with other relationships and the acceptance of the gap that is present with the loss of the loved one. Very often, the living will continue addressing thoughts to the one who is gone. When one says good-bye (or emotionally accepts the loss as final in some way), this habit of continuing to relate strongly to the dead one as if he were alive usually goes. The timing for acceptance of the death is also variable and should not be pressed unless the living person is crippled with "hanging on." Normally one will say farewell when there is enough emotional strength to handle it, perhaps within 6 months to a year after the death.

6. The acceptance of the death of another is complicated because it often means a loss of some part of the mourner. In my case, it was difficult to say good-bye to my mother because I felt as though I were losing a major part of my childhood. Only she knew and remembered parts of my past and with her death, I had to fully accept that I was not a child. Accepting her death meant I could not even go back to childhood and lack of responsibility through my mother's memories. I had lost a part of me because I had lost my mother. The areas of loss of self vary according to the relationship and the areas of life shared with the departed. But there comes a time when we must say good-bye to the dead and the part of ourselves that they possess--hopefully, while affirming the meaning and value that were a part of that relationship.

7. Expressions of grief often confuse even the one who is grieving. A mourner himself does not understand why an incident will unexpectedly trigger tears months or years after the death. Within him there is the question of why grief crops up so unexpectedly and why grieving is not finished within any specified length of time. There are, I think, two reasons for the sporadic and uncertain timing of grief. The first reason is that the mourner has shared particular areas of his life with the loved one. As he remembers the experiences, he is forced into an awareness of loss. Also he sometimes "forgets" the person is dead and momentarily expects to see or hear the loved one within a certain context; the remembering is almost a reopening of the original wound. These areas that bring grief are fairly explicable to ourselves and others. It is the second kind of grief which is puzzling--those areas not shared with the loved one in any way, those new experiences which are totally separate of any memory of the other person. I think if the mourner would examine these incidents carefully, he would find that these are areas which he subconsciously assumed would (or should) be shared with the one who is gone. In my experience, my mother died over a year before I was married, but as the wedding plans were being formulated I re-experienced flashes of grief. I had always known my mother would be present to help me with my wedding. Because I had projected my mother into my wedding plans, I grieved as I went alone through experiences in reality which I had "shared" with my mother in fantasy. There are many other cases which are, of course, not so obvious, but are also time of "should be" sharing. It is only after most of these fantasy areas are touched, and we are allowed to experience grief in relation to them that we finish these bouts of mourning which seemingly come from "nowhere."

8. Almost everyone experiences guilt in the wake of the death of a loved one. After an initial feeling of loss, there come feelings of inadequacy in relation to what should have been done. Always more care, more attention, more time, more something could have been done. As long as someone is living, one can so something

(continued)

("Grief" continued p.3)

With the finality of death comes the realization that one can do no more for the loved one--and immediately things come to mind which one "should" have done. The mourner must be made to realize though, that the loved one would not want him to castigate himself for what he did not do. He must exercise faith that the person was grateful for what he did do and accepted his humanity in those places where he failed. Sometimes, a mourner at this point of guilt will question whether he was loved by the departed, considering all he "did not do." Every instance should be used to remind the grieving one that the deceased did love him. This feeling is a result, I think, of our frustration at not being able to stop the death (and consequently a feeling of inadequacy about everything else concerning the loved one).

9. One emotion which may not be expected by the mourner is that of anger. Often one who is grieving will suddenly be aware he is angry at the departed (causing more guilt because he "shouldn't" feel anger) or perhaps anger at others for what they didn't do for the dead. The anger is usually irrational in direction. I remember being angry because my mother had died two weeks before my 21st birthday--angry because she had not lived to see me become legally an adult. Of course, she did not choose to die then, nor would those two weeks have made any radical difference in who I was, but I was angry and frustrated. The ostensible reasons for anger are often as groundless as mine, but the real reason I suspect, is that of feeling abandoned. The feeling that the loved one has removed himself volitionally from the scene may be senseless to one who has not experienced that anger, but it is not uncommon. It should be understood by griever and observer alike as valid, even if not objectively "sensible".

10. Finally, it should be noted that patterns of activity are likely to alter during the period of grief. It will differ according to the individual, but there will probably be a marked increase in activity or a period of inability to do anything. Both are common and should not be a matter of concern unless they are unusually intense or prolonged to the point of being physically dangerous. Both are ways of coping with the emptiness that now pervades the mourner's life. One is an avoidance measure, while the other is a "giving in" emotionally to the helplessness of the situation.

No one will display all of these characteristics nor experience all of these emotional elements of grief. But everyone will experience at least one of them, and we as future mourners and ministers to mourners should be aware of these factors as possibilities. Above everything else I would stress the individual pattern of grief should be accepted. At this time of so many other emotional pressures, great care should be taken not to impose the idea of conformity on the one who grieves.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE DYING
Rev. Ted Dougherty, Ph.D.

This article will attempt to focus on the dynamics involved in the pastoral care of the dying. Due to limitations of space, only some major aspects of ministry in the face of death will be considered. "The Dying" in this material will represent those who are diagnosed as "terminal" since 3/4 of the American population die of "slow" impending death (versus "accidental," sudden death), and over 70% of Americans die in an institutional setting.

The minister, historically, functionally and professionally is the one person expected to be a part of the whole process of illness, dying, death, burial, and readjustment. The rebirth of death interest currently has reemphasized the role of ministry in the care of the dying.

Redemptive care of the dying assumes a minister has integrated and lives out the basic principles of pastoral care (see Wayne Oates, The Christian Pastor, and New Dimensions of Pastoral Care). The Pastoral Care approach attempts to: (a) identify the needs of the person; (b) bring to bear the Christian resources to meet those needs; (c) exercise incarnational ministry; and (d) evaluate and assess one's ministry for future ministry and understanding. Some specific guidelines for pastoral care of the dying are suggested.

What We Know About Dying People

Research and actual ministry have revealed the following axioms about those in a dying situation:
People (including children 5/6 years up) usually know when they are dying. Dying persons are usually looking for someone to talk to about their feelings, and they usually use symbolic language to discover who is listening. They expect others to take initiative toward them.
Talking about death with a dying person will not increase fears nor cause a person to "give up"; it actually is therapeutic and redemptive.
People tend to die as they have lived (personally and spiritually), but there is the possibility of significant change and/or conversion.
Feelings of abandonment and loneliness are the major fears of dying persons (loss of human contact).
Some persons want to die (they are not afraid of death) and they wish for death. These are people who are not suicidal or psychotic.
The professionals (including ministers) caring for an institutionalized terminal patient usually have more trouble in dealing with death than the patient.
(see A. D. Weisman, On Dying and Denying).

The Dying Process

Research and actual ministry have confirmed an identifiable and predictable dying process which mainly consists of emotional stages coinciding with physical deterioration.

Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (On Death and Dying) pioneered a new era in understanding the dying person. She has identified the process of dying from her work with terminal patients:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Denial | 4) Depression |
| 2) Anger | 5) Acceptance |
| 3) Bargaining | 6) Hope is the crucial factor |

Rev. Carl Nighswonger ("Ministry to the Dying As a Learning Encounter", The Journal of Pastoral Care, vol. XXVI, June, 1972, pp.86-92), offers another framework from which to review the process of dying. He sees the minister's task as helping dying persons walk through the Valley of Death as it is experienced by the person through a series of dramas which can lead to fulfillment:

(continued)

("Pastoral Care" continued)

- I. The Drama of Shock: Denial vs. Panic
- II. The Drama of Emotion: Catharsis vs. Depression
- III. The Drama of Negotiation: Bargaining vs. Selling Out
- IV. The Drama of Cognition: Realistic Hope vs. Despair
- V. The Drama of Commitment: Acceptance vs. Resignation
- VI. The Drama of Completion: Fulfillment vs. Forlornness

Pastoral Care Goals in the Care of the Dying

Pastoral Care to the dying include the following goals: (a) helping the person face the fact of death; (b) helping the person to "live" through the dying process; (c) being a mediator between patient and family and possibly other helping professionals; (d) bringing to bear all of the Christian resources; (e) encouraging and allowing the dying person to talk out the full range of their feelings caused by impending death; (f) facilitating the process of reviewing one's life, accomplishments, affirmations and faith; (g) facilitating the bringing together and completing of appropriate goals, relationships and feelings; and (h) being a representative of God and proclaiming hope.

Death is a part of life and it should be approached with goals of fulfillment and potential as any other stage of life. A successful and redemptive dying process is possible.

Dr. Kubler-Ross says successful death is moving to the stage of acceptance. Acceptance means one has worked through and expressed feelings and faces death realistically. Acceptance is not a happy stage, it is almost void of feeling and communication is diminished and is mostly non-verbal at the end.

Dr. Avery Weisman says one can move to an "appropriate death", if the dying person is helped in the following ways:

- a) pain and suffering reduced
- b) emotional and social impoverishments kept to a minimum
- c) encourage person to operate on as high and effective level as possible
- d) recognize and resolve residual conflicts (healing broken relationships and utilizing confession)
- e) satisfy remaining wishes which are consistent with the present plight
- f) help person yield control to others in whom he has confidence

Theological Considerations

Dying brings to the surface our most basic fears: (a) fear of abandonment; (b) fear of pain and suffering; (c) fear of not being loved. These psychological fears are correlated with theological dynamics.

Dying causes us to face the fact that: (a) we are finite and not able to live forever; (b) we are not in control and have limited power; (c) we do not have a permanent geographical place; (d) we are pilgrims and life is gift; (e) quality of life becomes significant versus quantity of life; (f) termination does bring judgment and assessment on who one is and what one has done.

Paul Tillich has stated in his Systematic Theology that one cannot truly have the "courage to be" until death and non-being have been faced.

Pastoral Care Guidelines

Some guidelines for pastoral care to the dying are offered to be adapted to individual needs and circumstances.

1. Presence (incarnation) and empathy (understanding) are the most important pastoral resources one can bring to the person who is dying.
2. Try to establish where person is in the stages of dying by eliciting and listening to feelings (symbolic language), then facilitate the person to die "successfully".

("Pastoral Care" continued p.3)

3. Identify feelings when you hear them and encourage more, letting the person know they are normal.
4. Remember that the purpose of religion in death is to help the person to be able to meet the situation with a sense of reality, a healthful expression of feelings, and a capacity to reinvest emotional capital (Herman Feifel).
5. It is not as important to know what the diagnosis is as it is to know what the person thinks and feels.
6. Use prayer and scripture to identify the person's feelings of death. These resources can also be used to teach a person the Christian view of death.
7. Help the person "set his house in order"
 - 1) practical matters (will, finances, arrangements)
 - 2) talking to those close to him and sharing feelings that have been held back.
 - 3) offer confession and forgiveness
 - 4) write letters or diary
8. Help person reflect on his life and pull together meanings and contributions.
9. Some dying persons very openly and frankly discuss their funeral and what scripture, hymns and thoughts they feel are meaningful.
10. Be a spiritual mediator between person and his family.
11. Assess what the experience means to you both personally and spiritually.

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