

A CRITIQUE OF JAY E ADAMS'
THEOLOGY FROM A PNEUMATOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT
WITHIN CALVINISTIC THEOLOGY

by
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D E C L A R A T I O N

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE DOCTORAL THESIS ENTITLED
"A CRITIQUE OF JAY E ADAMS' THEOLOGY FROM A
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AND WRITTEN IN MY NAME IS MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK. IT
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ERROL ROYDEN WAGNER

SPECIAL NOTE

Throughout this dissertation I will use the term "man" in the way in which Adams uses it, that is, generically. This does not mean that the sexist distortion associated with this custom is not recognised, however, I have had to be content with the terminology Adams chose for the purpose of clarity and faithfulness to his discussion. The deeper question whether the use of the term necessarily implies a prejudicial concept of women, is obviously beyond the scope of this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

Jay E Adams, who is Dean of the institute of Pastoral Studies and Director of Advanced Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has developed what he regards to be a distinctly biblical model of counselling. He calls his method nouthetic counselling. This term is derived from the Greek verb noutheteo, to admonish and the related noun, nouthesia, admonition.

Adams has developed his counselling model against a background of a move to return the task of counselling and care to the church. Although it was traditionally accepted that the task of helping people with their personal problems, and particularly behaviour change, was the ministry of the church, through the increasing influence of the psychological sciences, this role was steadily usurped. Instead of turning to the church with their personal problems, people began to look even more to secular psychologists for assistance.

In response to this, there was an attempt, from the late nineteen twenties, to integrate the findings of the psychological sciences with theology. These first attempts came from the more theologically liberal sectors of the church. Evangelicals, initially viewed this move with scepticism. However, over the past twenty to twenty-five years, there has been a substantial move towards an interfacing of theology and psychology among evangelicals. One evangelical who has been an opponent of any sort of integration has been Jay Adams. He is vehemently opposed to integrating psychology and theology. Adams rejects the

findings of the psychological sciences. What sets nouthetic counselling apart is Adams' insistence that counselling is the distinct domain of Christians. On this basis he insists that counselling be the work of ordained pastors and not the work of psychologists and psychiatrists.

Adams maintains that his theory of counselling is biblical. However, in this dissertation we attempt to show that nouthetic counselling is inadequate in two important respects. In the first place, it is maintained that Adams has an unbiblical understanding of human nature. We will show that Adams has ignored the inner, the deeper aspects of human nature, and in particular the serious effects of sin on the will of man. Because Adams has not understood human nature and human pathology, we believe the solution he proposes is inadequate in that he concentrates on outward behaviour. He assumes that outward behaviour change leads to deeper, inward change.

In the second place, it will be argued that Adams has a limited understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the process of behaviour change. Central to nouthetic counselling, is the place Adams claims to give to the Holy Spirit. He insists that the Holy Spirit is the counsellor, par excellence. He is adamant that nouthetic counselling focuses on radical behaviour change and that is what the Holy Spirit is concerned with. Adams equates nouthetic counselling with the application of the process of sanctification. It is Adams' understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in counselling and behaviour change that is the main focus of this dissertation. In this connection we examine and

evaluate Adams' theory of counselling from a pneumatological viewpoint within the context of Calvinistic theology. Nouthetic counselling is analysed with reference to Adams' understanding of the place of the Holy Spirit in the process of behaviour change. We have attempted to prove that Adams is inadequate because his counselling lacks a pneumatological dimension. What we mean is that Adams has a very limited understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Adams insists that the holy Spirit play the central role in the process of behaviour change. However, from a practical point of view, it is the Bible that has the central place. Adams believes that the Holy Spirit works through the Bible to bring a person to faith and to change that person. For Adams, then, the Bible is absolutely crucial. The Holy Spirit is mediated to the individual through the Bible. In other words, Adams places the Bible between the individual and the Holy Spirit. We will show that Adams imprisons the holy spirit in the Bible. He ignores the direct working of the Holy Spirit in the individual and the important part played by other means of grace in the process of change.

We have attempted to show that as a result, Adams' counselling is individualistic and problem centred. What Adams needs is a corrective. This corrective is to understand that the Holy Spirit is not limited to the Bible. Although it is accepted that the Holy Spirit works through the Bible, an important means of grace to cause change is the community of believers. It is as people are brought by the Holy Spirit into community they experience radical change. This change comes through the mutual ministry of caring and love in that community. We believe this is the

dimension that is missing not only from nouthetic counselling, but, largely, from most other models of counselling. It is argued that a truly biblical model of counselling takes seriously the place of the community of believers in the process of behaviour change. We have built on insights of Reformed theologians like Hendrikus Berghof and George Hendry to develop a pneumatological corrective looking at the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church, the individual and the kingdom. This is a corrective that we believe Adams needs to be truly biblical.

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CHAPTER 1.

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Jay Adams has become known in the evangelical sector of the church as a result of his work in the area of pastoral counselling. In fact, Adams was one of the first evangelicals to develop an integrated, structured and systematic biblical approach to pastoral counselling.

Adams' work is a reaction to the problems created by the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement (C.P.E.) in the area of pastoral counselling (as will be seen from page 7-10). However, attention will be drawn to the fact that Adams' alternative is inadequate as it lacks a pneumatological aspect. This issue will be clarified from page 12.

He calls his method nouthetic counselling. This term is derived from the Greek verb noutheto, to admonish and the related noun, nouthesia admonition. Adams believes that this word, which has no English equivalent best describes the emphasis of his counselling theory.

Nouthetic counselling was first introduced to the world of counselling through the publication of his first book Competent To Counsel in 1970. In this book Adams sets out the principles and methodology of his theory of counselling.

This first book was followed by other books and publications in which Adams further developed his principles and applied them to specific counselling situations. It is true to say that Adams broke with the trend which had developed in pastoral counselling from the mid-nineteen twenties, namely, an integration of psychology and theology.

To understand the emphasis which Adams brings, it will be necessary to explain briefly the background to this interfacing of theology and psychology in the church which led directly to the development of nouthetic counselling.

1.2 The background to the development of nouthetic counselling.

Traditionally, questions of human nature and human pathology were regarded as questions which could only be addressed by the church. Then, mainly as the result of the studies of Sigmund Freud, regarded as the father of modern psychiatry, fresh insights began to emerge regarding human nature and human pathology which challenged traditional beliefs. The reason for this was that most psychological studies excluded

any idea of God, the reality of sin and the spiritual aspects of human nature.

Increasingly, problems of behaviour, change came to be seen as psychological rather than spiritual. As a consequence, since the nineteen twenties, the psychological sciences have challenged the role of the church in the area of counselling. This resulted in a situation where "the whole process of 'curing souls' moved from the church to the doorstep of psychologists and other mental health professionals".¹

For those ministers who rejected the traditional understanding of sin and human pathology, these new insights gave rise to a new understanding of the personal problems a minister faced in pastoral care. As a consequence, the need was felt in certain sections of the church to integrate the findings of the psychological sciences and theology.

It was Anton T. Boisen who was the first to do pioneer work in this area. He started with a small group of seminary students and worked with them in a loosely organised training programme at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts.²

¹ J.D. Carter, B. Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology: An Introduction, p.10
Full details in Bibliography for all footnotes

² C.E. Hall Jr., "Some Contributions of Anton T. Boisen (1876-1965) to Understanding Psychiatry and Religion," Pastoral Psychology, 19:186, September 1968, p.44

Speaking of this period Andrew Abbot writes:

There emerged in this period a clinical pastoral training movement aiming to give young clergymen direct experience with the newly defined personal problems. Seminarians would learn the rudiments of human nature from psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers who 'knew' those rudiments, that is, from the professionals who currently controlled the definitions of them.³

This work formed the foundation of what came to be known as the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement (C.P.E.), which represented what Gary Collins calls the "Mainstream Movement in the area of counselling in the church".⁴

Another major figure in the C.P.E. movement was a former student of Boisen's, Seward Hiltner. He developed, organised and gave practical expression to the work of Boisen. It was under his guidance that clinical pastoral education developed into a highly organised movement.

However, in their attempt to integrate the findings of the psychological sciences and theology, most of their work was of a non-theological nature and when theological concepts were introduced, they were made subservient to the psychological and psycho-therapeutic principles which

³ A. Abbott, System of Professionals: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labour, p. 308

⁴ G.R. Collins (ed.), Helping People Grow: Practical Approaches to Christian Counseling, G.R. Collings, "Introduction: Approaches to Christian Counseling", pp. 13-14

apparently seemed more relevant to the data. According to Huckaby, 'pastoral counselling in the mainstream movement is dependant on the medical model with its focus on the inner dynamics of the person, derived from Freud and Carl Rogers.'⁵

Here we have the major weakness of this movement's approach to pastoral care. In an attempt to develop a workable model of counselling and care, they uncritically adopted the theoretical presuppositions of psychology.⁶ In this connection it was Wayne Oates who warned against the danger of selling out to psychology.⁷ For this reason, then, it is not surprising that the C.P.E. movement had very little impact on the evangelical sector of the church. According to David Powlison:

In the twentieth century pastoral counselling became virtually synonymous with liberalism and such pastoral counselling was intellectually and methodologically subordinate to secular psychology.⁸

Evangelicals rejected both the basic assumptions and the

⁵ P.Huckaby, "Survey of the Response to Behavioral Psychology in Recent Religions Literature", Journal of Pastoral Care, XXXIX, No 4, December, 1975, p. 263 quoted in C.J. Steckel, Theology and Ethics of Behaviour Modification. p. 150

⁶ W. Oates, Protestant Pastoral Counselling, p. 23

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ M.Scott Horton (Ed), Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church. David Powlison: "Integration or Inundation", p. 192

methodology of the mainstream movement. In particular, with their orthodox view of Scripture as infallible, inerrant and authoritative, evangelicals could not accept the view of the C.P.E. movement that Scripture was only one source of truth which needed to be interpreted in the light of the world view of twentieth century man.

Evangelicals also had great difficulty with the C.P.E. movement's optimistic view of humanity and faith in humanity's capacity to achieve ultimate fulfilment given the right environment. This ran counter to their view of sin, human depravity and the absolute necessity of the grace of God before change can be brought about.

As a consequence, evangelical ministers and counsellors made no attempt to apply the findings of the psychological sciences in their counselling. As Powlison points out,

conservatives neglected to develop thoughtful pastoral care. They evangelized. Higher life conferences dealt with the residual problems of living. The dropouts, failures and burnouts either suffered in silence or covertly found their way into the secular mental health systems. Evangelicals lacked both intellectual and institutional resources to address peoples' problems in living. Since the 1950's all this has changed.⁹

As evangelicals became more sensitive to the emotional and psychological needs of people, they realised how poorly

⁹ Ibid., pp 192-3

equipped they were to counsel. In the nineteen fifties and the nineteen sixties, evangelicals began to re-evaluate the place of the psychological sciences in counselling. Increasingly, those involved in counselling within the evangelical sector of the church attempted to integrate the findings of psychology into their counselling.

It was from this interest that the Christian Association for Psychological Studies [C.A.P.S] was founded in nineteen fifty two, with the aim of providing professional fellowship.¹⁰ In nineteen sixty five Fuller Seminary founded its Graduate School of Psychology with the aim of integrating the Christian faith and modern psychology as well as training clinical psychologists.¹¹ Similarly, The Rosemead Graduate School of Professional Psychology was founded at Biola University in the United States under the leadership of two professional psychologists, John D Carter and S Bruce Narramore. ¹² They are also editors of the: Journal of Psychology and Theology. The purpose of this school is to promote an interfacing of psychology and theology in the area of counselling within the ranks of evangelicals.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.194

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² R.F. Hurdling, Roots and Shoots: A Guide to Counselling and Psychotherapy. pp. 264-265

However, one of the main opponents to any sort of integrating was Jay Adams, Dean of the Institute of Pastoral Studies and Director of Advanced Studies.¹³ According to Powlison, this was the first counter attack to the dominant pastoral psychology. He says: "Like Karl Barth's 'bombshell in the playground of the theologians,' Jay Adams's Competent to Counsel shattered the existing consensus."¹⁴

Seeking a purely biblical approach to counselling, Adams has rejected any form of integration. His own experience of observing pastoral counselling processes in a variety of settings led him to conclude that pastors have relied on psychology rather than on their own Christian tradition. As a result of his many publications, he has become an influential figure amongst evangelical pastors and counsellors.

1.3 The theological basis of nouthetic counselling.

The uniqueness of nouthetic counselling is that it is not based on psychological principles but on theological principles. In his book, More than Redemption, Adams devotes two entire chapters to the relationship between

¹³ Horton: Power Religion: The selling out of the Evangelical Church, Powlison: "Integration or Inundation" , p.194

¹⁴ Ibid.

counselling and theology. When Adams speaks of theology he means "nothing more or less than the systematic understanding of what the Scriptures teach about various subjects".¹⁵ For Adams, theology is important because he believes that all counselling must be based on biblical principles. He decries the fact that

Typically, the self-appointed Christian professional has spent years studying psychology at the graduate level but has little more than a Sunday School (or, at best, a Bible School) knowledge of the Bible.¹⁶

The entire book is devoted to demonstrate:

The counsellor's need for theology, and to show how theologically themes have important (I may say vital) implications for counselling theory and practice.¹⁷

Adams further insists that "counselling cannot be done apart from theological commitments."¹⁸ That is the reason why he believes that "theological and biblical training ... is the essential background for a counsellor; not training in psychology or psychiatry".¹⁹ This is also why he believes that it is only Christians who can effectively counsel.

¹⁵ J.E. Adams, More Than Redemption: A Theology of Christian Counselling, p. 11

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 14

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁹ J.E. Adams, The Christian Counsellor's Manual, p. 33

Adams constantly challenges the basic assumptions of modern psychiatry and psycho-therapy and their effectiveness in dealing with human problems. He believes that modern psychiatry has underestimated man's problem, and as a consequence, also underestimated the solution to man's problems. According to Adams, behavioural problems are the result of sin, unless some organic causes can be identified. He insists that because counselling has to do with behaviour change, this is the work of the Christian minister and not the work of the psychiatrist.

Central to his approach is the place he gives to the Bible in counselling. Because the Bible deals with humanity's relation to God and God's relation to humanity, Adams believes that the Scriptures are entirely adequate in dealing with human problems. He rejects any idea that the Bible needs to be balanced off or combined with the findings of the psychological sciences. ²⁰

What is the theological basis of nouthetic counselling? Adams' own theological approach can be called Reformed or Calvinistic. He makes this quite clear when he states:

I have assumed...the common knowledge of many of the most basic principles of the Christian faith, (e.g., man is born dead in sin, salvation is by grace through faith, etc.). My own theological

²⁰ Ibid., p. 92

position is Reformed (Reformational Theology). It is those views commonly held by Reformed theologies, therefore, that I have assumed throughout. You are entitled to know this important fact.²¹

Why is Adams so adamant about the need to have a proper theological basis for counselling? It is because he believes that presuppositions determine methodology. Counselling methodology is integrally related to and dependent upon counselling philosophy. He states: "What we do to another man and how we do it is tightly bound up with what we believe about that man".²² He continues: "Christians insist that counseling methodology necessarily must grow out of and always be appropriate to the biblical view of God, man and the creation."²³ It is Adams' presuppositional approach to counselling that leads him to reject the use of the psychological sciences and which sets his theory apart from other counselling theories. Thus it is clear that any critique of nouthetic counselling must evaluate the theological basis upon which it is based.

A further point which Adams insists upon is the place of the Holy Spirit in counselling. As important as methodology and techniques are, ultimately, counselling is dependant on the

²¹ Ibid., p. 34

²² Ibid., pp. 71-72

²³ Ibid.

work of the Holy Spirit in both counsellor and counsellee. Consequently, he states: "Counseling is the work of the Holy Spirit. Effective counseling cannot be done apart from him".²⁴

Why is the work of the Holy Spirit so central in counselling?
According to Adams:

The Holy Spirit is the source of all genuine personality changes that involve the sanctification of the believer, just as truly as he alone is the one who brings life to the dead sinner.²⁵

For Adams, behaviour change is what counselling is all about and this comes about as the counsellee is enabled by the Holy Spirit to bring his/her behaviour into conformity with the Word of God, which for Adams is the Bible.

1.4 Adams is inadequate

Although nouthetic counselling has become an influential movement amongst evangelicals, particularly in the United States, his views have been challenged by many involved in the counselling movement. His greatest challenge has come from fellow evangelicals equally committed to the authority of Scripture but who nevertheless are involved in the integration of psychology and theology. As already mentioned, the Rosemead Graduate School of Professional

²⁴ J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 24

²⁵ Ibid., p. 21

mentioned, the Rosemead Graduate School of Professional Psychology at Biola University was established with the purpose of promoting an interfacing of psychology and theology among evangelicals.

Starting with the assumption that God is the author of all truth, John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, who head the Rosemead School, have argued for a need to develop models of counselling that integrate the findings of psychology into pastoral care and counselling.

Adams, has, therefore, increasingly found himself out of step with evangelicals involved in counselling. Critiques of nouthetic counselling have concentrated on the following:

- (i) Adams' limited view of general revelation and common grace leading to his rejection of the psychological sciences as a resource in counselling.
- (ii) His simplistic view and use of Scripture as a text book in counselling.
- (iii) His defective view of human nature resulting in a simplistic understanding of human pathology.
- (iv) His behaviouristic and authoritative approach to counselling.
- (v) His ecclesiasticism, according to which Adams views counselling as a pastoral activity aimed at sanctification.
- (vi) His confrontational and didactic style of counselling.

The area that has thus far not been examined in detail is

Adams' understanding of how the Holy Spirit brings about behavioural change in the individual. Adams is concerned with behavioural change or what he calls biblical change. The question is, how is biblical change brought about? Adams appears to assume that outward behavioural changes somehow lead to changes at the deeper level of personality.

Although, as we have seen, Adams, who claims to stand in the tradition of Calvinistic theology, insists that there can be no change apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, he does not attempt to explain or work out the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the human personality. He appears to assume a direct relationship between the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the human personality and behaviour change. In other words, he believes there is an inherent power in the Bible itself that leads to change, that power is the Holy Spirit. So, although Adams admits that behaviour change can only come through the Holy Spirit, he nowhere tries to explain exactly how this takes place, apart from his emphasis on the Bible. He in fact assumes an automatic working of the Holy Spirit with the Bible leading to change in the individual. With his emphasis on the Bible, one could ask whether Adams has not substituted the Bible for the Holy Spirit, or whether the Holy Spirit is not 'imprisoned' in the Scriptures in the same way perhaps as according to Catholicism the Spirit is imprisoned in the church.

The aim of this dissertation will be to examine critically the nouthetic counselling of Jay Adams from a pneumatological viewpoint within the context of Calvinistic theology. Specifically, Adams' understanding of the human personality and behaviour change, will be examined. We will attempt to show that because Adams has a superficial understanding of the human personality as a consequence, he has a superficial understanding of the effects of sin on the personality. For this reason, his understanding of behaviour change is inadequate in that he concentrates on outward behaviour. It is our contention that Adams has a legalistic understanding of the process of behaviour change or sanctification. It will be argued in this dissertation that to understand the process of change it must be put in the context of pneumatology.

In these days when so much is being written on the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a great need to understand the pneumatological aspects of counselling. It will be argued that a theology of the Holy Spirit is the correct perspective for a proper understanding of the goal of counselling, namely, behavioural change. In line with this, a major goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the development of a pneumatological approach to pastoral counselling and care by considering the work of Jay Adams in the area of counselling. It will be shown that the primary means the Holy Spirit uses to bring about change in the individual is the

community of believers. As already stated, although much has been written on the work of the Holy Spirit recently, all the stress has been laid on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the individual. There is a need to explore the communal aspects of the Holy Spirit, for as Robert Sears points out:

Spirit is interpersonal, or better, communal. Spirit is what opens us to communion with others... 'Spirit' implies a community of persons. ²⁶

Similarly, "human spirit implies community and builds it". ²⁷

Sears observes that "Unfortunately, this communal personality of the Spirit has not been adequately treated in theology."

²⁸ The reason for this, according to Sears, is the fact that we are just now emerging from an age of individualism and subjectivism. ²⁹

We will see that there are aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit which are mediated to the individual only in the context of the community. This applies in particular to the role of the Spirit and change in the individual. It is this communal aspect of change that has also been lacking in

²⁶ R.T. Sears "Spirit: Divine and human. The Theology of the Holy Spirit of Heribert Muhlen and its relevance for evaluating the data of Psychotherapy." (unpublished Doctors dissertation. Fordham University, 1974) pp 3-4

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

modern pastoral counselling and care. This, it will be argued, is the major weakness of modern counselling, whether inside or outside of the church. Professional counselling, it will be shown, lacks this relational aspect which is the key to change. It is in community, in a non-formal setting, through deep relationships that personal problems can most effectively be dealt with.

As we have seen, it was in particular from Freud onwards that counselling was professionalised and became the domain of the specialist. This trend was continued through the C.P.E movement. Even among evangelicals, counselling has been regarded as something specialized and not really open to lay people, other than in a peripheral way. Although it is true that some, like Laurence Crabb, have felt uneasy about this and have advocated the need to relate counselling to the community of believers, the stress has nevertheless, still been on the need for the expert. Similarly, although Adams advocates moving counselling back to the church, yet he concentrates on developing specialist counsellors, albeit in the church. This does not mean that there is no place for the specialist in counselling, as we will see in chapter 4.

In the next chapter of this dissertation we will focus on Adams' understanding of human nature, his anthropology. In looking at his anthropology, attention will be given to his

understanding of human nature and in particular how he sees the inner aspects of human nature. This will be followed by a consideration of a biblical understanding of human nature in order to show that Adams has a very limited understanding of the inner aspects of human pathology and consequently his solution is inadequate.

Next, the dissertation moves on to consider Adams' theological position on the use of the Bible in counselling. Adams constantly stresses the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who brings about change in the individual. All counselling must rest on the work of the Holy Spirit. He is emphatic that it is through God's Word, the Bible that the Holy Spirit works. However it will be shown that Adams has a very limited view of the Word of God. He, in fact, equates the Word of God with the Bible, which is a very narrow and limited understanding of the concept of the Word of God. Further, he substitutes the Bible for the Holy Spirit. He does not distinguish enough between the Bible and the Spirit. His counselling is thus based on a theology of the Bible rather than a theology of the Spirit who works through the Word of God, which is broader than the Bible.

This will be followed in chapter four by considering the pneumatological dimensions of counselling from the perspective of Reformed and Baptist theology. We have already

pointed out above that it is this pneumatological viewpoint that is lacking in Adams. Our intention in this chapter will be to provide a corrective for Adams' limited understanding of the process of change. Attention will be focused on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church, the individual and the kingdom. In the course of our discussion, we will attempt to show that from a pneumatological perspective, there is a place for the psychological sciences in counselling. At this point attention will be given to the role of the specialist in counselling, but it will be argued in this dissertation that the place of the specialist is within the community of believers. It will be shown that where specialists do not relate to, or hold themselves accountable to the community of believers, counselling becomes professionalised and individualistic rather than relational and communal. For this reason it will be argued that counselling that leads to effective change takes place in the community of believers as they relate to each other in caring love. From this perspective we will also discuss the place of helping non-Christians with their problems. It will be further shown that with this broadening of counselling, even non-Christians can be helped as they are brought into contact with the community of believers. It will then just be left for us to draw some conclusions and to offer an alternative to Adams' nouthetic counselling.

CHAPTER 2.

AN EVALUATION OF ADAMS' ANTHROPOLOGY FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE.

2.1 Adams' Anthropology

2.1.1 Introduction.

A counselling situation arises as the result of a need, some problem in the life of a person that needs to be overcome. Whatever the problem, the focus of nouthetic counselling falls on a need for change. According to Adams,

Nouthetic confrontation arises out of the condition in the counselee that God wants changed. The fundamental purpose of the confrontation thus, is to effect personality and behavioral change.¹

What type of problems arise in nouthetic counselling? The types of problems are varied and can be traced in Adams' different books and publications: alcoholism, anger, fear and anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and sexual difficulties (masturbation, homosexuality, marital problems). Whatever the problem may be, Adams insists that counsellors reach a biblical understanding of the counselee's problem, and in particular the cause of the problem.

Fundamental to an understanding of nouthetic counselling is Adam's thesis that there are only two causes of emotional and

¹ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 45

behavioural problems. Firstly physical, caused by injury, disease, genetic or chemical imbalance, which he calls organic causes. ² Secondly there are those which can be classified as non-organic. These are hamartagenic sin-engendered, by which he means actions that are produced by wrong attitudes to self, others and God. ³ He affirms:

All non-organic problems are represented in the Scriptures as stemming from the counselee's sin. There is no third, neutral category or sub-category, that allows for non-organic difficulties for which the counselees may not be held responsible. ⁴

As a consequence, Adams lays great stress on responsibility. He believes that God made the human a responsible being. He believes that much of modern counselling abdicates the idea of personal responsibility by attributing behavioural problems or even mental illness to disease and sickness. He argues that this in fact destroys hope and locks the counsellor into patterns of behaviour for which he is not responsible and, therefore a situation about which he can do nothing. He insists that

The Freudian or expert knowledge approach is based squarely upon the presupposition that man is not responsible for what he does. This is a fundamentally non-Christian assumption.⁵

² Ibid., p. 28

³ Ibid., p. 29

⁴ Adams, The Use of The Bible in Counselling.
p. 12

⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 76

Here we find one of the major areas of conflict between Adams' approach and the approach of modern psychiatry. In line with this, Adams believes that modern psychiatry has underestimated the human problem and as a consequence has also underestimated the solution to the human problem. Our problems are not just the result of poor socialisation, or failure to actualize untapped resources, or a bad environment. He adamantly states:

Our problem is sin. We have rebelled against our Holy Creator, breaking His laws and incurring His wrath. As sinners, we cannot manufacture holiness with dirty hands. A righteous God has declared that He will punish us for our sin. We have no way in ourselves, through other sinful human beings, or by the manipulation of the environment, of appeasing Him.⁶

For Adams then, behavioural problems are the result of sin unless some organic cause can be identified. If a counsellor is going to be of help to the counsellee and if he is going to give him hope, it is vital to understand the counsellee's problem biblically and that means labelling behavioural problems as sin and not sickness.

In identifying a problem Adams speaks of three dimensions of problems. He shows that problems are usually more complex than those which counsellee's initially identify as their problem. Adams believes that a counsellee's immediate problem is really an effect of some deeper problem. For this reason

⁶ Adams, The Use of the Bible in Counselling, p. 39

a counsellor must probe to uncover how a counsellee responds unbiblically to life. Even this may not be enough. It is important to establish why the counsellee responds in a particular way. This is what Adams calls the preconditioning problem.⁷ It is not sufficient to deal with the problem itself, but to get to its root if a biblical solution is going to be found.

Adams believes that people develop certain patterns of behaviour over a long period of time. They become conditioned and programmed to handle life's situations in a certain way. This is the only form of probing into the past which Adams recommends. He believes that

It is important to review the past thoroughly enough to establish the fact that nonbiblical response patterns are at the root of one's immediate problems. The counsellee needs to be shown the preconditioning problem at the root of the particular problem which he has presented. The purpose of going back into the past is to take a behavioral history.⁸

Once a problem is identified biblically, it will be possible for the counsellor to help the counsellee towards a change in behaviour. How is this change brought about?

In nouthetic counselling the emphasis falls on what can be done about the problem, and upon correcting undesirable

⁷ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 151

⁸ Ibid.

behaviour patterns rather than on understanding the causes of these behavioural patterns. Furthermore, Adams believes that counsellors must concentrate on behaviour rather than on feelings. He observes:

Nouthetic counseling assumes that the feelings are not the most profound level of human relations with which one must be concerned in counseling. ⁹

Although he does not deny the existence of feelings, he regards them as entirely dependent upon behaviour. Adams insists that people feel bad because of wrong behaviour. In other words, feelings flow from actions. Right behaviour leads to good feelings. ¹⁰ Adams insists that God's commands deal with attitudes and behaviour. If the individual obeys God's commands the result is good feelings. On the other hand, if he disobeys, the result is bad feelings. ¹¹ For this reason the nouthetic counsellor focuses on behaviour and not feelings. ¹² Adams insists that to treat feelings rather than behaviour is to treat the symptom and not the cause.

We must be clear what type of change Adams is talking about. He points out that not all counsellors have the same kind of change in mind. In clarifying the matter he states:

What we are talking about as Christians is change that

⁹ Ibid., p. 92

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 93

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

goes far beyond minimal or incidental modifications in personal behavior. The superficial change offered by secular counselors will not do. ¹³

The change Adams is concerned with is more than just outward, it is what he calls "substantial change", ¹⁴ a change in one's inner life that is known only to God and oneself. It is change toward God. Adams believes that whatever one's problems may be, the ultimate cause of such problems can be traced to one's relationship to God. Thus the counsellor must not only deal with immediate problems, he/she must deal with the deeper problem. According to Adams "external changes that do not follow on internal changes of heart toward God always move a further away from the Lord." ¹⁵ Change may be socially good but may be religiously evil, because it has not led to an internal change of heart towards God. ¹⁶

How is this change brought about? Adams' theory of change is based on:

- (i) his understanding of the human personality, and
- (ii) his understanding of the place of the Bible in counseling and in this regard, his view of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture.

¹³ Adams, How to Help People Change: The Four Step Biblical Process, p. XII

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 6

¹⁶ Ibid.

In this chapter we will look at Adams' understanding of the human personality and in chapter three we will give attention to his theological position on the Bible.

2.1.2 Adams' view of human nature.

We begin by considering Adams' view of human nature and the impact of his views on his theory of counselling. In section 2.2 Adams' views are evaluated biblically and also against those of traditional Reformed scholarship. The aim will be to show that Adams is often guilty of interpreting the biblical material to suit his particular style of counselling. In other words, Adams is guilty of the very thing he accuses other counsellors of doing, that is, imposing his own theory of counselling on the Bible. What then is his understanding of human nature?

Any theory of counselling is based on a particular view of human nature. When you propose to help another person solve particular problems of living, there are bound to be assumptions of human nature. For example, Skinner's behaviouristic psychology is based on his view that the behaviour of the human being is a product of evolution. Because human behaviour is the result of conditioning, it is possible to control and change human behaviour through

conditioning.¹⁷ Hurding points out that Skinner's conclusions are based on two assumptions about human nature: "that man is simply a higher animal and that man is a machine".¹⁸

Another example that illustrates the extent to which assumptions of human nature determine a counselling theory is the client-centred counselling of Carl Rogers. Rogers has a very optimistic and positive view of humanity. Central to his theory is the view that humans are autonomous and that they have the resources within themselves for constructive change.¹⁹ Concerning a person, Roger affirms:

he is free to become himself or to hide behind a façade; to move forward or to retrogress; to behave in ways which are destructive of self and others, or in ways which are enhancing, quite literally free to live or die, in both the physiological and psychological meaning of these terms.²⁰

What assumptions about human nature form the basis of Adams' nouthetic counselling theory?

The importance of this question is recognized by Adams himself for he consistently insists that counselling

¹⁷ B.F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity, pp. 31-32

¹⁸ R. Hurding. Roots and Shoots. A Guide to Counselling and Psychotherapy, p. 48

¹⁹ C.R. Rogers, Becoming a Person, pp. 26-27

²⁰ Rogers, "The Concept of the Fully Functioning Person", Pastoral Psychology, 16:153, April 1965, p. 32

methodology is integrally related to counselling philosophy.

He points out:

What we do to another man and how we do it is tightly bound up with what we believe about that manChristians insist that counseling methodology necessarily must grow out of and always be appropriate to the biblical view of God, man and creation. ²¹

Lawrence Crabb shares Adams' view when he states that,

Counseling theory always begins, either explicitly or implicitly, with a set of very basic ideas about human nature...from this we develop a model of counseling.²²

It is therefore important to ask what is Adams' view of human nature and how does his view affect his counselling methodology?

On the whole, Adams holds a traditionally evangelical view of human nature. He believes in the existence of literal Adam, created by God. ²³ In reviewing Adams' discussion on human nature one notes that three important aspects impact upon his counselling theory:

1. He stresses the fact that Adam was originally created sinless and perfect. ²⁴
2. Adam was created in the image of God, which Adams

²¹ Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 71

²² L. Crabb, Understanding People, p. 87

²³ Adams, More Than Redemption. p. 98

²⁴ Ibid., p. 98

understands to be moral and cogitative and also ruling.²⁵ In other words, Adam was created an intelligent, thinking and morally responsible being.

3. Adam did not remain in a state of perfection, but fell from his state of perfection through an act of disobedience, resulting in guilt and corruption in all aspects of human life.²⁶ As a consequence of man's fall, "All are born with a warped sinful nature".²⁷ This is true even from the birth of an individual. This point is illustrated in a discussion regarding childhood responsibility in the context of the effect of adverse influences in childhood. Adams makes it quite clear that God holds children responsible for any sin from the very first day of their lives.²⁸ He insists that, "They are guilty in Adam."²⁹ They are "declared to be children of wrath."³⁰ In other words, they are born with a sinful nature which is expressed in sinful actions. For that reason,

They are both held guilty for sin (because of Adam's sin - cf. Romans 3:23; ch. 5) and polluted by sin. Their corrupted nature expresses itself from birth in acts of

²⁵ Ibid., p. 125

²⁶ Ibid., p. 140

²⁷ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 54

²⁸ Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 138

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

actual transgressions. ³¹

What impact does Adams' understanding of human nature have on his counselling theory? It is interesting that Adams lists these three aspects of his view of human nature in a discussion regarding his presuppositions. As already seen, Adams insists that, "All counseling systems rest upon presuppositions". ³² In this connection then, Adams lists the following among the most important presuppositions that he says are foundational to his biblical counselling:

- Presupposition 6 - Man was created in God's image as a responsible being.
- 7 - Human thought and behaviour is moral.
- 8 - Man is a sinful being, guilty and corrupt as the result of the Fall.
- 9 - Man's corrupt nature leads to sinful behaviour and behaviour patterns.
- 10 - Sin results in misery. ³³

Adams does not deal with the exegetical and theological considerations behind his point of view. Rather, he refers for support to the writings of E.J. Young and John Murray, both prominent Reformed scholars.

Adams works this out in terms of the human personality. His theory of change is built on his understanding of the human

³¹ Ibid.

³² Adams, Update on Christian Counselling Vol 1, p. 36

³³ Ibid., p. 36

personality. The human personality, according to Adams, is, "The sum total of all that one is by nature and nurture."³⁴ According to Adams, man is born with an inherited nature, which he calls phusis a Greek word which he defines as "the basic deposit of 'stuff' with which an individual is created or born; it has to do with his inherited and genetic side".³⁵ The phusis would include natural gifts and abilities.³⁶ In this regard, Adams seems to reject the concept of temperament. In a footnote he states that

It is interesting that the Bible says virtually nothing about temperament. If it were so important a matter as some make it, the Scriptures would have quite a bit to say. Usually, the various categories listed...go back to the old pagan Greek view of the four humors.³⁷

According to Adams, the personality is determined by the way we, with our particular nature, phusis responds to our environment, nurture. The personality is the sum total of all that we are at any given moment.³⁸ From one's genetic make up, humanly speaking, an almost infinite number of possibilities for using the genetic make up can arise.³⁹ God created human nature in such a way to enable the human "to

³⁴ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 250

³⁵ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 99

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 250

³⁹ Ibid.

think and act so as to perform certain tasks, and to maintain certain relationships".⁴⁰

2.1.2.1 Adam created sinless

As we have seen, it is Adams' conviction that Adam was created sinless. By this he means that Adam never did anything God forbade. He obeyed God perfectly in all he did.

⁴¹ Adams goes into a detailed discussion of Adam before his fall into sin. Adam, prior to the fall was an example of normal human life as God intended it.⁴² It was not normal for Adam to sin.⁴³

What significance does it have for the counsellor to know and accept that man was created sinless? Adams points out that knowing what man was like before he fell into sin, clarifies God's norm for human life. ⁴⁴ In other words, Adams believes that we must look for our understanding of what is normal at Adam, as he was originally created. He points out that we must not presuppose "that human nature always has been more

⁴⁰ Adams, More than Redemption. p. 100

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 99

⁴² Ibid., p. 101

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 100

or less the same as now". ⁴⁵ For this reason Adams warns against basing our standards of what is normal and abnormal on studies and tests done in surveys of human behaviour. ⁴⁶ He insists that it is possible to set out absolute norms and standards as to what is normal and abnormal. ⁴⁷ Similarly, Christ sets the norms for human life today. He argues: "Christ, not sociological polls, provides the norms for human living". ⁴⁸ He states further: "We must say that what is normal for a human being is what Christ said and did". ⁴⁹ For Adams, then, the norm is righteousness, by which he means the sort of life that Christ lived. ⁵⁰ He insists that true righteousness and holiness is the norm for human living. ⁵¹

It is not difficult to see how Adams uses this view then to set the goals of counselling. He states: "A counselor must have proper goals and objectives toward which to move in counseling". For Adams this is crucial. He makes the point: "When you deal with the question of standard, you're dealing

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 98

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 102

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 101

⁵¹ Ibid.

with the fundamental issue in counseling...." ⁵² The issue is that if you are involved in assisting people to change, it is vital to deal not only with the question of how to change but also into what? For Adams, the answer is quite clear, "Into the likeness of Jesus Christ".⁵³

From this it is clear that Adams' view is diametrically opposed to the evolutionary view of man which sees man progressing from primitive to advanced. On the contrary, Adam was created perfect and fell from that state of perfection. Man's problems are, therefore, the result not of a yet incomplete process of evolution but the result of the fall.

Another aspect of Adams' understanding of human nature is his explanation of the concept of the image of God.

2.1.2.2 Adam and the image of God

Referring to Genesis 1:26-28, Adams points out that Adam was created in the image of God. ⁵⁴ He draws no distinction between the terms, image and likeness, used in Genesis. How does Adams understand the image of God? He admits that there is wide disagreement as to the meaning of this term. Adams

⁵² Ibid., p. 102

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 118

understands the image of God as that which makes humans different from animals. In what way? It is the human who is like God. God is person and as person he created the human.⁵⁵ Furthermore, as person, God is a moral being in that he is concerned about right and wrong, truth and error.⁵⁶ He sets standards according to his own nature. The human is therefore an intelligent, morally, responsible being. The human is incurably ethical.⁵⁷ Adams insists: "Everybody knows that he/she lives in a moral world that cannot be divorced from shoulds and oughts".⁵⁸ Thus for Adams, the image of God in the human is both moral and cogitative.⁵⁹ Another aspect of God's image in the human, as Adams understands it, is authority to rule. Humanity was created to rule over the earth under God.⁶⁰ What does Adams understand by this? Adam was created to work, to care for the garden, to "name and rule over the animals, subdue the earth and propagate the human race".⁶¹ Adam was to be creative and productive.⁶²

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 125

⁵⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 45

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, p.98

⁶⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 128

⁶¹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 134

⁶² Ibid.

What is the relevancy of the concept of man being created in the image of God for counselling? For Adams the fact that man has been created in the image of God as a moral, intelligent being means that he stands responsible before God for his actions. ⁶³ In this connection Adams makes the point: "Now if that is so, it must have something to do with counseling". ⁶⁴ Adams believes that one of the major weaknesses of modern psychological theories is the fact that they undermine the responsible nature of man. In this connection he takes issue with Skinner for asserting that man is controlled by his impersonal environment. ⁶⁵ Similarly, he points out that Freud's concept of the irrational unconscious which controls and motivates man "leads to a sort of determinism that removes all responsibility". ⁶⁶ Adams takes issue with Freud for popularizing the Medical Model of human problems. ⁶⁷ According to the Medical Model personal problems are the result of sickness.⁶⁸

It is this view of behavioural problems that, according to

⁶³ Ibid., p. 125

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 118

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 119

⁶⁷ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 4

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 5

Adams, forms the basic approach to counselling today. Why is Adams so set against the Medical Model? He answers:

The idea of sickness as the cause of personal problems vitiates all notions of human responsibility. This is the crux of the matter. People no longer consider themselves responsible for what they do wrong.⁶⁹

In this connection Adams observes:

One achievement with which Freudianism ought to be credited is the leading part it has played in the present collapse of responsibility in modern American society.⁷⁰

Adams is concerned that, "personal helplessness, hopelessness and irresponsibility are the natural result of the Medical Model".⁷¹ Adams insists that, "The image and likeness of God...is a truth that implies that God holds man responsible for his behaviour".⁷² This means that the counsellor can hold a counsellee responsible "at every point where the Scripture does, with the firmness born of the conviction that God has declared man responsible to Him for his behavior...."⁷³ Adams admits that an unsaved man cannot fulfil God's moral requirements.⁷⁴ But that makes no difference, for, "Man's

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 4

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7

⁷² Adams, More than Redemption, p. 120

⁷³ Ibid., p. 125

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 126

present ability is not the measure of his responsibility".⁷⁵ It is up to the unsaved person to repent and turn to God for forgiveness. In fact it is because man is created in the image of God that a counsellor cannot for long suppress the sense of right and wrong that God has put within him.⁷⁶ It is on this basis that Adams places such a stress on confrontation in nouthetic counselling.

2.1.2.3 Adams' understanding of the inner aspects of human nature.

Adams, who claims to base his views on those of leading Reformed theologians like A.A. Hodge, L. Berkhoff and John Murray⁷⁷, rejects the tricotomous view of human nature, that man is a body, soul and spirit.⁷⁸ For himself, he prefers to speak of man's duplex nature by which he means that man is body and soul or spirit.⁷⁹ Adams uses the terms soul and spirit interchangeably.⁸⁰ In this connection Adams states: "careful exegetes understand the Bible to speak of man

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 45

⁷⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 110

⁷⁸ Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 9

⁷⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 110

⁸⁰ Adams, The Christian Counsellor's Manual, p. 9

dichotomistically; not trichotomistically".⁸¹ However, he is careful to point out that although man is described as body, soul or spirit, the emphasis in Scripture is on the unity of man's nature. He affirms:

Man is a complex whole. He cannot (in this life) be separated into his parts, except for purposes of analysis. All attempts, therefore, to divide man as body, soul and spirit...must fail. They fail because the concept of a tripartite nature of man is not biblical....⁸²

He feels it is unfortunate that the focus of so much discussion on human nature has been on trying to identify separate entities in human nature.⁸³ He points out that some who hold the view of trichotomy have erroneously assigned different specialists to the different aspects of man. Thus, it is suggested that physicians attend to the body, psychologists attend to the soul and pastors attend to these aspects pertaining to the spirit.⁸⁴ Adams holds to the view that man must be seen as a complex whole.

How does Adams understand terms like spirit and soul? As already mentioned, Adams uses these terms interchangeably. Spirit is the non-material aspect of human nature out of relationship to the body. For Adams it refers to the

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 437

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 110

⁸⁴ Adams, The Christian Counsellor's Manual, p. 9

disembodied state. ⁸⁵ It is a person without a body. ⁸⁶ Spirit is what causes life. But spirit is not something that is unique to man. ⁸⁷ The uniqueness of man is the manner in which God created man and breathed into Adam the breath or Spirit of life. ⁸⁸ Adams states:

This personal, direct, unique in-breathing constituted a separate act on God's part that distinguished human life from other animal life. ⁸⁹

For Adams, man is both earthly and heavenly. What about the soul? The soul speaks of man as a living being and is also used with reference to the person and often means no more than "me" and "I". ⁹⁰ Adams points out that man is not unique in being a living soul as it refers to the life principle in man, which is shared with all other non-human creatures.⁹¹ How do soul and spirit relate to each other? According to Adams, both soul and spirit refer to the non-material aspects of human nature, where spirit refers to the non-material out of relationship to the body, i.e., when viewed as separated from the body. Soul refers to the non-material in relationship to

⁸⁵ Adams, More than Redemption, p.116

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 108

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 91

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 116

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 108

the body or the material.⁹² Does he hold to a dualistic view of the body? In this regard Adams rejects any notion that material is sinful and spiritual good. Adam was created a material being. According to Adams:

Human materiality is never to be considered (as some, unfortunately, call it) the "lower" aspect of man's nature, and the spiritual (non-material) aspect the "higher", if by that language the intention is to give the former a lesser status than the latter. Both the material and the spiritual creations were equally good and equally as important because both were from God and for God.⁹³

However, we shall see later, that Adams comes close to identifying the body with sin.

To what extent does Adams refer to other aspects of human nature? Adams explains his understanding of the mind as the intellectual side of the inner man and he relates it to the heart and soul.⁹⁴ However, from the point of view of relevancy to his counselling theory, these are not terms which are of interest to Adams. The word which Adams does focus on as the key to understanding the inner aspects of human nature is the term heart. For Adams heart is the most illuminating term the Bible uses to explain human nature.⁹⁵ In fact he insists that, "there can be no real understanding

⁹² Ibid., p. 116

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 106-107

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 116-117

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 113

of human nature (and especially the spiritual aspect of it)" until we understand what the Bible means by heart.⁹⁶ For Adams the heart "is the most fully developed, most far-reaching and most dynamic concept of the non-material (or spiritual side of) man in the Bible...."⁹⁷

How then does Adams understand the term heart? The heart, according to Adams, refers to the inner aspects of human nature.⁹⁸ It is "the inner life that one lives before God and himself, a life unknown to others because it is hidden from them".⁹⁹ Adams insists that the heart must not be equated with feelings and emotions. He points out that the Bible in fact associates feelings with the splagchon, the viscera and not the heart.¹⁰⁰ For him, the stress must be laid on the intellect. He states: "In the Bible, human beings are said to think, reason, plan, understand, doubt, perceive, make mistakes, purpose, intend, etc., in their hearts".¹⁰¹ In this regard it is interesting that Adams should identify the conscience with the heart, which he defines as the faculty of

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 115

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Adams, The War Within, p. 26

⁹⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 115

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 114

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

moral self judgment.¹⁰² Heart for Adams, then, includes the whole inner person, and often indicates what one is truly against what one seems to be outwardly.¹⁰³ How do spirit and soul relate to heart? Heart refers to the non-material side of man in contrast to the material side.¹⁰⁴ Adams then concentrates on the heart in his counselling theory. It is the heart that must be changed. At conversion God gives a new heart. In other words, man is changed in his inner nature.¹⁰⁵ All the other terms which the Bible so frequently uses to describe the interwoven aspects of human nature seldom occur in Adams' writings and he gives very little attention to them.

2.1.2.4 Adams' understanding of the effects of sin on human nature

How has sin affected human nature? This is an important question for counselling as it is true to say that one's understanding of sin and its effects will have major implications on one's counselling theory. In this connection Carter and Narramore point out that, "the fall of the human race into sin...has broad implications for our understanding

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Adams, The War Within, p. 26

¹⁰⁴ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 116

¹⁰⁵ Adams, The War Within, p. 27

of personality".¹⁰⁶ The framework of the Christian understanding of personality rests on the dual facts of humanity's creation in the image of God and the fall into sin of the human race.¹⁰⁷ Disciplines involved in helping people "must struggle to understand and explain the misery of the human being".¹⁰⁸ Carter and Narramore observe:

There is no getting around the fact that something radical has gone amiss in the human personality. Both individually and corporately we encounter problems of gigantic proportions.¹⁰⁹

Adams shows how the Christian understanding of man's problems contrast with the non-Christian's view. He takes Freud, Skinner and Rogers as examples of the non-Christian view.¹¹⁰ For Freud man's problems are due to poor socialization, for Skinner, it is environmental conditioning and for Rogers it is failure to live up to potential.¹¹¹ As a result, Freud's solution is resocialization by an expert, for Skinner, it is reconditioning by an expert and for Rogers it is mobilization of resources in one's self.¹¹² Adams points out that the

¹⁰⁶ J.D. Carter, B. Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology: An Introduction, p. 56

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.58

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Adams, The Christian Counsellor's Manual, pp. 73-74

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

Christian understands man's problems to be the result of sin against God. Accordingly, the solution lies in the Spirit's resources in the Bible, which is of course Adam's approach.¹¹³ How does Adams then understand the effects of sin on human nature and how does his view affect his theory of counselling?

As we have seen, in line with traditional Reformed theology, Adams believes that Adam fell from his state of perfection through an act of disobedience.¹¹⁴ Through this act of disobedience the whole of humanity became both guilty and corrupt. Adams believes that it is sin that has led to the misery in which man finds himself. Sin has affected him emotionally in a feeling of estrangement from God, other people and himself. It has led to feelings of guilt. It has led to actual transgressions on the part of the individual.

¹¹⁵ Adams argues:

Since the fall, in which Adam's sin led to a guilty conscience, hypocrisy and doubt, it has been impossible for natural man to keep their hearts pure, their consciences good or their faith unhypocritical.¹¹⁶

How has sin affected the image of God in the human? Has it eradicated the image of God? Adams believes that in the fall,

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 140

¹¹⁵ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 69

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 54

the image of God was distorted. ¹¹⁷ In this regard he insists:

The image of God in man was distorted by the fall. Man as a communicating, holy, knowledgeable, righteous being, reflecting God his creator, became rather a reflection of the Father of lies. ¹¹⁸

Elsewhere he writes that, "The image of God was ruined by the Fall". ¹¹⁹ This does not mean that humanity no longer retains God's image in some sense. ¹²⁰ However, that image has to be renewed. For that reason Adams believes that, "It is only in the Christian that the image of God once more can begin to be detected in any true sense of the word".¹²¹

Adams stresses the effect of sin on the inner core of human nature. It is in the inner core that the effects have been most serious. He insists that as a consequence of the fall, "All are born with a warped sinful nature". ¹²² No part of human nature has escaped sins blighting effects. ¹²³ Human nature is affected in the inner core, the heart, according to Adams.¹²⁴ He explains that it is from this inner core, which

¹¹⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 140

¹¹⁸ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 218

¹¹⁹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, pp. 92-93

¹²⁰ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 119

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 120

¹²² Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 54

¹²³ Adams, More than Redemption, p.141

¹²⁴ Ibid.

has been corrupted, that all sinful attitudes, words and actions flow.¹²⁵ It is for this reason that Adams insists: "It is extremely dangerous, biblically to speak as if there were part of human nature that is not sin affected, but also not sin generating".¹²⁶ In other words: "All of man, then, is both affected by sin and is a source of further sin".¹²⁷ Adams points out that, "Man is not a sinner because he sins, he sins because he is a sinner....By nature...." ¹²⁸

Regarding the effect of sin in the inner core of human nature, it is interesting that Adams draws a distinction between the inner corruption and the flesh, sarx, a term which we shall see is the term Paul most frequently uses as a description of the effect of sin on human nature. Adams believes that flesh must not be confused with the corrupt nature with which the human is born, i.e. sinful nature. It is significant that Adams identifies the flesh with the body. He states: "flesh does have as its primary reference the corporeal".¹²⁹ Adams, in a discussion on Romans 6 comes very close to identifying the body with the problem of sin. He

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 142

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Adams, The War Within, p. 133

states:

Because of the guilt and corruption inherited from Adam, every person born by ordinary generation wrongly habituates his body from earliest days. ¹³⁰

Adams insists that the body has been captured and controlled by sin. ¹³¹ On the other hand, Adams denies that there are dualistic elements, that the body is the source of sin. ¹³² For this reason Adams states:

When Paul speaks of the body as sinful, he does not conceive of the body as originally created by God as sinful...but rather of the body plunged into sinful patterns and habits as a result of Adam's fall. ¹³³

Adams works out the effect of sin in terms of his understanding of the human personality. Our responses to our environment, Adams believes, become deeply ingrained, they become a habitual way of responding. Our problems are caused by the fact that we are born with a phusis which is "disposed toward sin". ¹³⁴ He is adamant that corrupt behaviour is not something learned from one's environment for we are born corrupt. It is natural to respond sinfully. ¹³⁵ The more we sin, the more these sinful patterns of behaviour become entrenched. Although it is inevitable for us to respond

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 62

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 62-63

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 160

¹³⁴ Adams, The War Within, p. 75

¹³⁵ Ibid.

sinfully, at the same time individuals can develop certain particular styles of sinful expression. These sinful patterns of behaving become so entrenched that they seem to become second nature to that person. This is how behavioural problems originate, a phusis disposed toward sin leading to wrong ways of responding to the environment then becoming deeply ingrained as a habitual pattern of behaviour.

The flesh then, for Adams, means the body habituated to the ways of the world rather than to the ways of God.¹³⁶ In other words, the flesh, sarx is the programme of sinful behavioural patterns, sinful habits. It is the result of learned behaviour and behaviour passed down from previous generations.¹³⁷ Adams makes the point: "The body has been programmed by long-standing practice...."¹³⁸ The flesh is therefore not deep rooted in human nature, it is outward, it is habit and learned behaviour. It is the programmed way in which the person has learned to respond sinfully to situations. It is this way of responding that Adams believes must be radically changed. His counselling theory is about changing these ways of responding.

¹³⁶ Adams, The War Within, p. 234

¹³⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 163

¹³⁸ Adams, The War Within, p. 236

What implications does the doctrine of the fall have for counselling? In this regard Carter and Narramore point out:

Every area of theology's understanding of sin... can be shown to relate to the conditions of personal maladjustment that applied psychologists are addressing.¹³⁹

They explain that the doctrines of depravity, condemnation alienation and guilt parallel certain specific psychological expressions associated with psychopathology.¹⁴⁰ According to Adams: " Considerations of sin and its effect upon the human being and the implications of this for counseling is an enormous undertaking...."¹⁴¹ It is so important that Adams feels that even he has not dealt with all the implications adequately and asks contributions from his readers.¹⁴² In this regard, Adams wants to set the record straight. He feels it is a gross misrepresentation to say that in nouthetic counselling all human problems are attributed directly to the sins of particular counselees. He writes: "I have stated clearly that not all problems of counseling are due to their own sin".¹⁴³ However, Adams believes, as we have seen, that

¹³⁹ Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p. 59

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 139

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

as a result of the fall man is both guilty and corrupt.¹⁴⁴

How does Adams work this out in terms of the counselling situation? Sin brought guilt. Adams wants his readers to understand the guilt he is talking about is not just feelings of guilt, but real guilt.¹⁴⁵ He explains:

So, when Christian counselors speak of guilt, they refer to culpability (i.e., actions or attitudes making one liable to punishment) before God. This culpability may be for original sin or for actual transgressions by the counselee.¹⁴⁶

He does not want his understanding of guilt to be confused with the type of guilt that is referred to in psychiatric literature.¹⁴⁷ He accuses psychologists and psychiatrists of dealing with guilt feelings and not real guilt. That is to deal with the symptoms and not the cause. He understands that guilt feelings can lead to all sorts of problems. However, counsellors must deal with the fact that man stands guilty before God and that this can only be dealt with on the basis of Christ's sacrificial death for sin.¹⁴⁸ Thus a counsellor dealing with either a Christian or a non-Christian, "must call the counselee to repentance (he treats the guilt as real

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 144

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 144-145

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 146

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 145

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.144

and the sense of sin as appropriate)" ¹⁴⁹

How does Adams' understanding of the effects of sin on the image of God affect his counselling theory? We saw that according to Adams, one aspect of the image of God in man is that man was entrusted with authority to rule. Humanity was created to rule over the earth under God. Man was in control of his environment. With the fall, Adam lost this domination and in fact the earth gained dominion over him so that he no longer had mastery over the earth. ¹⁵⁰ There is now a constant fight between humanity and the environment. Counselling problems arise from this tension between humanity and the environment. Not only is man genetically disposed to sin but in addition man is in conflict with his environment. People constantly allow their environment to control them. This is seen in the way man allows his problems to control him. Adams states: "Man adapts to the problems; man is subdued by the problems...." ¹⁵¹ It is the task of the counsellor to show the counsellee that he/she can, through Christ, gain control over his/her environment. In nouthetic counselling counsellees are taught to solve problems rather than adapt to them. Adams insists that one of the ways in which counsellees adapt to

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 146

¹⁵⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 128

¹⁵¹ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 130

their problems is by claiming they cannot be solved.¹⁵² Adams is adamant:

"One of the words which is taboo in nouthetic counseling with Christian clients is the word 'can't'. A catchword of nouthetic counselors is, 'You can't say can't'".¹⁵³

He insists that

Christians can't say 'can't' because God says they can. They can cope with their problems just as Christ did, and as thousands of other Christians have done".¹⁵⁴

He insists in this regard: "There is a biblical solution to every problem".¹⁵⁵ Where this happens the counsellor begins to reflect the image of God.¹⁵⁶

Sin has also led to a souring of interpersonal relationships between people.¹⁵⁷ But even more serious, it has resulted in a corruption within man's nature.¹⁵⁸ The counsellor must recognise that man's problems are deep seated. There is an inner corruption. He states:

Corruption of the whole person, but especially of his inner life, is a dominant and essential theme for every

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 130

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 131

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 129

¹⁵⁷ Adams, The Christian Counsellor's Manual, p. 123

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

counselor to know, to teach and upon which to base all his work. ¹⁵⁹

There is no real hope for man, Adams maintains, unless the sinner by the gracious work of the Spirit comes face to face with the issue that sin has afflicted his/her whole personality. It is only in Jesus Christ, through the regenerating work of the Spirit that the image of God can be renewed. That is why Adams constantly insists that Christian counselling is for believers alone and evangelism is for unbelievers,¹⁶⁰ because there can be no real change without a change in the inner being. ¹⁶¹ It is here that man must be changed if there is going to be any change in behaviour. Adams argues that change must take place in the inner core of the human being and not only on the surface "so that his very set of values and the springs of his motivations are affected". ¹⁶² Man's heart needs to be changed because it is from here that all personal problems stem. What man needs, Adams argues, is "a new power from his inside to change". ¹⁶³ He believes that this inner power is the Spirit. He stresses repeatedly that people are not changed through merely changing their environment or their behaviour patterns.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 143

¹⁶⁰ Adams, More than Redemption, p.121

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 104

¹⁶³ Ibid.

Change comes from the inside. ¹⁶⁴ He fiercely denies that nouthetic counselling is concerned with actions only and not also with thoughts and belief. ¹⁶⁵ It is through the new birth, regeneration, that a person receives not only new life, but also a new power in his inner being which results in the transformation of character and life. This inner transformation is essential. ¹⁶⁶ However, it is essential that this inner change leads to outward change in behaviour patterns. He makes the point that

inner change is essential, but it must lead to outward change....These two sides are part and parcel of one another....If there is really no outer change...there has been no inner change. ¹⁶⁷

Adams explains that

Potentially, every truly regenerate person, because he possesses a new life and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit...has the capacity and the resources to do all that God requires of him ¹⁶⁸

Adams admits, that this renewal comes gradually and not all at once. It happens irregularly and in spurts and is never completed. ¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 313

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 169

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 313

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 121

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

We have looked in detail at Adams' understanding of human nature, the effects of sin on human nature, the implications of his understanding of human nature and sin for his counselling theory. It is now necessary, by way of evaluation, to turn to the biblical view of human nature. At the same time Adams' view will be evaluated against those of the views of leading evangelical and Reformed theologians.

2.2 Biblical understanding of the nature of man.

2.2.1 Introduction.

In evaluating Adams' understanding of human nature, the question may be raised as to why it is necessary to evaluate his views from a biblical standpoint. Should his views not be scrutinized rather from a scientific standpoint using the findings of the psychological sciences? In this connection, Adams makes it quite clear that his counselling model is not based upon scientific findings.¹⁷⁰ His approach is presuppositional. By this he means that his views are based on the Scripture, which he understands to be inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient for all faith and practice.¹⁷¹ This will be discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. xxi

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

For this reason Adams makes it quite clear that any evaluation of his counselling model must be done on biblical grounds. He is quite prepared to refine his position if it can be shown biblically that he is wrong.¹⁷²

How legitimate is a biblical approach to the study of anthropology? In this regard it is important to distinguish between scientific anthropology and biblical anthropology. The former concerns the empirical study of man and his world. Biblical anthropology is primarily concerned with humanity in relation to God. Although biblical anthropology is concerned with man in his relation to God, it nevertheless, sheds light on human nature. Whereas scientific anthropology bases its study of humanity on empirical investigation, biblical anthropology bases its study of the nature of humanity on divine revelation. Although the approach of biblical anthropology is different from that of scientific anthropology, it does not mean that it is unscientific or that it represents a primitive view of humanity. Bromiley makes this quite clear when he states:

As the theological anthropologist recognises that his scientific counterpart may discover many things in his own sphere, he too claims validity for the many things...taught by the divine self revelation...¹⁷³

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 269

¹⁷³ G.W. Bromiley (ed), The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol 1, G.W. Bromiley, "Anthropology", p. 132

In this connection it is pertinent to note that in Wendel Craker's view, from the insights of Freud and others, we understand more about the human personality than we did a generation ago. Psychological studies of scientific anthropology have made available material which was at first unavailable to theologians. Nevertheless, he admits that to a large extent science has not yet unlocked the secret of humanness. It remains to a large extent clouded in mystery. Some questions which remain unanswered: What is the essence of humanity? What is it that makes us human? ¹⁷⁴ These are some of the questions where divine revelation can assist us in our study of the human personality. At the same time it is true that not all that might be known of human nature is developed in divine revelation.

What then is the biblical understanding of human nature? Is there what we can call a Biblical Psychology? What is it that constitutes the human personality? How do the various components associated with the human being such as body, soul, spirit, and flesh fit together? What do they tell us about the human personality? How does this compare with Adams' understanding of human nature? As we have seen, his views have had a marked impact on his counselling model. It

¹⁷⁴ W. Craker, 'The Holy Sprit and Human Personality', Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4, Fall 1976, p. 267-8

will be necessary to relate the biblical material to Adams' understanding of human nature. Has Adams understood human nature biblically or has he interpreted the biblical material to fit his counselling model?

These questions are exceedingly complex but it is essential to get to a biblical understanding of the human personality if we are going to provide a critique of Adams' theology with the aim of providing a corrective to his counselling.

Now a study of man in the Old Testament shows that four words are used to describe man,

<u>basar</u>	- flesh
<u>nephesh</u>	- soul
<u>ruach</u>	- spirit
<u>lebh</u>	- heart

Although the Hebrews had no word at all for the whole body, man is viewed in terms of his bodily and soulish dimensions.¹⁷⁵ The bodily dimensions of man speak of man in his finitude and temporality.¹⁷⁶ The soulish dimensions speak of man in his infinity and eternity. But there is no dualism, the one a lower part of man and the other the higher part of man. Man is always viewed wholistically, as a unity. The different terms used to describe man are not separable

¹⁷⁵ G.W. Bromiley (ed), The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol 1, C.B. Bass, "Body", p. 528

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

faculties but different ways of looking at the whole of man.¹⁷⁷

The New Testament builds on the Old Testament understanding of man but it is richer in its vocabulary. According to Guthrie, of all the New Testament writers, Paul gives the fullest expression to the doctrine of man.¹⁷⁸

The main ideas which Paul uses to describe the various aspects of man are,

<u>psyche</u>	- soul
<u>sarx</u>	- flesh
<u>pneuma</u>	- spirit
<u>kardia</u>	- heart

This compares to the Old Testament description of man. But in addition there are other words used to describe man which are not found in the Old Testament, namely,

<u>soma</u>	- body
<u>nous</u>	- mind
<u>thelima</u>	- will
<u>syneidesis</u>	- conscience
<u>eso anthropos</u>	- inner man

How does Adams understand these terms? How does he relate these terms to his model of counselling? From our review of Adams' understanding of human nature it is apparent that the concept which is important to him, which is central to, and which shapes his counselling theory, is his understanding of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p.163

the heart. According to Adams this is descriptive of the inner aspects of human nature and supports his understanding of the effects of sin on the human personality. When Adams refers to the other aspects of human nature mentioned in the Bible, for example soul, spirit, flesh, and mind etc., he deals with these briefly and it is obvious that they do not play an important role in his thinking.

In our evaluation of Adams' anthropology from a biblical standpoint, attention will be given to the aspects which are determinative in his counselling theory. For the purpose of evaluation we will rely heavily on Paul's understanding of human nature. The reason for this is as Wheeler Robinson points out: "The psychological vocabulary of Paul is the most elaborate in the New Testament...." ¹⁷⁹ In addition, his understanding of human nature is largely drawn from the Old Testament. ¹⁸⁰ We shall concentrate on a biblical understanding of the term heart as this is the one which Adams stresses. However we will look also at the other major terms referred to in the Bible, namely, soul, spirit and flesh. At the same time we will need to consider a biblical view of the effect of sin on the inner aspects of human nature. The aim of this section is to show that Adams' has an

¹⁷⁹ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 104

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

inadequate understanding of the deeper aspects of human nature. In other words, his understanding of human nature in a psychological sense is almost completely external and behavioural. In this regard John Carter states: "The only thing that seemingly prevents him from being a full fledged Skinnerian or Mowererian is Adams' meta-physical commitment to God and the Bible." ¹⁸¹

2.2.2 A biblical understanding of the term heart and other terms related to the inner aspects of the human personality

We have seen that Adams does not regard terms like soul, spirit and flesh as important. Central to his understanding of human nature is the term heart. Adams regards the heart as the comprehensive description of the inner nature of man. It is a term which Adams believes covers all the other terms, including mind, conscience and inner man. In this section we will look in particular at a biblical understanding of the heart. We will consider in some detail how the term heart is used by the biblical writers. Our aim will be to attempt to answer the following important questions: Firstly, is Adams correct in his view that the biblical focus on man's inner nature is summed up in the word heart. Is heart the central concept in the Bible which best describes the deeper aspects

¹⁸¹ Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p. 151

of human nature?

Secondly, we will need to clarify whether Adams' understanding of heart is truly biblical as he claims or whether, perhaps, he has not defined heart to fit his behaviouristic model of counselling?

Thirdly, a question related to this is whether other terms like spirit and soul etc., are not also ways of describing other aspects of human nature not covered by the terms heart?

We will look at the first two questions together in the following section and in the next, we will look at the third question, namely whether other terms which Adams regards as unimportant, like soul and spirit, are not ways of describing other aspects of human nature not covered by the term heart.

2.2.2.1 The heart as an indication of the inner aspects of the human personality.

The Hebrew word lebh and the Greek word kardia translated heart are among the most important in the Bible. In the English versions several Hebrew and Greek expressions are translated heart. However, the main words are leb, lebah and kardia.¹⁸² Basically, this word stands for the innermost or

¹⁸² W.A. Elwell [ed] ., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, O.R. Brandon, "Heart. Biblical Psychology., p. 499

hidden part of anything. ¹⁸³

As we have seen, Adams focuses on the heart as the key to understanding the inner aspects of human nature. He believes that the term heart is the most comprehensive of concepts describing the nature of man. In other words, it is even more descriptive of the inner aspects of human nature than spirit or soul or flesh, or any other term used in the Bible. It will be our purpose to ascertain how this term is in fact used in both testaments and what light it can shed on the biblical understanding of the human personality.

Wheeler Robinson has analyzed five senses in which the term heart and its derivatives is used. ¹⁸⁴ It can refer to the physical organ of the body. The instances in which heart is used in this literal sense are infrequent and only appear in the Old Testament. Heart can also refer to the whole personality, the inner life or the character in general.

However, because the heart was seen as the most important organ in the body, it took on a wide range of psychical meanings in both the Old and New Testament, and came to stand for the centre or focus of the inner personal life. Owen

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, pp. 22-23

Brandon remarks:

Like other anthropological terms in the Old Testament, heart is also used very frequently in a psychological sense, as the centre or focus in man's inner personal life. The heart is the source, or spring, of motives; the seat of the passions; the centre of the thought processes; the spring of conscience. Heart, in fact, is associated with what is now meant by the cognitive, affective and volitional elements of personal life.¹⁸⁵

In this sense then, the heart can refer to the seat of the emotions and passions. The heart may be glad, it may be pleased, and it may be thankful. The heart may be merry, it may be thrilled, it may find delight, it may find pleasure, it can also know grief and be sorrowful. It may be distressed, it may be broken and it may be in despair. The heart may be bowed down, in other words, it may be in despair. The heart may show compassion, it may love, and it can be subject to fear, it may be anxious and afraid.¹⁸⁶

Quite often heart has the meaning of mind, referring to intellectual activity. In the New Testament, heart and mind, nous are closely related, both designate the self, wilful intentions and thinking.¹⁸⁷ Thus we have expressions where heart signifies various intellectual processes like, laying

¹⁸⁵ E.F. Harrison [ed]., Baker's Dictionary of Psychology. O R Brandon, "Heart", p. 262 6.3.2 The seat of Intelligence

¹⁸⁶ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man. pp. 22-23, 78

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

something to heart or considering something carefully, or taking something seriously, paying attention, to ponder, to meditate, to believe, to doubt, to decide, to understand, to discern, to process thoughts and ideas, to question, to think, to devise plans, to recall things to memory, and to listen. ¹⁸⁸ The heart is seen as playing a key role in decision making. It refers to the seat of the will. The heart is seen as the place where will and purpose originate, it is also the place of intentionality. Resolve comes from the heart, determination is spoken of as the hearts desire and the inner impulses of a desire come from the heart. One remains true to the Lord with all one's heart. Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to give according to what they decided in their hearts. The heart can be impenitent because of it's wilful wrongdoing. ¹⁸⁹

From this it is clear that the dominant use of the term heart in both the Old Testament and New Testament is psychological. It is a comprehensive term used to refer to all the inner aspects of human nature. It is the very person, his psychological core.¹⁹⁰ It is man's inner being from which

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ H.Ridderbos, Paul, p. 334

springs, his will and actions.¹⁹¹ It is also the self which is stirred by feelings and emotions.¹⁹² However, nowhere is the heart seen as a higher aspect of human nature.¹⁹³

Having looked in detail at the major ways in which the Bible uses the term heart, we can make some preliminary conclusions regarding our evaluation of Adam's understanding of the deeper aspects of human nature. From what we have seen, it is clear that kardia heart, is an important term the Bible uses to designate the whole of the human person's inner nature.¹⁹⁴ It refers to the centre of man's inner personal life. It denotes the integrating centre of the person as a rational, emotional and volitional being.¹⁹⁵ It is the source of the emotions, the seat of the thought processes and the spring of the conscience. It refers to the inner life of man from various points of view. Paul uses it as a comprehensive term for human nature. However, Wheeler Robinson points out that Paul does not find this term sufficient to describe the inner life. He states:

¹⁹¹ Th. G. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology. p. 202

¹⁹² R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.226

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 200

¹⁹⁴ Ridderbos, Paul, p. 166

¹⁹⁵ G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid (eds)., Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, J.K. Chamblin, "Psychology", pp. 766, 769

Paul's detailed references to the present inner life called for something more exact than the general and inclusive term "heart", which was sufficient for the Old Testament.¹⁹⁶

For example, the word nous is used in a similar way in which Paul uses the term kardia. In this regard, Bultmann points out that Paul uses kardia to a large extent synonymously with nous to designate the self as a willing, planning, intending self.¹⁹⁷ In 2 Corinthians 3:14 mind and heart are similar in content.¹⁹⁸ Just as the nous can be detestable, hardened, blinded or corrupted, so can the kardia. One reasons and understands with the nous but likewise the kardia can be enlightened to understand. Just as the nous can be renewed, so must the kardia be illuminated.¹⁹⁹ In other words, kardia is the comprehensive term and nous is the more particular and specific term referring to the area of thinking.²⁰⁰

Of particular interest is the way Paul uses the expression splagchna or bowels. It is similar in content to kardia. This word refers to the inner organs, heart, lungs, liver and is at times translated as heart. It is the word Paul uses for

¹⁹⁶ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 105

¹⁹⁷ Bultmann, New Testament Theology. p. 20

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ G.C. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God. p.20

²⁰⁰ Bultmann, New testament Theology. p. 221

Christian affection.²⁰¹ According to Chamblin, splagchna is "the most expressive term available to indicate the source of human emotions".²⁰² It is, therefore, similar to the term heart, "except that it is confined to a much narrower territory viz., to denote the self as moved by love".²⁰³

Another word which is clearly related to kardia is the term conscience. Interestingly enough, this word is not found in the Old Testament at all. However, the idea is expressed by the term leb heart. We are told that David was smitten in his heart for his sin of numbering the fighting men of Israel contrary to the command of God.²⁰⁴

In the New Testament the Greek word for conscience is syneidesis. Most of the occurrences are found in Paul's writings. Paul views the conscience as a gift of God.²⁰⁵ It is a faculty of moral judgment.²⁰⁶ In Romans, Paul implies that the conscience is universal and innate since he

²⁰¹ G.E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p.475

²⁰² G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid [eds]., Dictionary of Paul and his Letters. J.K. Chamblin, "Psychology", p. 769

²⁰³ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 222

²⁰⁴ W.A. Elwell [ed]., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, A.M. Rehwinkel, "Conscience", p. 267

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 477

maintains that the Gentiles have an innate consciousness of what is right and wrong even though they do not have the law of God.²⁰⁷ As we have seen, the heart is also used in a way which is synonymous with conscience. In Acts we are told that on the day of Pentecost the crowd who listened to Peter were convicted in their hearts of crucifying Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸ We have the same usage of heart in John's first letter where he speaks of our hearts condemning us.²⁰⁹ There are cases where Paul in fact uses heart and conscience together.²¹⁰

In other words, kardia is the comprehensive term referring to the whole of the inward man in his thinking, loving and willing aspects. Ladd observes that in both the Old and New Testament, the terms leb and kardia designate "the inner life of man from various points of view".²¹¹ However, when Paul wishes to focus more specifically on one of these aspects he uses the terms nous, splagchna, thelema, or syneidesis. Thus heart is described as the seat of the emotions, both good and bad.²¹² It is also used for man's intellectual activity, the

²⁰⁷ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 170

²⁰⁸ Acts 2:37

²⁰⁹ I John 3:20

²¹⁰ Romans 2:14-15

²¹¹ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 475

²¹² Ibid.

seat of the will, the organ of ethical judgment, the seat of religious experience.²¹³

Obviously, then, kardia is a comprehensive expression for human nature. According to Berkouwer "the heart shows forth the deepest aspects of the whole humanness of man".²¹⁴ Its importance lies in the fact that it refers to man as he really is, in the core of his being, in his life before God. It is from this core that everything flows.²¹⁵ According to Cooper,

the heart in Hebrew thought is not significant primarily for its role in organic existence, but as the hidden control-centre of the whole human being. The entire range of conscious and perhaps even unconscious activity of the person is located in and emanating from the heart. It experiences emotions and moods, it has personality and character traits, it is the locus of thought and deliberations, choices and actions, and it is above all the source of love or hate of God and neighbour. It may be hidden from other people and perhaps even from oneself. But God searches its depths and knows it altogether.²¹⁶

In other words, it is clear that the dominant use of the terms heart in both the Old and New Testament is psychological. It is a comprehensive term used to refer to all the inner aspects of human nature.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, pp. 202-203

²¹⁵ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 168

²¹⁶ J.W. Cooper, Body, Soul & Life Everlasting, p. 46

It is unfortunate that Adams does not demonstrate just how comprehensive this term is by showing its relationship to the others terms Paul uses like splanchnon, nous', etc. He does not demonstrate that these terms are in fact aspects of kardia. It is at this very point, in his understanding of heart that Adams' view of the inner aspects of human nature becomes obvious. He makes it clear that heart must not be understood in terms of emotions and feelings, rather it must be seen in terms of intellect.²¹⁷ Roger Hurding makes the point that Adams leaves out the so-called psychological.²¹⁸ That this is in fact the case is confirmed by Adams when he states that

there is not the slightest hint in the Bible that there is another inorganic, amoral aspect of man in addition to the heart, [the so-called psychological] which [according to the advocates of the view] is so important for living.²¹⁹

In this regard, it is interesting that Adams takes Lawrence Crabb to task for his psychological approach to counselling because he stresses the inner aspects of human nature.²²⁰

Obviously then, although Adams says he understands the heart to be a comprehensive term, he, in reality stresses only

²¹⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 114

²¹⁸ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 285

²¹⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 151

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 117

those aspects of heart which suit his behavioural model of counselling. That is why he plays down the other aspects of heart that we find in the Bible. It is the intellectual that is more vital. That is the reason why he recognises the relationship of heart and conscience. He identifies the heart with the conscience which is defined as the faculty of moral self judgment.²²¹ Again his emphasis is on the intellectual, the understanding the cognitive. He leaves out the other aspects. In fact, Adams' understanding of heart is limited by his counselling model.

Kirwan commenting on this aspect of the use of heart in the Bible remarks:

As the centre of the individual, it is the seat of emotional response and expression. The full spectrum of emotions, from joy to depression and from love to hatred, is ascribed to the heart....Scripture regards the emotions of the heart as of great importance.²²²

It is not possible, as Adams tries to do, to separate the cognitive and the emotional in the human being, because the emotional or affective aspects of a person are inextricably bound to one another.²²³ According to Viscott:

Feelings are our reaction to what we perceive and in turn they colour and define our perception of the

²²¹ Ibid., p. 115

²²² W.T. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 47

²²³ Ibid., p. 50

world. Feelings, in fact, are the world we live in. Because so much of what we know depends upon our feelings...Our feelings are our reaction to what we have perceived through our senses and they shape our reaction to what we will experience in the future...Understanding feelings is the key to mastery of ourselves.²²⁴

This is of course the very opposite of Adams' approach, where living according to feelings rather than obeying God's commandments is the basic hindrance to holiness. Even having any feelings appears to be a liability. Adams supposes that right feelings follow right thinking and behaviour. That is in sharp contrast to the biblical concept that behaviour emanates from the heart where feelings operate. Adams tries to isolate feelings from will and intellect, whereas, as we have seen, they all flow and operate together. That is the thrust of a biblical understanding of heart.

This brings us to consider more specifically whether we can say, as Adams believes, that the term heart is even more central than the other concepts used for human nature by the biblical writers? What about soul, or spirit and flesh?

2.2.2.2 The meaning of soul as related to the inner aspects of the human personality.

There are a number of different words which are translated as soul in the Bible but the words most frequently translated

²²⁴ D. Viscott, The language of feelings, pp. 11-13

soul are the Hebrew word Nephesh²²⁵ and the Greek word Psyche

²²⁶ How is this term understood by the biblical writers? As we have seen the term soul is not one which plays a significant role in Adams' understanding of human nature. Adams understands soul to be the non-material aspect of human nature in relationship to the material.²²⁷ Is Adams correct in saying that this term is not important in coming to a biblical understanding of human nature? Does it not shed some light on the human personality?

In this connection, Berkouwer warns against the danger of interpreting soul dualistically.²²⁸ In other words, to understand soul as a higher and more spiritual aspect of human nature. When one looks at its usage in the Bible it is apparent that it does not have a uniform meaning. According to Wheeler Robinson, this word appears 754 times in the Old Testament.²²⁹ In some cases it carries the meaning of life and is in fact practically a synonym for it. However, the term itself was not limited to a description of man as a

²²⁵ Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, p. 202

²²⁶ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 204

²²⁷ Adams, Update, p. 83

²²⁸ Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, p. 200

²²⁹ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 16

living and natural being. The Hebrews used the term soul for all animal forms of life.²³⁰ The term soul is also used in a psychical sense referring to different states of consciousness, will, intellect, and emotions.²³¹ It is seen as the seat of different desires, needs and feelings.²³² It is significant that this term is used in this sense in approximately one third of its usage in the Old Testament.²³³ It therefore covers different states of consciousness, volition and intellect, although emotion dominates.²³⁴ Soul is also used in a number of cases as a personal pronoun.²³⁵

According to Davidson, it refers to the whole immaterial part of man.²³⁶ However, in its whole range of meanings, soul never refers to a distinctly separate part of human nature. It never refers to the spiritual part of man as distinct from

²³⁰ Come, The Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit, p. 58

²³¹ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 16

²³² Bromiley (ed), The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol 4, C.M. Robeck, "Soul" p. 583

²³³ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 16

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ A.B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 199

the non-spiritual part.²³⁷ Neither is it conceived of as an independent element in man which possesses eternal life in its own right.²³⁸ Rather, it refers to the whole of man himself as a living individual on earth ²³⁹, an individual personality.²⁴⁰

When we come to the New Testament, the meaning is very similar to the Old Testament. With reference to Paul, his understanding of soul is in line with the Old Testament usage and speaks of the natural life of earthly man in contrast to supernatural life.²⁴¹ Although it is not a term which plays a significant role in Paul's anthropology, he does place stress on the emotional aspects of soul.²⁴²

So although Adams' neglect of the term soul appears at first sight to be in line with the biblical evidence and emphasis, in that it does not provide as much insight into the human personality as perhaps other terms like heart and spirit, yet

²³⁷ Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, p. 201

²³⁸ Vreizen, An Outline of the Old Testament Theology, p. 202

²³⁹ Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 199

²⁴⁰ H. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, p. 198

²⁴¹ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 205

²⁴² Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 105

it is a term which, along with the other terms used in the Bible, shows the complexity of human nature, and for that reason it should be taken into account. There appears to be a reluctance on the part of Adams to recognise the complexity of human nature, particularly those aspects which lie below the level of the conscious. With his emphasis on changing outward behaviour he does not believe that it is necessary to spend too much time dealing with the inner aspects of the human personality. This is a characteristic of Adams' behaviouristic approach to counselling.

2.2.2.3 The meaning of the spirit as related to the inner aspects of the human personality.

Coming back to the question regarding the important place which Adams gives to the expression heart, Arthur Come believes that the expression heart, important as it is, is not the most vital aspect of human nature. He states that

One might think that...with the concept of the human 'heart' one has reached the very core of human nature, that no greater heights and depths could be discovered. But the true grounds of human subjectivity do not come to light except in the explication of man as 'spirit'.²⁴³

Likewise, Donald Guthrie observes that, "In the Christian doctrine of man the central idea is not 'psyche' but 'pneuma' ".²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Come, The Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit, p. 69

²⁴⁴ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 63

Wheeler Robinson identifies four major usages of spirit, ruach in the Old Testament,

- a) wind, literal or figurative,
- b) supernatural influence acting on a person,
- c) principle of life, and
- d) psychical life.²⁴⁵

Davidson points out that there is a development in the use of this word as it refers to human nature. At first it is used as a reference to breath as the sign of life.²⁴⁶ Life originates with God who "formed...man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being".²⁴⁷ God's maintenance of spirit is that which sustains existence of living things.²⁴⁸ Death can be referred to as the release of the spirit to God.²⁴⁹ From this basic meaning of the sign of life, spirit was extended to refer to the principle of vitality.²⁵⁰ But it is not seen as a spiritual substance in man, it does not have real existence in and of itself.²⁵¹ Spirit eventually takes

²⁴⁵ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, pp. 17-18

²⁴⁶ Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 193

²⁴⁷ Genesis 2:7

²⁴⁸ Bromiley (ed), The International Bible Encyclopedia, J.W. Simpson, "Spirit", p. 599

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 196

²⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 195-196

on a psychological meaning.²⁵² Spirit can thus refer to human emotions. Often a statement about a person's emotional state is made by the attribution of the emotions to their spirit. Thus Pharaoh's spirit was troubled by the dream which he had, Hannah had a sorrowful spirit, Ahab the king's spirit was sad. We must be slow to anger but control, or rule over our spirit. Other emotions attributed to the spirit are bitterness, jealousy, confusion, anxiety, anger.²⁵³

Spirit can refer to disposition. We are told that Caleb had a different spirit from the rest of the generations of the Exodus from Egypt, with the result that he was obedient to God. The Israelites had a willing spirit. God values a contrite and a broken spirit. A person's spirit can be marked by deceit, faithfulness, willingness, humility and compassion.²⁵⁴ Spirit can also refer to conscious energy. Thus the spirit can be revived. We read that Jacob's spirit revived, and was invigorated when he saw the carts sent by Joseph to take him to Egypt. The spirit can grow faint. It can fail, be broken and downcast.²⁵⁵ Spirit can be used as a synonym for self. The psalmist communed with his own heart

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, pp.18-19

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

and his spirit.²⁵⁶

Obviously, then, from these references it can be seen that the Bible recognises a reality within human nature that is spirit. Ruah refers to the inner aspect of human nature. We can identify a moral domain of spirit. We can also identify a mental domain. And then there is also an emotional domain. These all point to the inner aspect of human nature. God is said to examine the spirit of a person i.e., looks at their motives, not just their actions. Thus "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the body".²⁵⁷ The spirit, as the place of the innermost thoughts of a person, is also a place in which the search to know God occurs.²⁵⁸

In the New Testament the word for spirit is the Greek word pneuma. In most cases it refers to the Spirit of God, Spirit, Holy Spirit, Spirit of the Lord.²⁵⁹ According to Wheeler Robinson, pneuma is the most important word in Paul's psychological vocabulary, perhaps in his vocabulary as a

²⁵⁶ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 110

²⁵⁷ Proverbs 20:27

²⁵⁸ Bromiley (ed), The International Bible Encyclopedia, Simpson, p. 600

²⁵⁹ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 110

whole, and that his usage is on the same lines as in the Old Testament which he continues and develops even further.²⁶⁰ It is Paul who gives us the clearest exposition of the human spirit in the New Testament.²⁶¹ In this regard Come says that when we move into the Pauline letters we find a more explicit and yet a more complex anthropology.²⁶² One of the questions that has concerned New Testament scholars has been the origin of Paul's ideas regarding the human pneuma. Guthrie observes that "we discover a great similarity between the Old Testament doctrine of man and the Pauline doctrine. There are no contradictions, although there are several developments and modifications."²⁶³ In Paul's writings spirit can refer to the emotions. Thus we read that Paul was vexed in his spirit.²⁶⁴ It can refer to mood, disposition and inclination. Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to be "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord".²⁶⁵ If a fellow believer fails, those who are mature should restore that one "in the spirit of meekness".²⁶⁶ Bultmann observes that Paul

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p. 76

²⁶³ Guthrie, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 76

²⁶⁴ Acts 17:16

²⁶⁵ Romans 12:11

²⁶⁶ Galations 6:1

uses this term as a personal pronoun just as soma and psyche.²⁶⁷ Thus when Paul says that the messengers from the Corinthian congregation refreshed his spirit, it means simply that they refreshed him.²⁶⁸ In Romans Paul speaks of serving God with his spirit, emphasising that he puts his whole person into serving the Lord.²⁶⁹ He also uses spirit to refer to others. For example, he writes: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers".²⁷⁰

Spirit is also used as a synonym for mind. Thus Paul speaks of standing in one spirit, meaning that they should be striving with one mind.²⁷¹ In a parallel passage he uses the word nous where the meaning is exactly the same.²⁷² Paul also uses spirit in the sense of consciousness or awareness. So in Romans, Paul refers to the fact that as believers the divine Spirit bears witness with our pneuma that we are God's children.²⁷³ In other words, the Holy Spirit makes us conscious of our adoption. We have a similar meaning where

²⁶⁷ Bultmannn, Theology of the New Testament, p. 206

²⁶⁸ I Corinthians 16:18

²⁶⁹ Romans 1:9

²⁷⁰ Galations 6:18

²⁷¹ Philippians 1:27

²⁷² I Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2

²⁷³ Romans 8:16

Paul refers to the fact the human spirit knows what is within a person.²⁷⁴ Bultmann, referring to these passages notes that pneuma approaches the modern idea of consciousness.²⁷⁵ From this Ridderbos observes that like psyche, pneuma, designates humanity in its natural existence approached from within.²⁷⁶ In other words, the human in his inner essence.²⁷⁷

In evaluating these usages it is obvious that the New Testament carries forward the Old Testament understanding of spirit with some important developments. This term focuses more sharply on the fact that God made man to live in fellowship with him through the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁸ But how central is the human spirit in the nature of man? According to Barclay,

it is precisely the possession of this spirit which makes a man different from the animal creation, he shares psuche, the life principle with the animal creation; but he alone possesses pneuma, for it is that which makes him man...²⁷⁹

Guthrie likewise observes that, "Paul does not use the word

²⁷⁴ I Corinthians 2:11

²⁷⁵ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 206

²⁷⁶ Ridderbos, Paul, p. 121

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ W.A. Elwell [ed]., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, M.E. Osterhaven, "Spirit" p. 1041

²⁷⁹ W. Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, p. 13

pneuma...of animals...."²⁸⁰ Barclay states that

The spirit is the ruling part of man, it is the spirit which controls the thoughts and the emotions, the mental activities and the passions of a man.²⁸¹

On the other hand, Guthrie comments that the spirit "is capable of both defilement [II Cor. 7:1] and of consecration [I Cor. 7:34]. It takes the flavour of the dominant influence".²⁸²

Come feels that the human spirit is the fullest possible actualization of what man is in his heart, it is man at his most personal level. He states:

It is precisely when 'heart' is used to refer to the selfconscious, spontaneous individual in selfexpression that the heart is characterised 'as especially subject to the influence of the spirit', or better, as being spirit. So when Moses bade the Israelites to contribute for the building of the Tabernacle, 'they came, every one whose heart stirred him, and every one whose spirit moved him' [Exodus 35:21]²⁸³

However, spirit means even more than that. According to Wheeler Robinson:

Its chief importance lies in the higher association of the term with the 'Spirit' of God; the similarity of terminology kept open a heavenward door, so to

²⁸⁰ Guthrie, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 166

²⁸¹ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, p.13

²⁸² Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 167

²⁸³ Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p.72

... speak, in human nature.²⁸⁴

It speaks of a higher side of the human personality which is conceived to be accessible to God.²⁸⁵ Likewise Carey states:

The importance of the term lies in its origin. Contrary to nepes, the ruah is something that is particularly associated with God. When used of man it links him uniquely, specially, to God the Spirit, Creator and Sustainer of all.²⁸⁶

Ladd observes that the human spirit is man's true inner self, that enjoys direct fellowship with God.²⁸⁷ According to Morton Kelsey:

The spirit is that part of the human psyche that is stamped with the divine image, with the longing for God that cannot be satisfied by anything else.²⁸⁸

However, from this we must not conclude that the Bible presents spirit as a higher or more spiritual aspect of human nature. In this regard Bultmann notes:

When Paul speaks of the spirit of man he does not mean some higher principle within him or some special intellectual or spiritual faculty of his...²⁸⁹

Now this is important when we consider the Hellenistic understanding of human nature that was prevalent at the time

²⁸⁴ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 27

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 69

²⁸⁶ G. Carey, I Believe in Man, p. 29

²⁸⁷ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 462

²⁸⁸ Morton T. Kelsey; Companion on the Inner Way: the Art of Spiritual Guidance, p. 245

²⁸⁹ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 206

of the New Testament.

What is the relationship between spirit and soul? According to Bultmann, in both the Old and the New Testaments, soul and spirit are to a large extent synonymous.²⁹⁰ Isaacs similarly believes that in his anthropology, Paul did not make a rigid distinction between spirit and soul.²⁹¹ Ridderbos also believes that Paul speaks of spirit in much the same sense as of soul but that it is just different ways of describing the inner aspect of human nature.²⁹² Ladd observes that soul and spirit both designate the human being as a whole viewed from different perspectives.²⁹³ However, Isaacs makes the point that Paul does seem to use spirit more than soul as a designation for the inner nature of the human person. This is in contrast with the Old Testament where soul is used more often.²⁹⁴ For Paul spirit is more central than soul.²⁹⁵

However, whilst accepting that there are times where there is a blurring of meaning between soul and spirit and whilst also

²⁹⁰ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 205

²⁹¹ Isaacs, The Concept of Spirit, p. 73

²⁹² Ridderbos, Paul, p. 121

²⁹³ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 459

²⁹⁴ Isaacs, The Concept of Spirit, p. 74

²⁹⁵ Ibid. .

accepting that there is no dualism present in the New Testament's usage of spirit, we cannot overlook the fact that spirit is seen as that aspect of human nature which is related to the divine in a way in which other aspects of human nature are not. In this connection Sanday and Headlam observe that spirit is that part of the human which holds communion with God.²⁹⁶ According to Isaacs, spirit is not so much the highest part of man but rather man in his divine aspect.²⁹⁷ In this connection, commenting on the terms spirit and flesh in Galatians 5:12, Isaacs points out that here we have a description of two different spheres of existence rather than two different constituents of human nature. It is not an expression of anthropological dualism.²⁹⁸

If one asks what is the particular emphasis of spirit in the New Testament, the answer is that spirit stands for the transcendent aspect of human nature.²⁹⁹ Spirit is a term of kinship between God and man. It stresses man's affinity with God just as flesh emphasises man's dissimilarity. Spirit stresses that man is open to the transcendent life of God.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ W. Sanday, & A.C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 196

²⁹⁷ Isaacs, Concept of the Holy Spirit, p. 76

²⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 79-80

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

Barclay states that

through the pneuma God can speak to man and that man can have fellowship and communion with God. The pneuma is that part of man which is distinctively and uniquely akin to God.³⁰¹

According to Ladd the soul designates man in relation to other men, whereas spirit designates man in relation to God.³⁰² Likewise Carey points out that by using the term spirit for man the biblical authors were stressing the fact that man as a being was made for God, and dissatisfied apart from him. He comments: "He is a creature certainly, but he is God's creature who gropes for relationship with God and fulfilment in him".³⁰³

In this connection it is pertinent to relate spirit to another term used for the human person, image of God. It is Carey's view that, "the clearest clue to the spiritual nature of man is found in the...notion that man is made in God's image".³⁰⁴ It is only of man that it is stated that God created man in his image and after his likeness. As we have seen, the Bible gives us no definition or explanation of what the image of God is.³⁰⁵ God is Spirit and God breathed into

³⁰¹ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, pp.13-14

³⁰² Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 459

³⁰³ Carey, I Believe in Man, p. 29

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 30

³⁰⁵ Berkouwer, Man:The Image of God, p.36

man spirit and he became a living being.³⁰⁶ Man is clearly represented as standing in a special relationship to God. From this we can say that it is because man is made in God's image that he is able to enter into relationship with God. This relationship is of such a kind that there may be personal dealings with God. This is what distinguishes man from the rest of creation. Man alone is made in God's image.³⁰⁷ Man alone has pneuma and is open to transcendence.

In the light of this, a question which arises is whether we can attribute spirit to those who are not Christians at all? Is it part of man as such or is it only part of man after he becomes a Christian? In other words, is pneuma part of human nature or is it a gift of God to redeemed human nature?

It was Barclay's view that the human spirit is nothing other than the Holy Spirit taking up his residence in man and giving him life and peace and a beauty which are simply not available to or not possible for the non-Christian man.³⁰⁸ He further argues that

In the thought of Paul the spirit of man is that part of a man which is implanted in him by God; it is the presence and the power of God in him; it is the coming of the risen Christ into residence within

³⁰⁶ Genesis 2:7

³⁰⁷ Carey, I Believe in Man, p. 30

³⁰⁸ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, p. 14

the man.³⁰⁹

He continues: "It may be said that for Paul the spirit of a man is the indwelling power of God in that man".³¹⁰ Schweizer also argues that spirit in man refers to the operation of God's Spirit and does not refer to man in himself.³¹¹ Barth, in line with Reformational theology, insists that man does not have spirit. He rejects the slightest suggestion that man has the divine character of "thou-ness" as an independent being or as a possession of his own.³¹² Like the Reformers, Barth wished to guard against the idea that man is capable of making any contribution to the act of saving grace. There is nothing in man that reaches out to God. Any relationship with God is established solely by the Divine Spirit reaching down to man. Barth for this reason, equates the spirit of man with the Spirit of God which has reached down toward him.³¹³ Come commenting on this states that

it is fair to say that Barth has not attained any real consistency or clarity on the subject of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit.³¹⁴

Likewise Hendrika Vande Kemp rejects all notion of a

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 15

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 26

³¹¹ E.Schweizer, The Holy Spirit, p. 8

³¹² K. Barth, Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation, III:2 p. 414-439

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p. 87

non-Christian having pneuma for pneuma cannot be associated with ethically negative impulses.³¹⁵ On the other hand, Isaacs argues that the way in which Paul speaks of the human spirit indicates that he assumes it is present in all people.³¹⁶ Paul draws a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit.³¹⁷ He speaks specifically of the spirit of man which is in him. Ladd regards this as a key verse when he states:

The human pneuma is the 'organ' which receives the Spirit of God. It is because man possesses pneuma that he is capable of being related to God.³¹⁸

Another key verse is Romans 8:10 where Paul says: "But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness". However his predominant usage is the eschatological gift which is in those who are in Christ.³¹⁹ Likewise Come indicates that for man to receive Spirit he must be spirit.³²⁰ He insists that

if God is to come as Holy Spirit and dwell with man, man must be spirit to be truly present with God. To speak of the 'spirit of man'...could refer only to man's own inner capacity and power to become or to

³¹⁵ H.Vande Kemp, 'The Tension Between Psychology and Theology:An Anthropological Solution', Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1982, Vol 10, No 3, p. 205

³¹⁶ M. Isaacs, The Concept of the Spirit, p. 80

³¹⁷ II Cor. 2:11

³¹⁸ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 462

³¹⁹ Isaacs, The Concept of Spirit, p. 80

³²⁰ Come, The Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit, p. 73

realise his full and ideal self.³²¹

Pannenberg also argues that new life in Christ envisaged for the Christian presupposes the original life created by the divine Spirit.³²² Bultmann, referring to Romans 8:16 observes that the divine pneuma which Christians have received is expressly distinguished from our pneuma.³²³ Similarly, Wheeler Robinson takes Paul's statement in Romans 8:16 as conclusive proof that Paul did not attribute human spirit only to "pneumatic man"³²⁴ He refers to the double use of spirit,

to denote both a supernatural influence and a natural element in human nature...it supplied a point of contact in human nature for the regenerative action of the Spirit of God.³²⁵

Taking up the point of the transcendence of human nature, Hendry argues strongly for the existence of pneuma in all people, Christian and non-Christian alike. He points out that there is in man what he calls "the principle of self-transcendence or an awareness of the transcendent", i.e.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² W. Pannenberg, 'The Doctrine of the Spirit and the task of a theology of nature' - Theology 75, 1972, 619 p. 10

³²³ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 205

³²⁴ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 110

³²⁵ Ibid.

an ability to elevate himself above himself.³²⁶ This, he observes points to the existence of the human spirit.³²⁷ He shows that this principle or capacity for self transcendence was recognised by Augustine in his concept of the unrestful striving in man. It can also be identified in Aquinas' idea of man's desire for the infinite. It is even manifested earlier in Luther's description of the spirit as that part of human beings by which they are able to grasp eternal things.³²⁸ Hendry shows that the theology of the Reformation led to the virtual elimination of the human spirit. Calvin, for example, never referred to the spirit of man. According to Reformation theology, man is spiritually dead until he is given spirit by the Holy Spirit.³²⁹

Hendry argues that "man cannot be deprived of active spirit without ceasing to be man".³³⁰ The capacity for self transcendence is that distinctive feature that distinguishes man from all other creatures.³³¹ Similarly, Kilian McDonnell points out that the breathing in of spirit belongs to

³²⁶ G.Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p.107

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid., pp. 97-98

³²⁹ Ibid., pp. 99-100

³³⁰ Ibid., p. 101

³³¹ Ibid., p. 101

humanity in a constitutive way and not something that is added later.³³² It is that which in fact distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation.³³³ It is that which makes the grandeur and also the misery of man in "that man is permanently maladjusted to his environment and is impelled to reach out to the transcendent".³³⁴ Without the existence of human spirit, there can be no real relation to God. Without human spirit there can be no freedom and without this freedom to relate or not to relate to God there can be no mutual relationship.³³⁵ As God's creature, man's relation to God can be realised "only by the free act of the human spirit, which is the organ of man's encounter with the Spirit of God".³³⁶ Hendry admits that man does not automatically relate to God. The human spirit can either relate to God or relate to nothingness.³³⁷ He observes:

There can be no immanent principle of a relation to God in sinful man. But while sin alienates man from God, this does not mean that there is no spirit in man. Man remains a being endowed with created spirit...but spirit in sinful man becomes the principle of his lost relation to God; for man's

³³² K.McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", Theology Today, Vol XXXIX, No. 2, July 1982

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ G.S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 121

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 107

³³⁷ Ibid.

relation to God is always a relation in freedom, and spirit is the principle of freedom.³³⁸

The presence of a human spirit in man does not in itself guarantee that man is going to relate to the Spirit of God.³³⁹ Relating of divine Spirit to human spirit is a gift of grace.³⁴⁰

This does not exclude that special work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. The Bible clearly speaks of a powerful operation of the Spirit of God on the human personality at conversion and in the Christian life. As a result man becomes a new creation.³⁴¹ How does the Holy Spirit accomplish this? He works in and through the human personality. He enables the person to understand spiritual things.³⁴² He witnesses to man's spirit.³⁴³ In other words, he works in that part of the person which is capable of responding to divine influence, that is, the transcendent part of the human personality.³⁴⁴ In this regard, Come notes:

Man comes to know the ultimate definitive truth of

³³⁸ Ibid., p. 115

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 108

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ II Corinthians 5:17

³⁴² I Cor 2:14

³⁴³ Romans 8:16

³⁴⁴ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 166

his own being when the Spirit of God realizes relationship with man and so becomes an operative reality within the life of man.³⁴⁵

Osterhaven puts it like this:

The spirit of mankind fulfils its true destiny when it lives in conscious relationship to God its Creator: Himself the eternal spirit...with man made in his image and likeness [Genesis 1:27-28, 2:7].³⁴⁶

According to Pannenburg, Christians receive a new spirit in Christ in community which enables them to accept the Christian message in "ecstatic acts of faith, love and hope".³⁴⁷ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the New Testament recognises the existence of a natural spirit in the human personality. In this regard, Ladd referring to Genesis 2, observes that man received ruah when God breathed into him, and that spirit is an element of the human personality, including the whole range of emotional and volitional life.³⁴⁸ According to Guthrie:

It is difficult to conceive of pneuma as something added to man's existing state. It is more reasonable to consider that man's natural spirit, which in his unregenerate state is inactive, is revived at conversion by the Spirit of God.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p. 121

³⁴⁶ Elwell [ed]., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, M.E. Osterhaven, "Spirit" , p. 1041

³⁴⁷ A. Dulles & C.E. Braaks [eds]., Spirit, Faith and Church, W. Pannenberg, "The working of the Spirit in the creation and in the people of God". p. 113

³⁴⁸ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 458

³⁴⁹ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 166

In other words, when he operates in man, the Holy Spirit transforms man's natural pneuma and this makes him a new creation. According to Stacey:

All men possess pneuma but the reception of the divine pneuma means the renewal of the human pneuma so that it acquires new dimensions.³⁵⁰

It is therefore legitimate to draw a distinction between man's natural pneuma and his Christian pneuma.³⁵¹ For the believer then, pneuma is the whole man committed to God.³⁵² There can be no question that for the apostle Paul, the pneuma of the Christian must be dominated by the Spirit of God.³⁵³

What about Paul's assertion that the man outside of Christ is spiritually dead? ³⁵⁴ Ladd observes that spiritually dead does not mean that man does not have human spirit but that those outside of Christ do not enjoy a living relationship with God. To be made spiritually alive is not to receive human spirit but it means to quicken all in the human spirit so that man can enter into living relationship with God.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰ W.D. Stacey, The Pauline View of man, p. 135

³⁵¹ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 166

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 167

³⁵⁴ Ephesians 2:1

³⁵⁵ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 463

Pneuma then, speaks of humanity open to transcendence. It speaks of the transcendence of man, that man is not destined for earthly existence alone, but that the whole of man is destined to a transcendent existence. It speaks of man in his transcendence. The whole of the self which as spirit is open to fellowship with God.

Come, dealing with the relationship of soul and spirit states that soul refers to life in general with reference to its particular genus. The quality which is distinct to man, man's particular form of quality of life, is spirit in the image of God.³⁵⁶

At this point Adams is particularly weak in that he does not consider this aspect of human nature. He sees spirit as merely the non-material aspect of human nature. But how then does it differ from the other non-material aspects of human nature? The problem Adams has at this point is the problem of not wishing to attribute spirit to the non-Christian. He, therefore, overlooks the transcendent aspect of human nature, even in the Christian.

We have seen that Adams sees the heart as central to understanding the inner aspects of human nature. However, it

³⁵⁶ Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, pp. 58-59

is quite clear from what we have just seen, that spirit also gives us insight into aspects of human nature not clearly brought out by the expression, heart. On the other hand, a good argument can be made for another expression as even more central and comprehensive, the inner man, ho eso anthropos. It is an expression that is peculiar to the apostle Paul. Even though it is not used frequently, it is an expression which is significant in Paul's understanding of human nature.

2.2.2.4 The meaning of inner man as it relates to the inner aspects of the human personality.

The inner man is contrasted with the outer man.³⁵⁷ While the outer man is corruptible and wasting away, the inner man is being renewed every day. Ladd sees the inner man as "the higher essential self".³⁵⁸ In this connection, Bultmann observes that the inner man is man's real self in contrast to this self that has come under the sway of sin.³⁵⁹ According to Nola Opperswall, the way in which Paul uses this expression makes it practically synonymous with the heart, and parallel to the statement God made when Samuel looked for a king for Israel among Jesse's sons that "man looks on the outward

³⁵⁷ II Cor 4:16

³⁵⁸ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 476

³⁵⁹ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p.203

appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart".³⁶⁰ It is in the heart that the spirit operates. However, the strengthening of the inner self should issue into a transformation of outward behaviour as well.³⁶¹ It is in the inner self that Paul delights to do the will of God.³⁶² According to Ridderbos, inner man or inward man as used by Paul in Ephesians 3:16 is in many respects equivalent to heart mentioned in the same context.³⁶³ Similarly Bultmann believes that in Romans 7:22, the inner man is identical in content with nous ³⁶⁴ According to Bultmann the full meaning of nous is found here where Paul speaks of another law at war with the law of his nous. Bultmann argues that here nous means inner man or inmost self. In other words, nous is man's real self.³⁶⁵ Perhaps Kummel is more correct when he says:

Paul uses a whole series of concepts for the 'inner man' which he does not clearly distinguish from one another, such as soul, mind, heart, conscience and even spirit....³⁶⁶

³⁶⁰ Bromiley [ed] The International Bible Encyclopedia, N.J. Oppewall, "Inner Man:Inner Nature:Inmost Self", p. 827

³⁶¹ Ephesians 4:1-31

³⁶² Romans 7:22f

³⁶³ Ridderbos, Paul, p. 115

³⁶⁴ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 212

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ W.G. Kummel, Theology of the New Testament, p. 176

Likewise, it is the opinion of Ridderbos that inner man is the overall term for nous, kardia, thelema, psyche, pneuma, and syneidesis. We should regard all these terms as closely related to each other in the thinking of Paul.³⁶⁷ So there are clear parallels between kardia and inner man. Inner man is at least as important as heart. In other words it is difficult to maintain that this or that expression is more central than another expression.

2.2.2.5 The meaning of flesh as it relates to the inner aspects of the human personality.

We now come to consider the word flesh in both the Old and New Testaments to see what insights it gives us regarding human nature. The word flesh is a translation of the Hebrew word basar and the Greek word sarx. How is it used in the Old Testament and the New Testament?

In the Old Testament it is used both literally and figuratively ³⁶⁸It is something both humans and animals have in common.³⁶⁹. Davidson in his study of the usage of basar, points out that it is not clear whether the Hebrews gave this

³⁶⁷ Ridderbos, Paul, p.177

³⁶⁸ Bromiley [ed], The International Encyclopedia, Vol 1, F.B. Knutson, "Flesh", Vol 2, pp.313-314

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

word an ethical meaning.³⁷⁰ It is interesting that basar is often used in contrast with God or Spirit. When used in this way the stress is on the fact that man is frail and weak.³⁷¹ According to Vriezen, basar denotes man as transitory.³⁷² According to Davidson: "Flesh as one sees it is perishable and subject to decay; when the spirit is withdrawn it turns into dust".³⁷³ However, Davidson argues that there is a leaning toward an ethical meaning in that physical frailty is pleaded as a ground of compassion for moral frailty.³⁷⁴ But basar in and of itself is not denoted as sinful.³⁷⁵ God promises to give his people a "heart of flesh" and to remove their "heart of stone", so that it can respond obediently.³⁷⁶

When we come to the New Testament, we find that sarx has a variety of meanings just as in the Old Testament. Wheeler Robinson identifies five main usages of this word in Paul's writings:

a) physical structure

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- ³⁷⁰ Davidson, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 191
 - ³⁷¹ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 25
 - ³⁷² Vriezen, p. 201
 - ³⁷³ Davidson, Theology of the Old Testament, p.190
 - ³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 192
 - ³⁷⁵ Ibid.
 - ³⁷⁶ Ezekiel 11:19

- b) kinship
- c) sphere of present existence
- d) fleshly weakness
- e) ethical experience³⁷⁷

Paul's distinctive usage of this word is ethical.³⁷⁸ In its ethical sense, flesh is related to sin and in some sense active in the production of evil.³⁷⁹ Knutson observes:

Because of its (sarx) limitations, it is liable to sin, e.g., to set up the natural and human as God, neglecting the true God, and thus can even be regarded as mankind's master (Galations 5:17). It thus becomes "sinful flesh", with passions, indulgences, or "zeal, boasting" etc.³⁸⁰

According to Ridderbos: "'flesh' is the pregnant and very specific description of man in his sin, and the coinciding meaning of being human and being a sinner".³⁸¹ It designates man in his fallenness, his sinfulness and his rebellion against God. It is that aspect of human nature that makes humanity vulnerable to sin. According to Robinson:

It is clear that Paul finds in man's physical nature the immediate foe of the higher principle, though this does not...prove that the flesh is the ultimate enemy, as implied when "Hellenistic dualism" is ascribed to Paul.³⁸²

³⁷⁷ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p.114

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 113-114

³⁸⁰ Bromiley, The International Bible Encyclopedia, Vol 2, F.B. Knutson, "Flesh", p.314

³⁸¹ Ridderbos, Paul, p. 93

³⁸² Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 115

In other words, the problem is not the body as such. Ladd points out that Paul does not identify the flesh with the material body or outward bodily substance of man.³⁸³ Likewise, Burton argues that

The evidence is against the view that Paul found the flesh in a physical thing....The flesh that makes for evil is not the body or matter as such, but an inherited impulse to evil.³⁸⁴

The body is neutral but the flesh is not. The body can be an instrument of the service and glory of God, the flesh cannot.³⁸⁵ The body can be purified and even glorified, the flesh must be eliminated and eradicated. The body passes over into the new creation, the flesh does not.³⁸⁶ This distinction between flesh and body must be maintained. Kummel points out: "sinfulness on the part of fleshly man is not the consequence of the fact that man has a fleshly body which leads him astray to sin".³⁸⁷

The flesh then is much more than the body. The body is only the instrument. The ultimate enemy is of course sin of which

³⁸³ Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 473

³⁸⁴ E.B. Burton, Spirit, Soul and Flesh, p. 197, quoted in G.E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 473

³⁸⁵ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit: an Examination of Galatians 5:19-23, p. 20

³⁸⁶ Ridderbos, Paul, p.104

³⁸⁷ Kummel, Theology of the New Testament, p. 175

flesh has become the weak and corrupted instrument.³⁸⁸ According to Schweizer, the flesh represents not a part of man but man as a whole.³⁸⁹ In this connection Wheeler Robinson remarks:

It is clear that Paul conceives of the fleshly opposition to the Spirit to extend throughout the whole personality. Even the mind (nous) is under the influence of the flesh.³⁹⁰

It is that aspect or quality of corruption in man's nature that impels each person towards committing sin. It is the principle of sin that infects every part of human nature.³⁹¹

To what extent is a Christian dominated by the flesh? The sin principle is so deeply rooted in human nature that nowhere does Paul hold out the expectation that even the Christian will be freed from the flesh. The flesh continues to plague the Christian. Thus Paul insists that Christians must consciously live in dependence upon the Spirit's power to overcome the flesh on a moment by moment basis. This is how Ladd puts it:

While Paul makes a sharp and absolute contrast between

³⁸⁸ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 117

³⁸⁹ G.Friedrich (ed), The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol 7, E. Schweizer, "Sarx", p. 98

³⁹⁰ Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 115

³⁹¹ D.K.Clark, "Biblical Words for Self", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 18, No 4, 1990, p. 312

being 'in the flesh' (unregenerate) and being 'in the Spirit' (regenerate), there remains in the believer a struggle between the flesh and the Spirit....Even in the Christian the flesh struggles against the Spirit so that he cannot be the (perfect) man that he should wish to be.³⁹²

Flesh is then a description of the serious effect of sin on the human personality. It speaks of the whole of the human being with particular reference to human frailty and weakness. And from this it speaks of man as sin has affected the whole of his being. Flesh speaks of the effect of the fall on the nature of man. It refers to the whole of man in rebellion against God and in bondage to sin. It refers to the sin principle in man's nature. It sums up Paul's understanding of the effect of sin on human nature. Barclay observes:

The flesh stands for the total effect upon man of his own sin and of the sin of his fathers and the sin of all men who have gone before him. The flesh is human nature as it has become through sin. The flesh stands for human nature weakened, vitiated, tainted by sin. The flesh is man as he is apart from Jesus Christ and his Spirit.³⁹³

It is so deeply rooted in human nature that it acts as a force. Flesh focuses on the fact that the body, its members, have been brought under the control of sin in such a way that the inner man too, i.e. the mind, heart, will, conscience, etc., is unable to offer resistance to the superior power of

³⁹² Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 473

³⁹³ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, p. 22

sin.³⁹⁴ In other words, the effect are so strong that even the inner man is in its grasp.³⁹⁵ There is nothing that can oppose it but the Spirit.³⁹⁶ Thus the New Testament admonishes us to actualize by the Spirit's power, Christ's liberating potential for overcoming the flesh. It is as we do this that we make progress toward our full potential as real humans, becoming like Christ.

2.2.3. Conclusion.

From what we have seen it should be obvious that it is not possible to maintain as Adams does that this or that expression is more central than another expression. Why?

Firstly, the various expressions used for human nature are not to be regarded as scientific or precise. Davidson makes the point: "What we may expect in the Old Testament is not scientific but popular phraseology".³⁹⁷ What about the New Testament? Davidson comments:

And in the New Testament there may be observed an approach towards a more fixed or definite use of terms. But even in the New Testament there is no Biblical Psychology in a scientific sense.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Clark, "Biblical Words for Self", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 18, No 4, 1990, p. 313

³⁹⁵ Ridderbos, Paul, p.114

³⁹⁶ Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, p. 22

³⁹⁷ Davidson, The Theology of the O.T., p.183

³⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 184

Nor does the doctrine of man's nature form a unity from the point of view of systematic theology.³⁹⁹ Rather the emphasis of the biblical writers in general and Paul in particular, is to give full expression to the complexity of human nature. Behind the biblical terms "lie a rich and developed heritage of philosophical and religious ideas".⁴⁰⁰ In this connection Come speaking of Paul's understanding of human nature, observes that he never defines the terms he used:

His language is not scientific in the sense of being precise and consistent. His eye is always fastened on one thing: the complex dynamic reality of living, experiencing man as the nexus of a bewildering variety of relationships, always revolving around the central relationship of God and man in Jesus Christ...so Paul will not be pinned down to exact meanings of words...⁴⁰¹

And Bultmann puts it like this:

Paul, of course, did not draw up a scientific anthropology as if to describe man as a phenomenon in the realm of the objectively perceptible world.⁴⁰²

The second reason why we must not regard one or other expression as more important or central than another is the fact, as we have already seen, there is a great deal of overlap in the way the various expressions are used by the biblical writers. In this regard, Vriezen points out that, "The words soul, spirit, and heart are often used side by

³⁹⁹ Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, p. 199

⁴⁰⁰ Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p. 47

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 191

side or promiscuously".⁴⁰³ This is especially so of Paul who has given us more insight into the human personality than any other biblical writer. We have seen for example that we can reason and understand with the mind ⁴⁰⁴ but we can also understand with the heart.⁴⁰⁵ Similarly the spirit of the person can also understand.⁴⁰⁶ One can obey from the heart ⁴⁰⁷ but one can also obey from the soul.⁴⁰⁸ However, at the same time, we must take note of Berkouwer's observation that we may certainly not remove the distinctions between the various biblical terms as if they all actually refer anthropologically to the same thing.⁴⁰⁹ The point is that each term refers to the whole of human nature but from different points of view. We must therefore take them together to come to a biblical understanding of human nature. It is important then to see that each expression adds to our understanding of human nature. According to Benner, the different terms we have been considering are not be viewed as separable faculties of human nature but different ways of

⁴⁰³ Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, p. 202

⁴⁰⁴ I Corinthians 14:14-16

⁴⁰⁵ II Corinthians 2:11

⁴⁰⁶ I Corinthians 2:11

⁴⁰⁷ Romans 6:17

⁴⁰⁸ Ephesians 6:6

⁴⁰⁹ Berkouwer, Man:the Image of God, p. 201

looking at the whole person.⁴¹⁰ The one thing that is stressed time and again is the fact that biblically considered, the human person is a unity. Each expression we have considered describes the whole of the person from a particular perspective. As Bultmann points out:

Man does not consist of two parts, much less three; nor are psyche and pneuma special faculties or principles [within soma] of a mental life higher than his animal life. Rather, man is a living unity. He is a person who can become an object to himself. He is a person having a relationship to himself. He is a person who lives in his intentionality, his pursuit of some purpose, his willing and knowing [psyche, pneuma].⁴¹¹

Therefore it is incorrect to consider one aspect more central as Adams does. Again, Adams refuses to recognise the complexity of human nature. To reduce human nature to heart and then only the intellectual aspects is to have a reductionistic view of the human person. It is for this reason that John Carter accuses Adams of a sub-Christian view of human nature. He states that "Adams' view of man in a psychological sense is almost completely external and behavioural".⁴¹² The words soul, spirit and flesh, etc., which are used in the Bible to describe the interwoven aspects of human nature seldom occur in Adams' writings. When

⁴¹⁰ D.G. Benner, Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest, p.109

⁴¹¹ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 209

⁴¹² Carter, 'Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling', Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, Aut 75, p. 151

he does infrequently touch on these aspects of human nature, he is basically behaviouristic in his approach of man and his problems.

This is clearly demonstrated in Adams' understanding of flesh which we have seen to be outward. He rejects the view that flesh refers to the sin principle in human nature, i.e. that it is deeply rooted in human nature itself. Adams claims that he accepts that sin has corrupted the human person inwardly. Nevertheless, his understanding of sin is in reality outward, habit, learned behaviour which is passed down from one generation to another.⁴¹³ Richard Lovelace points out that the weakness of Adams' position is that he regards sin as merely habit patterns of disobedience which can be broken down by the application of will power working in a process of dehabituating, which is a process of disciplined "putting off" and "putting on" new patterns of behaviour.⁴¹⁴

Lovelace notes that such treatment will deal only with the surface manifestations of sin whilst leaving untouched the deeper roots that are not adequately understood and addressed by such counselling. The result of this, he argues, can be pharisaical self-righteousness in which the person may

⁴¹³ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 160

⁴¹⁴ R.Lovelace, Dynamics of Spiritual Life, p. 220

actually be worse off than before after the so-called help.⁴¹⁵
In this regard, Carter also takes issue with Adams. He makes the point that

In his haste to eliminate the psychological practitioner, Adams seems to have eliminated man's fallen or sinful nature. The problems of living are seen to be ascribed to sinful nature, but Adams' counseling operates as if they were functions of sinful actions.⁴¹⁶

Carter shows that psychologically Adams' view is consistent with Glasser, Mowrer and Szasz and that theologically his counselling can be regarded as Pelagian. He continues:

The whole of Adams' emphasis is that all man needs to do is to reorganize his bad habits by changing his mind [with the aid of the Spirit to effect this change]; man's sinful nature and any of its psychological consequences are not discussed as sources of problems and neither is the New Testament's concept of **flesh** with its connections to sin.⁴¹⁷

Because Adams will not accept the existence of the psychological aspects of human nature he ends up with a behaviouristic approach to counselling which leaves untouched the deeper aspects of human pathology. We have noted earlier in this chapter that Adams accuses Freud, Skinner and Rogers of not having an adequate understanding of the effects of sin on human nature.⁴¹⁸ They therefore have an inadequate solution. For Freud the solution is reconditioning by the

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Carter, 'Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling' Journal of Psychology and Theology, Aut 75, p. 150

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Chapter 2

expert, and for Rogers, it is mobilization of the resources of one's self. However, perhaps, Adams has not understood, that similarly he has an inadequate understanding of the effects of sin so that his solution of dehabitation and rehabilitation is also inadequate.

Although by no stretch of the imagination can one regard the biblical understanding of human nature to be scientific or precise, nevertheless, the one point that is clear, is the fact that human nature is complex. The human person is both corporeal and incorporeal. The terms we have looked at indicate clearly that the human person is more than just body, or that which can be seen on the outside, on the surface. There is a far more profound level of human nature than merely that which can be seen on the surface, or even understood on the surface. This is in line with empirical studies. It was Freud who first demonstrated that the unconscious is far more determinative in our behaviour than the conscious. The human personality is complex and cannot be reduced to one aspect. A Christian view of human nature must then take seriously its complexity, in particular those references in the Bible which have to do with the inner aspects. Adams, in his understanding of human nature, fails to take this seriously enough. Francis Schaeffer makes the point that

We are constantly brought face to face with the concept

of the subconscious, which is a realisation that man is more than that which is on the surface. All too often the evangelical Christian acts as though there is nothing to man except that which is above the surface of the water.⁴¹⁹

For this reason, William Kirwan warns that "to dismiss the existence and influence of the unconscious is both unwise and unscriptural".⁴²⁰

In other words, the various expressions we find in the bible which refer to human nature help us to understand the complexity of man as he is before God, himself and others. The point that is being stressed here is that Adams has a superficial understanding of human nature and also human pathology. He ignores the deeper aspects of human nature. It is for this reason that his understanding of the process of behaviour change is also superficial. In practice, Adams concentrates on outward behaviour, as we will see in the next chapter. It is true, as we will also see, that Adams stresses the importance of the Holy Spirit as the agent of change. There can be no change without the Holy Spirit. However, we will attempt to show that in practice Adams concentrates on outward obedience to the commands of the Bible. It is as counsellees learn to stop acting sinfully and learn to live in obedience to the commands of the Bible that they

⁴¹⁹ F. Schaeffer, True Spirituality, p. 103

⁴²⁰ W, Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Living, p. 59

experience radical change. He calls this the process of dehabituating and rehabituation. These terms will be explained in our next chapter. Adams assumes that there is something in the very outward act of obeying the Bible that leads to deeper, radical change. However, he does not explain how this takes place. He does not show how external obedience can lead to inner change.

It is argued that Adams' inadequate understanding of the process of change is the result of his unbiblical anthropology. Because he has ignored the psychological aspects of human nature, Adams' counselling tends to be behaviouristic. In this connection it is interesting to note that according to Kotesky it is a characteristic of behaviourism to ignore the deeper levels of personality, as Adams does.⁴²¹ He continues to explain:

Since nearly all important responses are learned, some people have learned incorrect responses, which must now be extinguished with the correct ones being learned in their places.⁴²²

That this is what Adams does will become obvious in our next chapter where we consider Adams' understanding of the place of the Bible in counselling.

⁴²¹ R.L. Kotesky, "Toward the development of a Christian Psychology", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 7, 1979, p. 94

⁴²² Ibid.

CHAPTER 3.

ADAMS AND THE USE OF SCRIPTURE
in
COUNSELLING

3.1 Introduction.

In the previous chapter we have shown that Adams, having ignored the deeper aspects of human nature, has opened himself to the charge of behaviourism. We now wish to examine Adams' understanding of the role of the Bible in counselling. Due cognisance is taken of the valuable contribution Adams has made in showing Christian counsellors the importance of the Bible as a resource in counselling. However, in this chapter we will attempt to demonstrate that the role Adams attributes to the Bible in counselling is questionable, and that he in fact expects too much from the Bible.

There is no doubt that Adams' understanding of the place of the Bible is probably the most important part of nouthetic counselling. The central place which Adams gives to the Bible sets his model of counselling apart from other counselling. By this it is not suggested that other evangelical counsellors do not utilize the Scripture in counselling, but what sets Adams apart is the fact that he consistently maintains that counselling must be based exclusively on the Bible. This is stressed throughout his books and articles. It is not simply that counselling must be based on biblical principles, but counselling

must be done from the Bible. Principles, techniques and methods must all come from the Bible. In other words, what sets nouthetic counselling apart from other counselling is Adams' rejection of all other helps but the Bible. In fact, for Adams, the Bible is the text book par excellence for counselling ¹ Adams calls nouthetic counselling, biblical counselling.

In view of this, we need to look at Adams' view of the Bible and why he believes it should be used in counselling. In this connection, then, Adams' understanding of the nature of the Bible will be investigated. It will be shown that for Adams, the Bible has absolute authority and in its sufficiency for all matters of Christian living, contains all the answers for the Christian's personal problems. All that is needed for spiritual development in general and for behaviour change in particular, will be found in the Bible. Whatever spiritual or emotional problem the Christian may experience, the solution is in the Bible. Why does Adams hold this view? Because he believes the Bible is inspired. In other words, it has a divine origin. Therefore, it has both authority and it is sufficient in counselling.

In our evaluation of Adams' thesis, we will look at what claims the Bible makes for itself. In other words, whether, the Bible claims to be the sole means for change and spiritual growth. We will also evaluate the biblical evidence Adams uses to support his particular approach to counselling.

¹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. xiii

3.2 Adam' position on the Bible.

What is Adams' view of the Bible? What is his doctrine of Scripture?

3.2.1 The Nature of Scripture.

Generally speaking, we may say that Adams holds a traditional evangelical view of the Bible. Basic to his understanding of the Bible is his belief that it is inerrant. By that he means that although the Bible was written by men in the distinctive styles of the individual writers they

were kept free from all errors that otherwise would have crept into their writings...(and)...expressed not only what they themselves wanted to say, but what God wanted to say through them.²

Adams insists that "the Bible is not shot through with human error".³ When Adams speaks about the Bible being inspired he does not mean that the writers were merely inspired to write, like we would say a poet is inspired to write a piece of poetry. Neither does he mean the Bible is inspiring to read. He means that the Bible is "a God-breathed book",⁴ and has its origin in God. The words of the Bible come direct from the mouth of God, "God breathed forth the Scriptures as His word".⁵ What is written in the Bible was breathed out by God so that if we "could hear God speak, (we) would find that God said nothing more, nothing

² Adams, More than Redemption, p. 17

³ Ibid., p. 18

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 93

less, nothing different from what is written".⁶ For Adams, "the holy writings are as much His word as if God had spoken them physically and audibly by means of breath".⁷ This means that it is not a human document but a divine document, it is "a God-breathed revelation".⁸ Adams insists: "Divine inspiration was clearly an undisputed pre-supposition of the early church upon which other points could be based".⁹ Although the Bible is inerrant and infallible, Adams admits, "I am aware that my interpretations and applications of Scripture are not infallible".¹⁰

3.2.2 The authority of Scripture.

On the basis of the divine origin of Scripture Adams attributes to the Scriptures supreme authority. This authoritative character of the Bible stems from the doctrine of inerrancy. Because the Bible is inerrant it has authority.¹¹ He states: "I avowedly accept the inerrant Bible as the standard of all faith and practice".¹² How does Adams apply his understanding of the nature of the Bible to counselling? Because the Bible is inerrant and authoritative the counsellor has the authority to give

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 18

⁹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 93

¹⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 18

¹¹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 18

¹² Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. xxi

authoritative answers.¹³ For example Adams points out that

When faced with plain proposals for sin...questions about behaviour...the Christian counselor can give an unequivocal answer because it is based not upon his own opinion, upon the probabilities of the consequences, expediency or any other such relative standard, but upon the commandments of the living God, who has spoken.¹⁴

So counselling based on the use of the Bible is authoritative. However, Adams is careful to draw a distinction between authority and authoritarianism. He points out that "counselors, who exercise the authority of God, are not authorities in their own right".¹⁵ They must not exceed the biblical limits of that authority. Their authority should not conflict with the valid God-given authority of the state or the home. Adams explains: "counsellors who advise illegal acts or who teach children to dishonour parents violate God's authority rather than act according to it".¹⁶ He also points out that a counsellor's authority is limited by the Bible itself.¹⁷

It is on the basis of this authority that Adams insists on a confrontational approach in counselling. As the counsellor uses the Bible as the basis for his counselling, he has God's authority. Adams insists: "only biblical counseling possesses such authority".¹⁸ Biblical counsellors, in fact, "exercise the

¹³ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 18

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 16

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 19

¹⁸ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 15

full authority for counseling that Christ gave to the organized church, [I Thess 5:12-13]".¹⁹

3.2.2.1 The element of confrontation.

Because of the authority derived from the Scriptures nouthetic counselling is directive.²⁰ Adams argues that "The New Testament word for counseling (nouthetic) implies scriptural direction".²¹ He bases his model of counselling on this word group, the Greek verb noutheteo and the Greek noun nouthesis. Adams believes that this word most clearly brings out the main thrust of what counselling should be. Quoting Trench, he shows that this is basic to the very meaning of the word nouthetic. He attests:

It is training by word - by the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required; as set over against the training by act and by discipline which is paideiaThe distinctive feature of nouthesia is the training by word of mouth.²²

Adams, recognising the difficulties of finding an English word that brings out the full meaning of noutheteo prefers to transliterate it and thus renders it confront nouthetically. Occasionally he renders it as authoritative nouthetic confrontation. According to Adams, nouthetic counselling or nouthetic confrontation, terms he uses interchangeably, have three foundational elements.²³ First, the word noutheteo is used

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 17

²¹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 15

²² R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, quoted in Adams, Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 45

²³ Ibid., p. 44

in conjunction with didasko or teach. In this connection he refers to Colossians 1:28 where Paul writes of his work and labour in proclaiming Christ Jesus. What is his aim? "We proclaim him, admonishing/ nouthetountes and teaching/ didaskontes with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect (mature) in Christ". Adams also refers to another similar verse Colossians 3:16 where Paul encourages the believers to

let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach/didaskontes and admonish/ nouthetountes one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Teaching deals with the impartation of information while nouthetic implies a problem which needs to be solved. Adams states: "In short, nouthetic confrontation arises out of a condition in the counsellee that God wants changed".²⁴ Thus the teaching is used to clarify understanding so as to contribute to behavioural change.

The second element inherent in the concept noutheteo is that it involves a verbal confrontation. In other words, the problem is solved by verbal means. This is the key to understanding what nouthetic counselling is all about. A person to person confrontation is involved aimed at helping the individual to change his or her behaviour patterns to conform to biblical standards and practices.

The third element in noutheteo is that nouthetic counselling is

²⁴ Ibid., p. 45

motivated by a deep and genuine concern for the counsellee. According to Adams: "Nouthetic counseling...embodies involvement of the deepest sort".²⁵ It is aimed at change for the benefit of the counsellee, changing that which is harming the counsellee. The aim is positive change. Adams insists that change is initiated by means of verbal confrontation. A person to person confrontation is involved which is aimed at helping the individual change his pattern of behaviour to conform to biblical standards and practices. The focus in counselling falls on the undesirable behaviour which must be confronted. It is important that counsellees be made aware that the cause of their problems is the result of not acting and living in accordance with the principles of the Bible. Counsellees must, on the basis of the authority of the Bible, be brought to a place of confession and repentance. No excuses must be allowed. Counsellees must take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.²⁶ Adams makes no apology for the fact that nouthetic counselling is directive. He believes:

Christian counseling involves the use of authoritative instruction. Authoritative instruction requires the use of directive Nouthetic techniques.²⁷

Adams states that he found that the more directive he became in counselling, simply telling what God required, the more people were helped.²⁸ He states that, "spelling out and getting

²⁵ Ibid., p. 53

²⁶ Ibid., p. 55

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. xiii

commitments to biblical patterns of behaviour after an acknowledgment of and repentance of sin seemed to bring relief and results".²⁹

The nouthetic counsellor imparts information, gives advice, and focuses on problems in a confrontative manner, but cannot just listen and accept a counsellee's sinful attitude or verbalizations since the acceptance of sin is sin.³⁰ Consequently, support as conceived of by psychiatry is unacceptable. Support is passive, therefore it is wrong because the counsellor must never support sinful behaviour. The counsellor must never give the impression that he approves of the counsellee's failure in handling his problems. Furthermore, there is no biblical evidence that a counsellor must just stand by passively just listening without doing or saying anything.³¹

In this regard, Adams takes issue with non-directive counselling that is based on Roger's Client-Centred Therapy. At this point Adams represents a major departure in the area of pastoral counselling and care, for as Hielema points out:

Carl Rogers' so called 'Client-Centred Counselling' dominates the field of pastoral counselling and forms the basis of most Liberal and much Conservative counseling.³²

In Client-Centred Counselling, the main function of the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 102

³¹ Ibid., p. 157

³² J.S. Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling: A Confrontation with American Pastoral Theology in particular Seward Hiltner and J.E. Adams, p. 81

counsellor is to understand what the counsellee is saying or feeling but to offer no interpretation other than to summarize how the counsellee feels. The counsellor merely listens and reflects the feelings of the counsellee. No moral or value judgements are made. Thus, central to Client-Centred Counselling is the fact that it is non-directive. And this is one of the reasons why Adams rejects it. He speaks of the need "to precipitate some sort of responsibility crisis" in order to break old sinful patterns of behaviour.³³ He argues that there is a need "to blast old patterns loose".³⁴ This necessitates confronting the counsellee with any form of sinful behaviour. Adams is against just allowing the problems to "ooze out".³⁵ Even if the confrontation hurts at first it will eventually be more beneficial than a soft, non-directive approach.³⁶ For example, to the counsellee who is involved in a homosexual relationship the nouthetic counsellor would say: "Confess the sin to God and forsake it, and you must break off that homosexual relationship today".³⁷ To someone who comes for counselling about debt the nouthetic counsellor could say: "Sell your car and pay off the loan".³⁸ In this regard, he states:

If the practice...is a transgression of a plain commandment of God, the counsellor not only may but must speak with this sort of finality. There is no suggestion of situation

³³ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 173

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 174

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, pp. 16-17

³⁸ Ibid.

ethics.³⁹

That is why nouthetic counselling focuses on behaviour. Adams insists that God's commands deal with attitudes, behaviour and obedience. If the individual obeys God's commands, the result is good feelings. Adams believes that to treat a person's feelings rather than a person's behaviour is to treat the symptoms and not the cause. This is also why nouthetic counselling focuses on present behaviour and very little attention is paid to delving into the past to uncover reasons for present problems. Adams is also against non-directive listening, listening must be directive. He admits that with this approach there are some failures. But he insists that the reason for the failures is not the basic principles of nouthetic counselling. Failures are the result of a counsellor being too sympathetic to complaints and the excuses of counselees, or where the counsellee is not held responsible for actions. On the other hand, a counsellor can be too authoritative, not distinguishing between the counsellor's authority and God's authority.

3.2.3 The sufficiency of Scripture

Another logical deduction Adams makes which arises from his understanding of the nature and authority of the Bible is his absolute commitment to the sufficiency of the Bible. Time and again he stresses that the Bible equips the Christian "for every good work"⁴⁰ that God requires. Since God breathed the Scriptures, they are, therefore, "useful for teaching, reproof,

³⁹ Ibid., p. 447

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 93

correction and discipline" ⁴¹ in godly behaviour. He states: "The whole process of counseling, plus the resources and methodology to be used, is either stated or implied...in the Scriptures".⁴² He believes that there is no counselling situation for which the counsellor is not adequately equipped by the Scripture.⁴³ All the answers that are needed by both the counsellor and counsellee, or just by the Christian on how to live, are found in the Bible. Adams insists that "all that we need as the basic foundation and framework for helping others and helping ourselves has been given to us".⁴⁴ Does the Bible deal with the sort of problems experienced by people today? Adams is convinced that there is no unique problem that has not been mentioned plainly in the Scriptures and that there is likewise a biblical solution to every personal problem.⁴⁵ A counsellor can say with confidence to a counsellee:

There is no problem that you have to which God does not offer a solution in His Word. It is my task to understand your problem, help you to discover God's solution to it, and to encourage you to do (by His help) what God requires you to do about it.⁴⁶

He states:

The Scriptures say that God has revealed to His Church 'all things pertaining to life and Godliness', and that God has given His Word in written form in order to enable His people to engage in 'all good works' by 'thoroughly

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 93-94

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 97

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 23

⁴⁶ Ibid.

equipping' them for every exigency of life.⁴⁷

On the other hand, Adams believes that

While the Scriptures deal with every situation that the Christian minister faces in the course of his legitimate work, while they contain all the data that is necessary for life and Godliness, this information comes neither in the form of an encyclopedia, nor as a ready reference manual.⁴⁸

Adams warns that the Bible does not address directly every problem we face with solutions attached. There are two types of situations we find in the Bible, those which are dealt with directly in the form of direct commands, and those which are dealt with only indirectly in the form of principles.⁴⁹ He affirms:

The Bible...is a collection of books containing principles that cover all life, together with a great number of life's situations that demonstrate how those principles apply and may be put into practice.⁵⁰

Adams is careful to distinguish between unalterable biblical principles and the specific application of these, which will vary from case to case. There is no question of simply quoting a text and urging the client to pray. The elements of the problem are uncovered and the client shown how those problems may be solved along biblical lines. Adams, answering the charge of a simplistic use of the Bible comments:

It is time to put to rest the tawdry caricatures of the nouthetic counsellor as someone who tears out passages of Scripture and hands them to the counselee accompanied by the simplistic direction 'take these three times a day with prayer'...over the years the leaders of Nouthetic or biblical counseling have expended much effort to teach

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Adams, Use of the Bible in Counseling, p. 42

⁴⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 24

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 122-123

counselors how to use the Scriptures, emphasising that inaccurate, unexplained, superficial...use of the Scriptures demean God's Word and harm counseling.⁵¹

It is from the standpoint of the sufficiency of Scripture that Adams argues that Christians were already involved in counselling before Freud.⁵² He points out that before the advent of psychotherapy Christians understood the principles of how to help people overcome their problems. He asks the question:

How did Jesus Christ become the perfect Counselor that the Scriptures report Him to be apart from the 'insights' of clinical psychology and psychiatry that we are now assured by unbelievers (and many Christians who follow this) are essential to effective counseling?⁵³

Where did Jesus Christ and Paul, for example, obtain their knowledge? Adams answers:

The Old Testament adequately supplied Jesus with all the knowledge and wisdom necessary for Him to counsel others unerringly...so too, following the Lord, the Church, whenever she has been faithful to this matter has found the Bible to be a rich, inexhaustible source of information for its counseling ministry.⁵⁴

How does Adams deal with the argument that the Bible was not meant to be a text book on psychology any more than it was meant to be a text book in physics or geography or shipbuilding? Adams answers:

The Bible was not written...as a textbook for physics etc...but it decidedly was written...[as a textbook to deal with human problems]. The Bible was not written to deal with the intricacies of shipbuilding, but surely it tells us all that we need to know about interpersonal relations. In the Bible are all things necessary to know how to love God and one's neighbour. Counseling directly pertains to

⁵¹ Adams, How to help People Change, p. 77

⁵² Adams, More than Redemption, p. 16

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

the intricacies of those matters.⁵⁵

Here we have one of the reasons why Adams rejects the use of the psychological sciences. He argues again and again that there is no need to use insights outside of the Scriptures. To the charge that the psychological sciences have provided us with more information about human nature and the human personality and should be used to supplement the knowledge found in the Scriptures, Adams insists that the Bible does not need to be balanced off by modern psychology or combined with psychology to construct a balanced approach.⁵⁶ All we need to know is found in the Bible. He does, however, admit that it is possible for unbelievers to "stumble over aspects of truth in God's creation but they always distort these by their sin".⁵⁷

There is another reason why Adams rejects the psychological sciences and its because their techniques and principles are based upon unbiblical presuppositions. He states:

Nearly all recent counseling books for ministers, even conservative ones, are written from a Freudian perspective...which are steeped in...humanistic dogma.⁵⁸

In fact, Adams goes as far as to state that Freudian psychotherapy principles are antithetical to Christianity. Freud is therefore an enemy and not a friend to Christian counsellors.⁵⁹ He believes that it is not possible to use either

⁵⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 18

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 92

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Adams, Competent to Counsel, pp. 17-18

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 15

the principles or techniques derived from the psychological sciences because they are based on unbiblical presuppositions. He points out that techniques grow out of presuppositions. He believes: "It is impossible to destroy the foundation and preserve the superstructure".⁶⁰ In this regard he writes: "Before adopting Freudian principles, Christians should know (the) basic Freudian presuppositions which underlie all he wrote".⁶¹ What are these basic presuppositions which Adams refers to? Freud believed that Christianity, and all other religions for that matter, were illusions and a sign of neurosis appropriate to an earlier stage in mankind's evolutionary development.⁶² Freud adhered to the mechanist determinism which was the dominant world view in scientific circles of his day. This asserted that the universe is basically a complex physical machine only.⁶³ Hurding writing about Freud's presuppositions, puts it this way:

He operates within a 'closed system' of 'cause and effect' in which the biological and physical laws of nature determined every aspect of man's existence.⁶⁴

Freud argued that man needs to grow up out of the infancy of religion.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 102

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 16

⁶² Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 73

⁶³ A. Vos, "A Response to 'God and Behaviour Mod'", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 6, 1974 p. 213

⁶⁴ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 73

⁶⁵ Ibid.

It is then not surprising that Adams rejects an eclectic approach, where Christian counsellors adopt techniques based on non-biblical principles which rest upon non-Christian presuppositions.⁶⁶ In this connection Adams accuses Bruce Narramore of eclectism because he advocates combining practical insights of modern psychology with truths from the Bible as a balanced approach to counselling.⁶⁷ He maintains that this is detrimental to Christian counselling.⁶⁸ Adams also takes issue with Crabb, who has become prominent in evangelical counselling circles, for eclectism even though Crabb similarly holds to the sufficiency of Scripture.⁶⁹ In similar vein Adams takes Merville Vincent to task for stating that Freud's diagnosis of the human condition agrees with Christ's diagnosis, namely that man requires a drastic change from within. Adams rejects this as an over-simplification and misunderstanding of both Christ and Freud.⁷⁰ In this connection then he insists:

This baptizing of secular anthropological views which has frequently characterized much that has been called Christian counselling, must be rejected. Instead, Christians must get back of these views and understand their basic Antichristian presuppositions.⁷¹

3.2.3.1. The place of the psychological sciences

Is there any place for, or any value in the findings of the

⁶⁶ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 100

⁶⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 92

⁶⁸ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 100

⁶⁹ Adams, More than Redemption, pp. 117-118

⁷⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. xx

⁷¹ Ibid., p. xxi

psychological sciences? Adams states:

I do not wish to disregard science, but rather I welcome it as a useful adjunct for the purpose of illustrating, filling in generalizations with specifics and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture, thereby forcing the student to restudy the Scripture.⁷²

However, because he believes in the sufficiency of Scripture, Adams is adamant that "qualified Christian counselors properly trained in the Scriptures are competent to counsel - more competent than psychiatrists or anyone else".⁷³ That is why Adams stresses again and again that

Preeminently, a nouthetic counselor must be conversant with the Scripture...a good seminary education rather than medical school or a degree in clinical psychology, is the most fitting background for a counselor.⁷⁴

This means that the counsellor must be one who knows the meaning of Scripture in his own life. And that is why only Christians can make counsellors.

3.2.4 Conclusions.

It is clear then, that Adams' understanding of counselling and his basic principles of counselling arise from his view of the Bible as the inerrant, authoritative Word of God which is sufficient for all our counselling needs. It is on this basis then, that Adams also rejects the use of the psychological sciences, except in a minor and peripheral way. In this regard he states his commitment to what he calls biblical counselling:

I have been engrossed in the project of developing biblical counseling and have uncovered what I consider to be a

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 18

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 61

number of important scriptural principles. It is amazing to discover how much the Bible has to say about counseling and how fresh the biblical approach is.⁷⁵

But how biblical is Adams? What biblical support does he in fact have for his biblical counselling? Adams stresses that his views rest on biblical evidence. He writes:

I want to alter any or all of what I have written provided that I can be shown to be wrong biblically. I am not interested in debate which moves off on non-Christian suppositions....I have attempted to reexamine counseling (suggestively but not exhaustively) in a biblical manner, and I ask therefore, that my work shall be similarly criticised.⁷⁶

It is to an evaluation of Adams' biblical evidence that we shall now turn. We will concentrate on the biblical evidence of two aspects of nouthetic counselling.

3.3 Biblical evaluation of key concepts of nouthetic counselling as related to the use of the Bible

John Carter, in his criticism of Adams, points out that what Adams has done is to merge the two basic purposes or goals of nouthetic counselling with the goals of Scripture as he sees them.⁷⁷ Adams links Paul's statement to the Colossian Christians that the aim of his preaching and teaching was to help Christians to mature, to ⁷⁸ Paul's statement that the Scripture as God-breathed "is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. xix

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 269

⁷⁷ Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 3/3 1975, p. 147

⁷⁸ Colossians 1:28

thoroughly equipped for every good work".⁷⁹ In other words, according to Adams, Scriptures are nouthetically orientated.⁸⁰ He writes: "Nouthetic confrontation is, in short, confrontation with the principles and practices of the Scriptures".⁸¹ On what biblical grounds does Adams base his claim?

In this section we will look at this question by first of all considering the evidence on which Adams bases his confrontational approach in counselling and secondly, we will consider Adams' evidence that the Bible is nouthetically orientated.

3.3.1 Confrontational counselling - biblical?

As we have seen, Adams is basically limited to one method of counselling, namely confrontational and directive. We saw earlier in 2.2.1 that this confrontational model of counselling is based on the Greek verb noutheteo and the Greek noun nouthesis. It is a word used almost exclusively by Paul to describe believers' responsibility for each other.

The fact that Adams has based his whole approach to counselling on one word, and a word which only appears infrequently, does not appear to concern him at all. It could be argued of course that the importance of a concept cannot be measured by the number of times a word occurs in the Bible. However, it is unusual to base important aspects of a thesis on an infrequently used word which

⁷⁹ II Timothy 3:16-17

⁸⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 51

⁸¹ Ibid.

Adams himself admits is not easy to translate.⁸² In any case, it remains an important principle of hermeneutics that meanings cannot be imposed on words and that a meaning is determined by the context in which it appears.⁸³ How correct is Adams in his interpretation of this word group? Adams' basic summary of the meaning of this word noutheteo is correct. In this connection, Kittel gives this word group the following meaning:

to impart understanding; to set right; to have a corrective influence on someone; to teach, to instruct, to warn. It presupposes an opposition which has to be overcome; to seek to correct the mind, to put right what is wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude.⁸⁴

It is based on this meaning that Adams speaks of authoritative confrontation. How is this word in fact used by Paul?

3.3.1.1 Paul's usage of noutheteo/nouthesis

In Acts 20 from verse 13 we find the apostle Paul meeting with the elders from the church at Ephesus. He was concerned for the church after his departure. His fear arose from the fact that he expected heretical teachers to arise, both from within, and from without the church. Teachers who would seek to lead the people astray.⁸⁵ His concern was that the elders of the church should be faithful and, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer"⁸⁶ In the

⁸² D.A. Carson, Exegetical Fallacies, p. 45f

⁸³ A.B. Michelsen, Interpreting the Bible, p. 100

⁸⁴ G. Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol IV, p. 1019

⁸⁵ Acts 20:29

⁸⁶ Acts 20:28

face of this danger, they should be alert. Paul reminded them that he had constantly warned them of the dangers of false teaching and they should follow his example. It is in this context that Paul says: "So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning/ noutheton each of you night an day with tears".⁸⁷ Marshall translates noutheton "earnestly warned"⁸⁸ and Lenski translates it "constantly reminded".⁸⁹ The warning element of noutheteo is obvious here. However, it is difficult to see how this statement can be seen to be concerned with a principle of counselling. No doubt Paul's warnings could at times involve authoritative confrontation, but that is not his main thought. In fact it would seem that there is rather a deep loving concern present, for the warnings came with tears. From the context it is obvious that we are not dealing with a counselling situation at all, or with principles of counselling, rather Paul is giving the Ephesian elders insight into his own concern and he is encouraging them to follow his example. Paul is not laying down a principle of counselling at all.

The next use of this word group is in Romans 15:14. In this passage Paul has been encouraging the Christians at Rome to bear with each other, to accept each other without judging each other for minor differences among them, and to stand united. There has been a certain amount of censure in what Paul has been writing.

⁸⁷ Acts 2:31

⁸⁸ I. Howard Marshall, Acts, p. 335

⁸⁹ R.C.H. Lenski, The Acts of The Apostles, p. 853

Now Paul anticipates an objection.⁹⁰ He had not been involved in establishing the church at Rome, in fact he had not even visited Rome at the time he wrote this letter.⁹¹ Paul realizes that he could be accused of interfering and underestimating their spiritual maturity. Thus Paul assures them that he in no way underestimates their regard and care for each other. Neither does he question their knowledge or even their maturity to deal with their own problems. On the contrary: "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct/ nouthetein one another".⁹² He is writing out of the concern he has as an apostle to the Gentiles. It is interesting how various commentaries have translated noutheteo in this passage. Dodd renders it: "you are well able to give advice to one another".⁹³ Bruce puts it like this: "capable of teaching one another".⁹⁴ And Hodge translates it: "to bring to think seasonably, to bear on the mind and conscience".⁹⁵ Calvin renders it: "quite able to offer encouragement".⁹⁶ In other words, none of the commentaries have translated it as Adams has. It is interesting that Adams regards this passage as

⁹⁰ J. Calvin, Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 525

⁹¹ Romans 1:10-13

⁹² Romans 15:14

⁹³ C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 229f

⁹⁴ F.F. Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 258

⁹⁵ C. Hodge, Romans, p. 437

⁹⁶ Calvin, Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 526

very important. He uses a phrase in this verse as the title for one of his books, namely, Competent to Counsel. In looking at this verse and the context in which it appears, it is obvious that what we have here is no more than a general comment. Paul is not stating a principle or setting out some teaching; rather it is some "gentle flattery".⁹⁷

We have another use of this word found in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, in I Corinthians 4:14. He writes: "I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children". From the context, we find Paul upbraiding the believers for their spiritual pride and especially boasting of spiritual superiority. They were convinced that they were a mature and effective church, satisfied with their spirituality. These Corinthian believers had settled down into the illusion that they had become the best they could be.⁹⁸ Paul draws a contrast between their superiority and his weakness. While they gloried in their reputation and strength, Paul says he was mocked and scorned and in want. Realizing that he had been writing in what could be regarded as a sarcastic tone, Paul assures them that it was not his intention to shame or embarrass them.⁹⁹ He is writing to them as their spiritual father out of concern for them. No father wants to ridicule his children, rather to demonstrate that he loves them. He had to be frank with them. He could not remain silent or indifferent. Paul's use of the word noutheteo is not found in

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 526

⁹⁸ D. Prior, The Message of I Corinthians, p. 65

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 68

the context of some teaching or counselling, it is used in this specific situation.

In Colossians 1:28 Paul expresses the purpose of his labour for the church at Colosse:

We proclaim him, admonishing (nouthetountes) and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, he so powerfully works in me.

His goal for them is maturity in Christ. To achieve his purpose Paul not only warns the young believers but teaches them also. Again it is difficult to see how Adams can use this as a normative principle of counselling. There is nothing here to indicate that Paul was using this term technically, or that he meant to give some normative teaching on how to counsel.

We have another usage of this word in this letter which in chapter 3:16 Paul writes:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish (nouthetountes) one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

This verse as well as the context in no way suggests a confrontational or counselling situation. The context is rather worship, thankful praise and mutual encouragement within the community.

In Thessalonians 5:12 Paul appeals to the believers in the church to appreciate the true worth of those who exercise spiritual leadership among them. He writes: "Now we ask you brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the

Lord and who admonish (nouthetountas) you". Paul's use of three participles following a single article indicates that it is one group of people who discharge all three functions.¹⁰⁰ They work hard in leading, advising, warning and correcting. Again it seems that Adams has read his own meaning into what Paul is writing. This was a specific situation where it would seem there were some problems in personal relationships and in particular opposition to the leaders who were attempting to put things right in the church.¹⁰¹ We must be careful not to misunderstand this as being a job description of those in spiritual leadership,¹⁰² or as a description of a method of counselling.

These examples indicate how Paul used this word group. It is clear that in all the instances where noutheteo or nouthesis occur, the meaning is not necessarily authoritative confrontation as envisaged by Adams. John Carter observes:

neither the word noutheteo nor its biblical context always necessitates either confrontation and/or authoritative declaration through a face to face interaction.¹⁰³

Carter accuses Adams of shifting the meaning of noutheteo to fit his model of counselling.¹⁰⁴ He also makes the point that, "Adams connects warning and admonition with the biblical framework of

¹⁰⁰ L. Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, p. 165

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 164-165

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 166

¹⁰³ Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 3/3, 1975, p. 147

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

authority and hence he speaks of authoritative nouthetic confrontation".¹⁰⁵

In this connection the question we need to ask is what Paul's intention was in the passages Adams uses to support his confrontational methodology? Was Paul in fact stating a normative principle relating to counselling? Did he have a counselling situation in mind or was he merely making some general comment applicable to a particular situation? We cannot take a reference in a specific situation and base a normative principle on it. In this connection Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart points out that "a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his readers".¹⁰⁶ Before Adams can use this word with reference to a specific counselling methodology, he must prove that Paul consciously had some kind of counselling situation in mind and that he was also consciously setting out a normative principle. He must also prove that Paul had a fixed meaning in mind, namely, confrontation. To be more specific, questions that Adams has not clarified in this connection are the following: What did Paul have in mind in using these words? Would Paul have had a precise meaning in mind as Adams obviously thinks? What warrant has Adams in applying such a general usage to a specific counselling concept?

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ G. Fee, D. Stuart, How to Read the Bible for all its worth, p. 60

3.3.1.2 Conclusion: A more balanced approach

From what we have seen then, Adams has no biblical warrant for the central place he gives to confrontation in his counselling approach. On the other hand there is no doubt that there are aspects of authoritative confrontation in noutheteo and for that reason it is legitimate for Adams to include this aspect in counselling. He is also correct in showing that this has been an area where counselling has been weak. To that extent he has made a valuable contribution to our understanding and development of pastoral counselling and care in the evangelical sector of the church.

However, it is often difficult to reconcile nouthetic confrontation with Paul's call to restore gently those who have fallen.¹⁰⁷ In fact Adams is unbiblical in his limited understanding of noutheteo. As we have seen, it cannot be confined to authoritative confrontation. He has built his whole methodology on one simple concept which he bases on a questionable understanding of one Greek word used by one biblical author, in non-teaching contexts. The question that needs to be asked is whether counselling is not more than nouthetesia? In this connection John Carter emphasises that any biblical model of counselling must not be built on one single concept, or even several biblical concepts, but on a network of biblical concepts.¹⁰⁸ He points out that there are many different words

¹⁰⁷ W.T. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 136

¹⁰⁸ Carter, "Toward a Biblical Model of Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 8:1, Spring 1980, p. 46

used in the New Testament which relate to what seems to be the counselling process.¹⁰⁹

Hurding has similarly pointed out that Adams in choosing nouthesia is guilty of ignoring a range of alternatives which could also be related to counselling, such as parakeleo, paraklesis or paramuthia.¹¹⁰ In this connection it is instructive to make a study of some of the words which are used in the New Testament Epistles which focus on believers' care for one another.

A word and its cognates which John Carter regards as a more appropriate base for a model of counselling than nouthesia and its cognates, is the word parakaleo.¹¹¹ Crabb similarly believes that parakaleo and its cognates supply a better model of counselling than nouthesia from a biblical perspective.¹¹² This word, which appears in its verbal form more than one hundred and thirty times in the New Testament, means, to come alongside, to help, to encourage, to console, to comfort someone, either by verbal nor nonverbal means.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 288

¹¹¹ Carter, "Nouthetic Counseling Defended :A Reply to Ganz", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p. 215

¹¹² Crabb, Effective Biblical Counseling, p. 149

¹¹³ J.P. Louw, E.A. Nida [eds], Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 306

Another word and its cognates which can be applied in the counselling process is the Greek word paramuthia. This word is found twice in the Gospels and twice in the Epistles and carries the meaning: to encourage, and conveys a strong sense of comfort and consolation.¹¹⁴ Its application in counselling is clear when Paul writes:

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God who calls you into his Kingdom and Glory.¹¹⁵

A similar idea is conveyed by the word boetheo and its cognates which carries the meaning, to help, to assist, to be concerned with, or to take an interest in.¹¹⁶ How do these words relate to specific problems or people? In I Thessalonians 5:14 the believers are encouraged to admonish or confront, noutheteo the unruly or idle, to comfort, paramutheomai the faint hearted, i.e. those who are temporarily overwhelmed by the stress of circumstances.¹¹⁷ They are encouraged to hold onto, support, and not to abandon, antechemai the weak, and to be patient, makrothumeo with everyone.¹¹⁸

This verse suggests widely varied helping styles to what seems

¹¹⁴ L.O. Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, p. 246

¹¹⁵ I Thessalonians 2:11-12

¹¹⁶ Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, p. 560

¹¹⁷ Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, p. 169

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

to be three different problems and a general style applicable to all people. If Adams wants a biblical model of counselling it is not sufficient to adopt one counselling style. His counselling methodology must include comforting, encouraging, consoling, caring, guiding, helping, supporting and not only confrontation. We will see in chapter 4 that when counselling is considered in the context of pneumatology, the whole range of these helping styles is brought into focus. Adams obviously expects too much from his counselling model.

Apart from this biblical evidence, there are serious practical dangers in building a counselling model on the concept of confrontation. Kirwan draws our attention to one of these dangers when he states:

the nouthetic school emphasizes confrontation, which carries a high risk of rejecting the one being counseled. Counselees have the fear that inability to change or give up a 'sinful habit pattern' will prompt rejection. And, indeed, if the client does not follow the directive of the counselor-which is the heart of the nouthetic system-what can the counselor do?¹¹⁹

It is for this reason that Kirwan warns that

Great care must be exercised in all confrontation, since it is easy to take a 'there you are' approach and thus to jeopardize the entire counselling relationship. Counselors must also guard against viewing confrontation as a verbal exchange, a game to be won by debate techniques.¹²⁰

Where there is confrontation it should be "characterized by empathy, tentativeness, and care".¹²¹ Kirwan makes an important

¹¹⁹ Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 136

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 155

¹²¹ Ibid.

point when he observes:

Counselors who display empathy, genuineness, respect, and concreteness of language tend to be more successful in confronting clients than do counselors lacking in these qualities.¹²²

It is interesting to note that in a recent publication of the Journal of Pastoral Practice, D. Powlison of The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, has admitted that in their zeal, nouthetic counselors have appeared suspicious, controlling, uncaring, as well as authoritarian instead of authoritative.¹²³ He further admits that while nouthetic counselling stresses the importance of human responsibility it does not take enough account of human suffering.¹²⁴ In this connection he states: "would anyone deny that nouthetic counseling practice often has been less than biblical in its sensitivity to suffering people".¹²⁵ It would appear that nouthetic counsellors have been rethinking their confrontational approach. This is how Powlison puts it:

the authoritative, directive and decisive intervention is only one mode of biblical counseling, and in fact not even a primary mode. The most characteristic biblical counseling relationship is a long term friendship consisting of mutually invited constructive dependency on one another.¹²⁶

This is the paracletic part of nouthetic counselling that has hitherto been neglected.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 155-156

¹²³ D.A.C. Powlison, "Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling", Journal of Pastoral Practice, 9:1988, p. 66

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 64

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 66

Having evaluated Adams' confrontational approach in counselling from a biblical perspective, we now have to turn to the second important aspect of nouthetic counselling, one on which the whole edifice is built. We refer to Adams' understanding of the Bible and the place of the Bible in counselling. The place Adams gives to the Bible in counselling is pivotal, and foundational. It shapes his whole theory of counselling. It is because of this that he rejects the psychological sciences. He subjects any scientific research and reasoning to its principles. According to Adams any theory or research that ignores God and his Word must be rejected outright .

3.3.2 The place of the Bible in counselling

As we have seen, Adams believes that in the Bible, God has given us "all that we need as the framework" for counselling.¹²⁷ Adams calls this the divine knowledge approach. A key passage in this regard is II Timothy 3:16-17 where Paul writes to Timothy:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Adams understands Paul's statement here as the touchstone for biblical counselling. He states: "The whole process of counseling, plus the resources and methodology to be used, is either stated or implied in this passage".¹²⁸ Although Adams points out that Paul's main concern is not about the inspiration of the Bible, Adams nevertheless, bases his understanding of

¹²⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 93

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 94

verbal inspiration and inerrancy on this passage.¹²⁹ However, he does not spend much time on the doctrine of inspiration, but merely mentions it as one of his presuppositions.

What Adams does seek to prove from these verses is his contention that the Scriptures are specifically designed as a text book for counselling. He states: "one might say that the Scriptures themselves are nouthetically orientated".¹³⁰ What does this mean? Adams points to the fact that the Scriptures are God's revelation to man and they are holy and unique.¹³¹ They are unique in their purpose, which is to present every man perfect in Christ. This means that they are designed to enable a person to live in conformity to the will of God, and in obedience to the commandments of God. Adams connects this to the statement in 2 Peter 1:3: "His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and Godliness". In what specific ways? According to Adams' understanding the Scriptures has four functions which lead to change; they teach, they reprove, they correct, and they discipline.¹³² Teaching, Adams defines as setting the norms for faith and life. Reproving is rebuking erring Christians in order to bring conviction of wrong. Correcting means to show how to restructure one's life to bring it into conformity to the commands of God. Discipline refers to the continued work of

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 51

¹³¹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 94

¹³² Ibid.

training in righteousness.¹³³

Adams sees these four functions as the basic activities involved in counselling.¹³⁴ He explains further that by means of the Scripture we are able to judge what behaviour is right and wrong. The Bible sets out clearly the standards and norms "with a view toward the beneficent ends of nouthetic confrontation...."¹³⁵ It is through the Scripture that a person is brought to conviction. Unless counselees are prepared to face their sin and accept full responsibility in confession, there can be no movement to change. This is the function of the Scriptures. From this, the Scriptures also show us what to do about our failure. This is often set out in specific terms, such as reconciliation, restitution and putting on righteous patterns of behaviour.¹³⁶ In other words, the Bible not only shows us what is wrong, it also sets us in the right direction. Adams stresses the fact that all counselling must deal with specifics. Dealing in generalizations does not lead to changed lives.

The Bible also shows how the whole of life must be restructured leading to a life of righteousness. However, the Scriptures are not only unique in their purpose, they also possess a unique power. Adams stresses the fact that, "there is power in God's

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 94-95

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 96

Word".¹³⁷ This power was first demonstrated in God's act of creation through his spoken word.¹³⁸ That word was revealed in human form in Jesus Christ, the living word.¹³⁹ The word was then recorded and is now in written form as the Bible.¹⁴⁰ Because the Bible is God's written word, it has power. Accordingly, Adams points out that, "The Bible is not just another book: it is unique because it is God's Word".¹⁴¹ And it is because of this power that the Bible is able to change people.¹⁴² In what way can it change a person? Adams answers: "It has power to bring a person to faith in Christ and power to mould him into the sort of person that God wants him to become".¹⁴³ Adams points out that secular counsellors have unsuccessfully sought a system with power to transform lives.¹⁴⁴ Because the word has power, Adams insists:

such power is found in one place only in God's Word (the Bible) - in the Word that not only brought order and meaning out of chaos on that creative morn, but which alone can give order and meaning to the chaos brought about by modern psychotherapeutic failure.¹⁴⁵

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in counselling and changing people? The power that Adams attributes to the Bible is that of

¹³⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 34

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

the Holy Spirit. This linking of the Holy Spirit with the Bible is important to remember when considering Adams' understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in nouthetic counselling. Adams does not want anyone to get the impression that he does not give the Holy Spirit his rightful place in counselling. In this regard he makes it quite clear that

Frequent references to the place of the Holy Spirit in counselling will be made specifically...but wherever his work has not been spelled out in detail, it is everywhere assumed.¹⁴⁶

What this means is that where Adams refers to the Bible he is also speaking of the Holy Spirit. The link is as close as that.

Bearing this in mind, Adams maintains that counselling is the work of the Holy Spirit and that it is impossible to counsel apart from him.¹⁴⁷ In fact, the Holy Spirit is the principal person in counselling, he is the real counsellor.¹⁴⁸ That is the reason why Adams insists that unsaved counsellors cannot counsel effectively.¹⁴⁹ This is also the reason why Adams believes that one can only counsel a Christian, for there can be no change in a person apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. He explains:

All of the personality traits that might be held forth to counselees as fundamental goals for growth (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) God declares to be the 'fruit' (i.e., the result of the work) of the Spirit.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 24

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 20

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 73

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 20

But how does the Holy Spirit work? Although the Holy Spirit can work through the sacraments, prayer and the fellowship of God's people, his principal means of effecting change is through his word.¹⁵¹ Adams makes it quite clear that, "The Spirit of God works through His Word to change men".¹⁵² For that reason Adams explains:

The Holy Spirit expects counselors to use his Word, the Holy Scriptures....He gave it for such a purpose ...it is powerful when used for that purpose....His counseling work is ordinarily performed through the ministry of this Word.¹⁵³

Adams insists that the counsel of the Holy Spirit is closely connected with the Scriptures and in fact his "counsel is identical with, and found only in, the pages of the Bible".¹⁵⁴ It is because the Scriptures have their origin in the Holy Spirit that the Christian counsellor is dependent upon the them. This is how Adams puts it:

When I say the Counselor Himself is the Author of the Scriptures, I refer, of course, not to the human counselor, but to the Holy Spirit, who is called by John 'the paraclete' (counselor) and by Isaiah 'the Spirit of Counsel' (Isa. 11:2). He is the Spirit by whom God breathed out His Words in written form in the Scriptures....¹⁵⁵

In this connection Adams states: "It should be no surprise, then, to find that He works through the Bible when carrying out His paracletic functions".¹⁵⁶ Quite obviously for Adams "The Bible is not just another book; it is unique because it is God's

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 21, 23

¹⁵² Adams, How to help People Change, p. 72

¹⁵³ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 23

¹⁵⁴ Adams, The Use of the Bible in Counseling, p. 58

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 57-58

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 58

Word".¹⁵⁷ How does the Holy Spirit work through the Bible? Adams explains: "He illuminates the mind of the counselee giving him the ability to understand the Scripture and He gives power and will to obey God's Word".¹⁵⁸

Based on II Timothy 3:16-17, Adams, therefore maintains that the Holy Spirit is not only the author of the Bible but he continues to work through the Bible in changing people. From this it is clear that Adams has in fact subsumed the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

For Adams, these verses are basic and crucial in his understanding of the place of the Bible in nouthetic counselling. There are no situations that will be encountered in life that are not dealt with in the Bible. He stresses that for the counsellor,

All of the answers that he and his counselee need for pursuing the four comprehensive activities...are in the Bible....The God of all resources graciously has given them to us fully in His Word.¹⁵⁹

That is the reason why Adams rejects the need for outside experts and insights from the psychological sciences. The Bible shows that it contains all the resources needed for helping people with their personal problems. That is why Adams maintains:

There is no need for eclectisims...all that we need as the basic foundation and framework for helping others and helping ourselves has been given to us.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 34

¹⁵⁸ Adams, The Use of the Bible in Counseling, p. 59

¹⁵⁹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 97

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

3.3.2.1. The meaning of II Timothy 3:16-17

In evaluating Adams' interpretation of Paul's statement in II Timothy 3:16-17 there are two important questions that need to be answered: Firstly, is Adams correct in assuming that Paul is making a blanket statement about the inspiration of the whole of the Bible? And secondly, does the Scripture claim to be nouthetically orientated? How does the Scripture define its own purpose? Can we say as Adams does, that the Bible is the principal means the Holy Spirit uses to change people? In other words, is Adams correct in subsuming the Holy Spirit in the Bible?

As regards the first question, it is only fair to point out that based on II Timothy 3:16-17 alone, it is doubtful whether it is legitimate to apply this statement to all Scripture, namely, both the Old and New Testament. The reason for this is that the word graphe / Scripture is used consistently in the New Testament as a reference to the Old Testament.¹⁶¹ That this is so is clear from Paul's previous statement where he reminds Timothy that his earliest education came from the heira grammata /sacred writings. Although, as Guthrie observes, this is an unusual phrase,¹⁶² he takes it to refer specifically to the Old Testament Scriptures. Hendriksen, likewise, points out that Josephus used this phrase to refer to the Old Testament Scriptures.¹⁶³ Obviously, then, in

¹⁶¹ T. Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, p. 24

¹⁶² G. Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 162

¹⁶³ W. Hendriksen, The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, p. 300

this context Paul is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures alone and not as Adams believers, both the Old and New Testaments.

There is also a problem of ambiguity in the first part of Paul's statement, pasa graphe theopneustos / all Scripture God-breathed. The problem is that it lacks the copula esti. The question is whether the verb should be inserted between graphe and theopneustos? If it is, the sentence would read: "All Scripture is God-breathed". If the verb is placed after theopneustos then the verse would read: "All God-breathed Scripture is also profitable". Obviously, if the former reading is accepted, then inspiration of all Scripture would be affirmed. If the latter reading is accepted, then the sentence would emphasize the profitability of only God-breathed Scripture. Both are grammatically possible.¹⁶⁴ Erickson argues that from the context it is difficult to really determine what Paul intended to convey.¹⁶⁵ This means that Adams builds his system on a dubious interpretation.

3.3.2.2 The sufficiency of Scripture

Coming to the second major question relating to Paul's statement in II Timothy 3:16-17, we need to consider whether Paul is making a definitive statement about Scripture. Is Paul claiming, as Adams believes, that Scripture is sufficient for all we need to live the Christian life? As we have seen the Bible is

¹⁶⁴ Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 164

¹⁶⁵ M.J. Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 210

practically, for Adams, the exclusive means of bringing about change or sanctification, by which he means personality change towards holiness or maturity.¹⁶⁶

This assertion is open to question. The context is not about general Christian living or about sanctification or maturity. Paul is writing about the need for Timothy to continue in what he has learned as he faces a turning away from the faith. II Timothy, which is widely regarded as Paul's last known letter,¹⁶⁷ was written from a prison in Rome where Paul was facing imminent martyrdom. If we add to this the situation of the church at that time, one can understand Paul's concern. According to Oden, the early church consisted of small groups of believers meeting in homes. It was not a highly organised established institution.¹⁶⁸ Paul's own work was now drawing to a close, if not already finished, but he had to make provision for the continuity of the Christian faith after his death, especially for its faithful transmission to future generations.¹⁶⁹ The question that occupied Paul was what would happen to the gospel when he was gone. Many hostile forces were challenging the church. Heretics appeared to be on the increase. In Asia there had already been an almost total apostasy from Paul's teaching.¹⁷⁰ Paul expected

¹⁶⁶ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 19

¹⁶⁷ T.C. Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, p. 7

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 3

¹⁶⁹ J. Stott, Guard the Gospel, p. 13

¹⁷⁰ II Timothy 1:15

matters to get much worse.¹⁷¹ He, was therefore, concerned that the gospel should be faithfully transmitted and taught so that coming generations would have the opportunity to hear the good news.¹⁷² It is for this reason then, that throughout this letter we see Paul pre-occupied with the faithful adherence and transmission of the deposit of truth which had been revealed and committed to him by God.¹⁷³ There is a sense of urgency in this letter as Paul reminds Timothy that the gospel was now committed to him and that he had to assume responsibility for it, to preach and teach it and defend it against attack.¹⁷⁴ In this regard, Guthrie believes that the phrase "man of God" restricts this statement specifically to Christian teachers and leaders rather than the Christian in general.¹⁷⁵ It refers, in other words, to the usefulness of the Scriptures in equipping the Christian teacher or minister in the work of ministry and in particular in his work of defending the truth. Huther comments as follows:

The apostle is not speaking here of the profitableness of Scripture in general and for all Christians, but of its utility to teachers of religion.¹⁷⁶

Similarly, Hendriksen makes the point that this statement applies to teachers and that the Scripture is indispensable for

¹⁷¹ II Timothy 4:3

¹⁷² Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, p. 4

¹⁷³ J. Stott, Guard the Gospel, p. 20

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 21

¹⁷⁵ Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 165

¹⁷⁶ J.E. Huther, Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, p. 256

teachers.¹⁷⁷

In other words, this is not a definitive statement about the sufficiency of Scripture but a statement about the usefulness of Scripture in Timothy's particular situation. This is an important point. The sufficiency of the Scriptures relates to its main purpose of pointing us to the Saviour and for relating our entire existence to the service of God.¹⁷⁸ This is stressed by the apostle John when he writes: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have in his name".¹⁷⁹ Even the passage Adams uses to support his contention that the Scripture is sufficient, "emphasizes the saving and orientating purpose of the Bible much more than the Bible's potential to serve as an immediate source of detailed knowledge" ¹⁸⁰ In this regard Mark Noll stresses:

"When evangelicals more consistently use the Scriptures to explain 'salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' and to outline what it means to be 'thoroughly equipped for ever good work', then evangelicals will be concentrating on what is essential about Scripture".¹⁸¹

Again we see that Adams has interpreted a statement in the Bible to fit his system.

But perhaps the strongest argument against Adams' view that

¹⁷⁷ Hendriksen, The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, p. 302

¹⁷⁸ Mark A. Noll, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, p. 244

¹⁷⁹ John 20:31

¹⁸⁰ Noll, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind, p. 244

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Scripture is the chief means of bringing the Christian to maturity are the passages which speak of the other means of bringing the Christians to maturity. We will look at some of these passages now.

3.3.3. The Scriptural view of the process of change.

As we have already seen, for Adams, behaviour change, the objective of nouthetic counselling, is nothing less than sanctification. He states: "Nouthetic counseling in its fullest sense...is simply an application of the means of sanctification".¹⁸² According to Adams, nouthetic counselling has the same goal as that of sanctification, to conform or to change the counsellee to the image of Christ.¹⁸³ Sanctification consists of a gradual process by which the Spirit enables the believer both to put off sinful patterns of life and replace them with holy patterns.¹⁸⁴ In other words, the goal of sanctification is change, which is also the goal of nouthetic counselling. The Bible stands at the very centre of this process. Adams insists: "Sanctification (personality change toward holiness) is the work of the Spirit through His Word".¹⁸⁵

The question that we need to look at in this connection is how the Bible itself describes the means of change, of sanctification and growth to maturity. The New Testament gives us insight into

¹⁸² Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 73

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 74

¹⁸⁴ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 36

¹⁸⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 19

the process by which a Christian becomes mature. It is these passages we will need to study.

3.3.3.1. Galations 5:13-25/II Peter 1:3-5

The first passage to which we will turn is Galations 5:13-25 where Paul is dealing with life by the Holy Spirit. In looking at this passage, we can in fact relate it to the question we are looking at, namely, the process of behaviour change as it relates to spiritual growth and sanctification. Bearing this in mind, the problem that is being dealt with in this passage is how to overcome the desires of the flesh, which is translated in the New International Version as "sinful nature". The relevancy of this to counselling is obvious when one looks at Paul's list, which is not comprehensive, but selective of the acts of the flesh. He says:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.¹⁸⁶

These are some of the behavioural problems that counsellors have to deal with. We have here a typical list of what we can call life controlling problems.

The issue here is how to overcome the acts of the flesh. How is a person motivated to act ethically and correctly? According to Jewish legalists, who were leading the Galation believers into error, it was only through the law that sin could be dealt with and be overcome. There had to be an outward restraint put on the

¹⁸⁶ Galations 5:19-21a

flesh. It was by means of rules and regulations that victory could be obtained. Paul is adamant that this is to go back to Jewish legalism and undermines the whole gospel. He is concerned that the Galatian believers were being tempted to go back to legalistic Judaism. It is for freedom from the law, rules and regulations, that Christ has delivered them.¹⁸⁷ Paul is adamant that Christianity is not a way of bondage, of rules and regulations, it is a way of freedom. But it is not "freedom for an opportunity for the flesh: / me tes eleutherian eis to sarki".¹⁸⁸ Paul does not want his doctrine of freedom from Mosaism to be interpreted as an excuse for antinomianism. He is careful to show that freedom does not end up in libertinism.

From a Christian viewpoint, Paul tries to show that it is only through the Spirit of God that a person can act ethically and correctly. Unlike Adams, Paul stresses that the Spirit alone can keep the believer truly free. He puts great emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer in this section. The Holy Spirit stands at the very heart of overcoming the acts of the flesh which lead to change. The change that Paul has in mind is radical change, which he describes as the fruit of the Spirit. He states:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.¹⁸⁹

This is the change that is desired. This would correspond with

¹⁸⁷ Galations 5:1

¹⁸⁸ Galations 5:13

¹⁸⁹ Galations 5:22-23

Adams' understanding of the goal of biblical counselling.¹⁹⁰ The connection of the fruit of the Spirit to spiritual maturity is obvious. The question is, how does Paul understand this change to take place? Paul assumes that all believers have the Holy Spirit.¹⁹¹ In the light of this, they are not to rely on the law to overcome the desires of the flesh but they must "walk/peripateite by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature". The verb used here is in the present tense indicating that Paul is speaking of a habitual way of life. The New International Version translates this, "live by the Spirit".¹⁹² They must habitually live in reliance on the Holy Spirit and not in reliance on the law. Bruce puts it like this: "let your conduct be directed by the Spirit".¹⁹³ Paul explains what this means when he states: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law".¹⁹⁴ Bruce comments that to be led by the Spirit is to have the power to resist the desires of the flesh.¹⁹⁵ In other words, the believer "is in a new realm altogether. He has finished with a direct relationship to law".¹⁹⁶ He has a direct relationship with the Holy Spirit and it is through the

¹⁹⁰ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 171

¹⁹¹ Galations 5:22-23

¹⁹² Galations 5:16

¹⁹³ F.F. Bruce, Galations, p. 243

¹⁹⁴ Galations 5:18

¹⁹⁵ Bruce, Galations, p.245

¹⁹⁶ M.A. Eaton, "A Theology of Encouragement: Towards a Non-Legalistic Soteriology", (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of South Africa, Nov., 1989), p. 270

Holy Spirit that the Christian receives a new life principle.

According to Ridderbos:

It is on the ground of this new principle of life, this sharing in and living under the power and government of the Spirit, that Paul is now able in the Epistle to the Galatians to stir up believers to walk after the Spirit.¹⁹⁷

There is therefore a vital, personal direct relationship between the believer and the Holy Spirit enabling the believer to resist the desires of the flesh, not on the basis of laws and regulations but on the basis of a new life principle.¹⁹⁸

In this connection it is interesting to take note of an observation made by G. Berkouwer. According to him, Protestants, in rejecting the Roman Catholic concept of infused sanctifying grace, "gratia infusa", "became very diffident in approaching the reality of the renewal of life".¹⁹⁹ He points out that due cognizance must be taken of the fact that at regeneration new qualities are infused into the will.²⁰⁰ He supports his argument by showing that according the Canons of Dort, at regeneration, the Holy Spirit:

pervades the inner recesses of man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which, though hertofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth fruit of good actions.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Ridderbos, Paul, p.217

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ G. Berkouwer, Faith and Sanctification, p. 78

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Canons of Dort, III, IV, 11, quoted Ibid,. p.. 79

Berkouwer makes the point that "In full view here is the connection between the operation of the Holy Spirit and sanctification".²⁰² He rejects the accusation that this "mystical intrusion of a higher order of being" is capitulation to Roman Catholicism.²⁰³ It is because there is a personal connection between the Holy Spirit and the individual that it is possible to speak about a radical inner change. According to Berkouwer, Abraham Kuyper used different terms to describe this radical change, terms like:

infusion of new life, a new capacity, irradiation, to plant a germ of life, new habits of will, the descent of imperishable seed in the soul of our heart, to implant in our innermost being a new attitude, to change the innermost core of our being.²⁰⁴

How does this compare to Adams' understanding of how change comes about? How is change brought about according to Adams? There is no doubt that Adams understands that there can be no change apart from the Holy Spirit. For example, he points out that

When the counselor undertakes...(the task of counseling) he knows that he and the counselee do not have to do it alone. He may assure the counselee, 'it is God who works in you' (Philippians 2:13). All holiness, all righteousness, all Godliness is the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Galations 5 verses 22 to 23). It takes nothing less than the power of the Spirit to replace sinful habits with righteous ones...the Holy Spirit can change any Christian and does.²⁰⁵

He makes the point there can be no fruit of the Spirit apart from the Holy Spirit, who alone produces it.²⁰⁶ He is adamant when he

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 80

²⁰⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 184

²⁰⁶ Adams, The Big Umbrella, p. 110

states:

You cannot structure the fruit of the Spirit into anyone's life. You can structure something that might look like it, or outwardly may seem to resemble it, but if you do so, what you get...is always something other than the fruit of the Spirit....The qualities mentioned in Galations 5 are obtainable only as the result of the Spirit's work in a believer.²⁰⁷

He also warns against the danger of trying to manipulate the fruit into a person's life.²⁰⁸ That is the reason why Adams insists that a non-Christian cannot be counselled without first evangelising him or her.²⁰⁹

Although Adams emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit in counselling and in change, in practice he ignores the personal and direct work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is the Holy Spirit mediated through the Bible that is in the forefront of his thinking. We have already seen that Adams subsumes the Holy Spirit in the Bible so that he can in fact use the terms interchangeably. For the direct work of the Holy Spirit Adams substitutes disciplined training in obedience to the Bible.²¹⁰ How, according to Adams, is change brought about? It is through disciplined training in righteousness.²¹¹ Even though a person is forgiven for his sin, and understands God's requirements, the counsellee needs to learn how to live righteously. In this connection Adams comments:

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 110-111

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 111

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 184

²¹¹ Adams, How to help People Change, p. 170

According to Paul's words in II Timothy 3:16, the change of lifestyle called sanctification occurs, at least in part, when we submit in faith and obedience to the 'disciplined training in righteousness' provided by the Scriptures.²¹²

What does this mean in practical terms? Adams believes counsellors have a responsibility to assist counsellees in their training and counsellees have the responsibility of disciplining themselves. In assisting the counsellee to affect change, the focus of the counselling falls on present behaviour, not past influences except insofar as the past assists the counsellee to understand present actions. The focus falls on what behaviour must be changed. What must happen, according to Adams, is the habitual way of responding to situations must be changed. The pattern of responding wrongly must be reversed by beginning an upward cycle of righteousness. The counsellee must take responsibility for his behaviour and must consciously begin to respond in a way that is in conformity to the Word of God. Adams believes that as the counsellee learned to respond unbiblically and which has become a pattern of behaviour, so he can learn new patterns of behaviour.²¹³ Commenting on Paul's experience in Romans 7:24 Adams states:

Before Paul became a Christian, he habituated his body to sinful patterns of living by yielding its members to sin, which led to more sin, and taught the body (including the brain) the very sinful responses he later came to deplore....Because he indulged the body's desires in various sinful ways, it became habituated to them so that after conversion it was inclined to do what it had always done before....He was struggling against his own programming (both his conscious sin and others into which he drifted....²¹⁴

²¹² Ibid., p. 175

²¹³ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 174

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 186

Adams finds scriptural support for this principle of change, which he calls the principle of Dehabituation and Rehabilitation, in Ephesians 4 and in particular verses 22 and 24. Here the Apostle Paul speaks of change in terms of putting off the old man (i.e., the old lifestyle) and putting on the new man (i.e., the Christian lifestyle). The old man and the new man, Adams interprets as learned patterns of behaviour.²¹⁵ Change comes as the counsellor puts off, that is, unlearns his habitual sinful way of responding and puts on, that is, learns new and righteous ways of responding to situations.²¹⁶ To encourage motivation in order to achieve dehabituation and rehabilitation, nouthetic counsellors use a wide range of behavioural techniques, for example, rewards and punishment, encouraging good responses and discouraging bad ones; modelling, in which the counsellor shares his own experience in living a righteous life.²¹⁷

Although Adams does not underestimate the difficulties of change, he insists that through habit, a person can learn biblical patterns of behaviour. In this way obedience becomes natural until it becomes second nature, or habit. He believes that "It is by willing, prayerful and persistent obedience to the requirements of the Scriptures that Godly patterns are developed and come to be a part of us".²¹⁸ According to Adams, habit is a God-given capacity that can operate negatively or positively. He

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 176f

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 187

affirms: "Whenever one does something long enough, it becomes a part of him. Counselors must remember that their counselees (as well as themselves) are fully endowed with this capacity".²¹⁹ It is Adams' conviction that

Habit is an important factor and deserves more attention in theology and Christian counseling. In the Bible it plays the same important part it does in everyday living. A large share of what we do day by day is by habit. The Bible recognizes that and gives habit its rightful place.²²⁰

Counselees are assisted to make these changes through interviews which are backed up by assignments of practical homework. Homework is an important aspect in nouthetic counselling and it begins from the very first session. Here is an example of the kind of homework which could be given:

In a brief paper, list as many sinful patterns as you can that will need to be put off, together with the biblical alternatives by which they must be replaced.²²¹

Adams claims that most problems are solved after 8 to 12 sessions.

However from the passage we have been looking at, it seems that Paul understands change to take place through a direct work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This is how Arnold Come understands this direct work of the Holy Spirit in the believer:

It is precisely here that the true mystery and miracle of the work of the Holy Spirit comes to view. It does not lie in some hidden, subconscious, impersonal manipulation and determination of human personality, but in the wonder of the immediate gift by God...of his self, his life, his love, in a way that simultaneously empowers man to be able to respond in love and yet honors and establishes his self

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 180

²²⁰ Adams, How to help People Change, p. 193

²²¹ Ibid., p. 187

as a responsible person.²²²

Here there is a person-to-person encounter.²²³ At this point it could be argued that Adams would agree. However, for Adams, as we have already seen, the Holy Spirit's work is indirect, mediated through the Bible. The believer's relationship with the Holy Spirit is through the Bible that is the emphasis of Adams' approach. How would the believer become conscious of sin? Is the Bible not necessary for this? According to Michael Eaton, Paul's view is that the presence of the Spirit ought to make one immediately and directly aware of the sins which he mentions in 5:19.²²⁴ To one who walks in the Spirit the law is not needed to detect immorality, impurity, licentiousness.²²⁵ Paul's idea here is that as the Spirit is the source of our life so we must let the Spirit also direct our course. But his direction is not contrary to the Bible as Richards and Martin stress when they state:

The obedience God seeks is not an obedience to external laws governing our behavior, as under the old covenant. Obedience instead is to the inner prompting of the Spirit. The Spirit-led life must be in full harmony with God's objective revelation in the Bible, but differs from it in that both behaviour and motivation are reshaped by God.²²⁶

Thus the Christian looks solely to the power of the Spirit and in so doing fulfils that which he was not able to by means of the law. Bruce puts it like this:

²²² A.B. Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, p. 118

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Eaton, "A Theology of Encouragement: Towards a Non-Legalistic Soteriology", p. 270

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 276

²²⁶ L. Richards & G.R. Martin, Lay Ministry, p. 94

Walking by the Spirit is the outward manifestation in action and speech, of living by the Spirit. Living by the Spirit is the root; walking by the Spirit is the fruit - and that fruit is nothing less than a practical reproducing of the character [and therefore the conduct] of Christ in the lives of his people.²²⁷

According to Wentzel Coetzer:

To walk in the Spirit...implies a total surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The guidelines laid down by the Spirit are followed, resulting in an intimate fellowship between Spirit and believer.²²⁸

In other words, according to Paul, believers do not overcome the problems of the flesh by means of rules and regulations as advocated by the legalists or even by Adams.²²⁹

From this it is obvious that spiritual growth and change does not only come through the Bible alone as Adams maintains. There is a direct aspect of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is this direct relationship which Adams ignores in his concept of change. In fact his understanding of how change comes about is essentially based on rules and regulations, through disciplined obedience. There are certain things that must not be done and certain things that must be done until they actually become habits.²³⁰ However, the way of the Spirit is contrary to laws and regulations.²³¹ What Paul has in mind is a direct

²²⁷ Bruce, Galations, p. 257

²²⁸ W.C. Coetzer, "Die Wandel na die Gees in die brief aan die Galasiërs", (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of South Africa, November, 1983), p. 211

²²⁹ Eaton, "A Theology of Encouragement: Towards a Non-Legalistic Soteriology" p. 238

²³⁰ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, pp. 189-190

²³¹ Bruce, Galations, p. 243

working of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This is apart from means. This is direct and experiential. In this connection Eaton anticipates an accusation that this is too subjective and vague. He states:

However troubled one might be about 'vagueness' in the concept of 'obedience to the Spirit', it is a problem which Paul did not seem to have. Paul did believe that the Spirit's ministry is adequate to lead and to motivate.²³²

According to Paul the direct experience of the Spirit in the believer replaced the function of the law in the life of the believer.²³³

We have the very same concept dealt with by Peter in his second letter chapter 1 verses 3-5. In this passage Peter describes the objective of the Christian life and the resources the Christian has to grow and develop spiritually. It is nothing less than an appeal to holy living. Peter's concern is that it is not enough to receive faith, it is vital to continue in the faith. There must be growth and development. But how is this going to happen? What makes spiritual growth possible? The answer is that everything we require is there for us. All the things that are necessary for life and godliness are given to us by and through the knowledge of God. The knowledge spoken of here is epi-gnosis which speaks of personal acquaintance with God. It is through a personal encounter with Jesus as Saviour and Lord that the Christian life begins,²³⁴ through which we have a mighty power

²³² Eaton, "A Theology of Encouragement: Towards a Non-Legalistic Soteriology" p. 282

²³³ Ibid., p. 288

²³⁴ M. Green, II Peter and Jude, p. 150

working in us. Our becoming Christians by the Holy Spirit is in view here.²³⁵ It is the action of God, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit placing a new disposition within believers, which gives believers new life and it is this divine power that accompanies them, working in them, and moulding them.²³⁶ This is what is elsewhere called new birth or regeneration. In this regard White observes:

New birth, or regeneration, is not at first a change of material already present in the person. It is new principle introduced into the centre of life, the spirit and heart of man. From its nature, however, it must bring about a change in the whole personality.²³⁷

It is this direct inner change that Adams ignores in his stress on outward behaviour. It is on the basis of the inward change that outward change takes place. There is something new in the believer that was not there before. Although Adams states his counselling is based on the work of the Holy Spirit, with his emphasis he in fact pays lip service to the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Peter's conception of the Christian life is that a believer is one who is a partaker of the divine nature. By this he means that a believer is one who becomes like God. The believer is one who develops the divine character and manifests divine characteristics. And it is on the basis of what has been done for us that we do certain things ourselves.²³⁸ What we have here is then the two sided aspect of spiritual growth. On the one hand, the direct working of the Holy Spirit in the believer and

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ E.White, Christian life and the unconscious, p. 36

²³⁸ II Peter 1:5-7

on the other hand, on the basis of this, the believer is to "make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge ...".²³⁹

Adams has ignored the fact that when we become Christians we enter into a real, living relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit and that relationship leads to deep inner change. Wayne Grudem refers to this as experiencing the resurrection life of Christ through the Holy Spirit.²⁴⁰ It is at this point that a person experiences a definite moral change.²⁴¹ For this reason, the Christian cannot continue to sin as a habit or pattern of life "because the power of new spiritual life within us keeps us from yielding to a life of sin."²⁴² This means that as Christians:

by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection life of Christ working within us, have power to overcome the temptations and enticements of sin. Sin will no longer be our master, as once it was before we became Christians.²⁴³

There is a real developing communion between the believer and God. To explain how this leads to change White uses an illustration and puts it like this:

Long and close friendship with another person often alters us in ways which are imperceptible to us, but which may become evident to others....If these changes are brought about by the contact of one human being with another, it is not unreasonable to suppose that communion with God brings about changes in the character of the Christian.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ W. Grudem, Systematic Theology : An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 747

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

Moreover...we should expect such changes to be far deeper and more lasting in character than those effected by human contacts.²⁴⁴

This is a point that Adams appears to miss. According to Robinson this process of spiritual growth can be described as the pressure of "spirit on spirit", specifically God's Spirit on man's spirit.²⁴⁵ He works internally and of his own accord. Mark Stocks comments as follows:

The present age is the period when God works primarily through the Holy Spirit for the work of conviction, comforting, guiding and leading us into all truth.²⁴⁶

In other words, there is an aspect of the direct working of the Spirit with the human spirit apart from means. In this regard, Stocks states:

It requires an understanding of how the Spirit's voice differs from other voices which would interfere with His. That is, selective listening requires a humanly unnatural tuning of the internal ear to God.²⁴⁷

For that reason "growth aims toward understanding and recognizing the various competing internal voices".²⁴⁸ For some this aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit may seem too speculative, however, Stocks further states:

The Holy Spirit, as is true of the human spirit, is not a tangible mass to be manipulated....He lives in the area of what the existentialists refer to as the "Ground of Being". Fundamental to the spirit of Man on the Spirit of God is

²⁴⁴ White, Christian life and the unconscious, p. 27

²⁴⁵ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, pp. 78-78

²⁴⁶ Gilbert & Brock [ed], The Holy Spirit in Counseling, Mark Stocks, "Personal Spiritual Growth", p. 86

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

love-committed relatedness.²⁴⁹

3.3.3.2 Ephesians 3:14-19

In Ephesians 3:14-19 we have another example of how Paul understood the process of change or spiritual growth. The relevance of this passage to our discussion is its comparison with Adams' understanding of the process of spiritual growth and change.

We have here Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers. He is praying for their spiritual growth.²⁵⁰ He prays that they will "be rooted and established in love".²⁵¹ In other words, that they will be grounded in God's love for them.²⁵² He also prays that they will be "filled to a measure of all the fullness of God",²⁵³ which means to be filled with all that God is, that God's perfection will be the level to which they will be filled.²⁵⁴ This is nothing less than a prayer for their spiritual maturity.²⁵⁵ Hodge, who also interprets this phrase as a reference to spiritual maturity, states that is it the same as being conformed to the image of Christ.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ C. Hodge, Ephesians, p. 190

²⁵¹ Ephesians 3:18

²⁵² H.G.C. Moule, Ephesians, p. 130

²⁵³ Ephesians 3:19

²⁵⁴ Moule, Ephesians Studies, p. 131

²⁵⁵ J. Armitage Robinson, St Paul Epistle to the Ephesians, p.88

²⁵⁶ Hodge, Ephesians, p. 190

How does this process take place? We have seen that Adams believes this process is linked to obedience to the Bible.²⁵⁷ Now the question is how does Paul understand the process of progressing toward this standard? That is really the substance of the prayer that begins in verse 14. For this progress to maturity to take place he prays that God will "out of his glorious riches...strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being".²⁵⁸ He wants them to be strengthened inwardly. The inner man, according to Hodge is "the interwoven principle of spiritual life".²⁵⁹ Hendriksen interprets inner man as the heart.²⁶⁰ What was the purpose of this inner strengthening? "So that Christ may dwell / katoikesia in your hearts through faith".²⁶¹ The verb, katoikesia according to Hodge "denotes permanent habitation as opposed to sojourning or an occasional visit".²⁶² This is a reference to the believer's experience of the abiding Christ. According to Hodge: "This is the true and abiding source of spiritual strength and of all other manifestations of the divine life".²⁶³ It means that "Christ is the source of spiritual life to the whole soul".²⁶⁴

²⁵⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 19

²⁵⁸ Ephesians 3:17a

²⁵⁹ Hodge, Ephesians, p. 1990

²⁶⁰ Hendriksen, Ephesians, p. 171

²⁶¹ Hodge, Ephesians, p. 184

²⁶² Ibid., p. 185

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 190

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 185

It is as the believer is united to Christ that he is "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God".²⁶⁵ In other words, change is brought about through direct personal fellowship with Christ mediated through the Holy Spirit.

Here is an aspect of spiritual growth that Adams ignores completely. For Adams, the believer's connection with Christ is through the Bible. For example, it is through the Bible that we can know Christ's word which should be obeyed.²⁶⁶ To all practical purposes, the believer's relationship with Christ is mediated through the Bible. There is no stress on a direct relationship with Christ and the believer.

In this connection it is relevant to refer to Millard Erickson's understanding of the direct relationship the believer has with Christ by virtue of the fact that the believer is in Christ and Christ is in the believer. According to Erickson, because the believer is united to Christ

His life actually flows into us, renewing our inner nature ...imparting spiritual strength. There is a literal truth in Jesus' metaphor of the vine and the branches".²⁶⁷

Adams seems to miss this point, he certainly does not emphasize it as Paul does. Erickson admits that although we cannot fully understand Christ's indwelling within the believer, "he is able to affect our very thoughts and feelings".²⁶⁸ This means that in

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 190

²⁶⁶ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 41

²⁶⁷ Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 953

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

fact:

the presence of Christ is found not merely in his teaching and the inspiration of his example. He also gives us concrete help that we might fulfil what he expects of us.²⁶⁹

It is this aspect of Christ's relationship with the believer, namely our union with Christ, that Adams seems to ignore in his model. Rather than stressing or allowing for this direct relationship between the believer and Christ, Adams understands this relationship to be mediated by the Spirit through the Bible. Adams' understanding of this relationship is virtually only positional. For example, in the context of the need to live differently, to live a life which is consistent with that to which we have been called, Adams points to the fact that Christ has on behalf of the believer fulfilled all God's laws. Because the believer is united to Christ, he has already put aside the old way of life and put on the new way of life. For this reason the believer must now put this into practice. Quite obviously, Adams is considering the believer's relationship to Christ from a positional point of view only, the experiential aspects are ignored. However, in this passage Paul is speaking of spiritual growth which comes as a direct result of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the reality of a deeply personal relationship with Christ. This is direct and experiential. It is apart from means, i.e., it is connected to the believer's relationship with Christ. It seems that Adams shares the reticence found among evangelicals when it comes to the experiential aspects of life in the Spirit. J.I. Packer observes that "Evangelicals for the most part seem to be at a loss" when it comes to considering the

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 954

experiential side of the work of the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁰ He believes that "In this terrain of direct perception of God evangelicals have some relearning to do".²⁷¹

The importance of this direct relationship is stressed by Keith Edwards when he states: "A key to change is that Christians have a personal relationship with God through the Saviour, Jesus Christ".²⁷² According to Boghosian:

The idea of people changing through a relationship with God is at the heart of Scripture. In particular, those in relationship with Jesus experienced acceptance, compassion, empathy, respect and candour. Unprovoked by expressions of human character weakness, Jesus remained a genuine, trustworthy person to whom anyone could relate and thereby experience constructive change.²⁷³

He makes an interesting application of this principle to the relationship between the counsellor and counsellee when he points out:

The client's interactional experience with the therapist is the active agent in rectifying abnormalities in the client's interpersonal style, affectional bonding to others, integration and organization of self, etc etc.²⁷⁴

He stresses that, "Such interpersonal processes are crucial to successful pastoral counseling".²⁷⁵ Boghosian, sensitive to the

²⁷⁰ J.I. Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, p. 72

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² K.J. Edwards, "Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Integrative Review of Research", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4, 1976 p. 104

²⁷³ J. Boghosian, "The Biblical Basis for Strategic Approaches in Pastoral Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 11, 1983, No 2, p. 100

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

accusation of not giving the Bible its place in counselling, comments: "This by no means trivializes the Word of God, but emphasizes its inextricable context of a relationship with God".²⁷⁶ However, according to Ridderbos, this personal relationship must be viewed in the context of the community of believers. In this connection, he points out that being in the Spirit is not just a personal or individual category, but an ecclesiological category.²⁷⁷ It is this aspect which emerges in Ephesians 4:12-16, which we will now consider, and will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

3.3.3.3 Ephesians 4:12-16

In this passage Paul is again dealing with spiritual growth, spiritual maturity. This is obvious in verse 13 and 14 where Paul draws a contrast between "mature, attaining the full measure of the perfection found in Christ" and a state of spiritual infancy, being "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching". It is the contrast between "a strong, mature, well built male,"²⁷⁸ and the instability of infancy. The same thought emerges where Paul speaks of growing / auzesomen into Christ.²⁷⁹ In this context Paul is dealing with corporate growth, growth of the whole body and he shows how this comes about, how the whole body develops and grows to maturity. Nevertheless, the individual member of the body is never far from

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ridderbos, Paul, p.195

²⁷⁸ Hendriksen, Ephesians, p. 199

²⁷⁹ Ephesians 4:15

Paul's mind, for it is as each part of the body does its work that the body grows.²⁸⁰ According to Ridderbos:

To be sure, in Ephesians 4 these pronouncements are applied in the first place to the church as such. But it may not be inferred from this that Paul does not intend to summon every individual Christian to be a perfect, mature believer. From the sequel in Ephesians 4:13 it is sufficiently clear that this last is also the case.²⁸¹

In other words, as the body grows and matures, so the individual members of that body likewise grow and mature. This point has to be made for it is argued that this passage, although concentrating on corporate growth, does give us insight into individual spiritual growth. Here Paul gives us another perspective on spiritual growth that is completely absent from Adams' model. Before we evaluate Adams we will first consider how Paul understands the process of spiritual growth in this passage.

In verses 12 to 16 Paul explains that the risen Lord gave gifts to the church. The immediate purpose of the gifts is to perfect the people of God for service. In other words, to equip them together and set them in place in order that they may function. They are equipped for the work of ministry / diakonia with the ultimate purpose of building up the body of Christ. These gifts are so beneficial both to those who exercise their ministry faithfully and to those who receive it that the church becomes steadily more healthy and mature.²⁸² The purpose of the gifts is to build up the body to promote spiritual growth and development,

²⁸⁰ Ephesians 4:16

²⁸¹ Ridderbos, Paul, p.271

²⁸² Moule, Ephesian Studies, p. 202f

and ultimately, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, / ies andra teleion, attaining the full measure of the perfection found in Christ". The perfect man refers to the church. It can be regarded as the church in a perfect condition, the body corresponding to the perfection of the head.²⁸³

The message which the apostle Paul is conveying here is that to Christ the entire church owes its growth. Just as the human body, when properly supported and held together, experiences normal growth, so also the church, when each of its members supports and maintains loving contact with the others and above all with Christ, will under the sustaining care of God grow and mature. But there is a close connection between corporate and individual growth.²⁸⁴ The idea Paul conveys here is that the spiritual growth of an individual comes through being related to the body and more especially as each individual plays his part in the body, being part of that body, leading to corporate spiritual growth and consequently to individual spiritual growth. Paul is obviously stressing the fact that spiritual growth is not just individualistic, it takes place in mutual ministry in the community of believers.

What place do the gifts of the Spirit have in Adams' theory of change? Adams admits in passing that the help of other Christians with gifts is given for the mutual edification of the whole

²⁸³ Hodge, Ephesians, p. 240

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 241

church.²⁸⁵ In a discussion on the fact that each Christian is equipped with spiritual gifts, Adams points out that counselees should be encouraged to use their gifts in the church. He puts it this way:

Each person has his gifts; that means each man has his own unique ministry or ministries. No one can say, 'There is no place where I can serve'. If he has not yet found the place he must be helped to do so...counselees will neither be happy nor productive until they do.²⁸⁶

Adams admits that

When he has found his proper place, functioning in the body of Christ, the counselee not only will find his life become satisfying and takes on new meaning, but he will begin to become productive.²⁸⁷

However, Adams does not develop this idea nor does he relate it to the process of change. Although it would be incorrect to conclude that Adams does not recognize the importance of relationships, his approach majors on God's propositional word rather than on the dynamics of personal interaction.

3.3.3.4 Conclusion

From what we have seen, Adams' insistence that counselling must be based on a sound biblical foundation and his attempt to find a way of using the Bible in counselling has been a healthy reminder of the resources we have as Christian counsellors.

Hurding points out that

There is no doubt that Adams' bold insistence on the primacy of the Scriptures has been of great value in encouraging the re-evaluation of counseling methodology in

²⁸⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 86

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 345

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 347

the light of the Bible.²⁸⁸

Furthermore, he has also reminded Christians of the importance of taking responsibility for their behaviour and has given them hope in breaking sinful patterns of behaviour. To this extent Adams has made an important contribution to Christian counselling practise, a contribution that should not be underestimated.

However, Adams' subsuming of the Holy Spirit in the Bible and limiting change and counselling to the Bible is questionable. His understanding of the process of change is also an aspect of counselling theory that cannot be accepted.

As we have seen there is ample evidence that the Bible itself understands spiritual growth, gradual behavioural change or sanctification as not coming through the Bible alone. The Bible is one of the means of sanctification. But it is not the only means. From what we have seen, spiritual growth, sanctification, comes through the believer's direct, personal and growing relationship with the living Lord Jesus, in the church fellowship, through whom the believer gradually becomes "conformed to the image of Jesus Christ",²⁸⁹ as will be seen in chapter 4. Growth also comes through the Holy Spirit in the believer through whom the believer is enabled to overcome the flesh and develop the fruit of the Spirit. Growth also comes through the believers relationship in the community of believers. Maturity comes as the natural process of the believers being in

²⁸⁸ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 284

²⁸⁹ Romans 8:29

community and functioning as part of that community.

Adams has unfortunately not recognized the wide array of resources available to affect change. In reality, Adams limits the Holy Spirit to work through the Bible. Although, evangelicals would agree that the Bible is a vital resource used by the Holy Spirit to change people, not all would confine the Holy Spirit to the Bible alone. For example, Roger Hurding, who would classify himself as an evangelical, points out that any truly Christian approach to counselling will look to one or more of a whole array of resources, the Holy Spirit, and his gifts, the Scriptures, the sacraments, the fellowship of the Lord's people, spiritual directions, discipline and personal experience.²⁹⁰ Adams is in fact guilty of imprisoning the Holy Spirit in the Bible. In this connection it is significant to take note of the comment by Hendrikus Berkhof: "The Word is the instrument of the Spirit. But the Spirit is not the prisoner of the Word, nor does the Word work automatically".²⁹¹ It is essential, if the Word is to be effective, for there to be a secret working and witness of the Holy Spirit.²⁹² It is the Spirit who brings the Word within the heart.²⁹³ However, the Spirit can work outside of the Word, as we have already seen.²⁹⁴ It will be argued in the next chapter

²⁹⁰ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 276

²⁹¹ Berkhoff, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 38

²⁹² John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1.7.4, 1.7.13

²⁹³ Berkhoff, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 38

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 37

that it is necessary to consider the relationship of the Spirit and the Word within the community of believers, the church. In other words, it is the Word and Spirit within the community of believers. The Spirit's witness to the Word is in the church. This is the pneumatological dimension that will be elaborated on the next chapter. It is obvious then that Adams has a very limited view of the process of change and sanctification, it is a serious weakness to restrict change, sanctification to the Bible.

Another weakness we have identified is that Adams has a very limited understanding of the process of change. Behaviour change is translated into the active effort of commandment keeping, which if practised long enough, somehow leads to inner change. In other words, external obedience leads to internal change. His answer to this is his concept of habit, but he gives no scriptural support for his understanding of this. Nor does he explain how habit actually leads to inner change. Another question that needs serious consideration is what is distinctly supernatural about habit? It is not only believers who can relearn new patterns of behaviour through habit. It is also possible for a non-believer to restructure his or her life in accordance with the Bible quite successfully. There need be nothing supernatural about this. One may say that a major thrust of Adams' model of counselling is cognitive. His model has strong overtones of Ellis' Rational Emotive Therapy, that right thinking leads to right actions and then to right feelings. For this reason Adams has been accused of being a behaviourist in his

approach to counselling.²⁹⁵

The view espoused in this thesis, which will be considered in the following chapter, is that sanctification and real change, comes through the Word, and the Holy Spirit, in the community of believers. It will be argued that this is the pneumatological dimension of counselling that has been neglected and which needs to be developed. It will be argued that the Holy Spirit, the agent of change, works within the community of believers and it is as the individual is brought into that community and relates to that community that spiritual growth and deep, inner change takes place. In this regard, then, attention will be focused in the next chapter on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church, the individual and the Kingdom.

²⁹⁵ Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 3, 1975, No. 3, p. 153

CHAPTER 4.

THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

4.1 Introduction.

From our discussion thus far it is clear that Adams has attempted to develop an evangelical pastoral theology. In doing so, Adams has had to break new ground and cut loose the ties with recent trends in pastoral counselling.

Although in this dissertation, Adams has been criticized in part, it is undeniable that he has made a valuable contribution in developing a counselling model which is coherent, systematic, practical and evangelical. According to Hurding: "Jay Adams' approach to counseling ... presents an influential and distinctive contribution to the range of various forms of 'biblical' counseling".¹ There can be no doubt that Adams has restored the confidence of many pastors and counsellors in their role in helping people with their problems. He has also restored confidence in evangelical pastoral counselling methods which have been free from liberal theological presuppositions. However, in spite of this there are a number of weaknesses in Adams' counselling model. To a large extent these weaknesses arise from a desire to assert some aspect of truth, but in so doing Adams

¹ Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p. 290

ignores other equally important aspects of truth.

This is quite obvious in Adams' understanding of human nature. In his desire to stress the need to take responsibility for personal actions, Adams ignores the deeper aspects of human nature. He concentrates on the outward and does not have an adequate understanding of man in the complexity of his nature. He assumes that changing outward behaviour leads to inward changes. In chapter 3 we saw that Adams was concerned in giving the Holy Spirit a rightful place in counselling. In his writings Adams acknowledges the central place of the Holy Spirit in bringing about change in a person. At the same time, however, a number of other statements appear to demonstrate a much more restricted view of the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual. Adams' understanding of the means by which the Holy Spirit brings about change seems to major on the Bible alone. He assumes that there is an inseparable link between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. In other words, in his desire to give the Bible and the Holy Spirit a rightful place in counselling he imprisons the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Adams seeming neglect of the wider dimensions of the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual and the church is, we believe, a major hindrance to the usefulness of his theory of counselling. Because Adams has subsumed the Holy Spirit in the Bible, he has a defective understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in not only the individual, but also in the church and the kingdom.

What are some of the implications of Adams' limited view of the

role of the Holy Spirit? In the first place, we will show that Adams has not fully understood the role of the Holy Spirit in the church, the community of believers. In other words, Adams has not given sufficient attention to the place of the church in counselling and in particular, bringing about change. Then, secondly, Adams' limited view of the role of the Holy Spirit has led him to ignore the contribution that the psychological sciences have made to our understanding of human pathology and behaviour change. Finally, nouthetic counselling is limited to Christian counselees and counsellors.

There are a number of questions which arise from our discussion thus far:

- 1) How is change brought about in the individual? In other words, how does the process of sanctification take place? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of change? We have already touched on this in the previous chapter, but it is now necessary to expand the scope of our discussion.
- 2) What role do the psychological sciences play in our understanding of the nature of man and the process of change?
- 3) Is there any place for counselling the non-Christian who does not become a Christian?

Commenting on Adams' contribution to pastoral theology, Derek Tidball expresses the hope that by engaging in discussion with Adams "a more balanced and adequate evangelical pastoral theology

may yet emerge" ² This is the purpose of this dissertation.

In this chapter I will attempt to suggest another dimension to the valuable contribution Adams has made in the area of counselling in the church. This dimension will concern the direct relationship of the Holy Spirit as he impinges upon the individual, the church and the kingdom. In this regard then, I hope to show how a consideration of counselling from a pneumatological perspective leads to a fuller and more balanced understanding of the process of change, which is the goal of counselling.

4.2 A summary of the main aspects of the pneumatological dimension as it relates to the individual, the church and the kingdom.

As we have seen, counselling has to do with behaviour change. We have also seen that it is the Holy Spirit who brings about change in the individual. However, it will be argued that change must be considered in the context of the church. When we refer to the church in this dissertation we use the Baptist definition as "the holy society of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit...."³ It will be shown that the Holy Spirit relates to the individual within the context of this community of believers. For this reason, as we see it, any model of counselling that leaves out the place of the church is not only individualistic but also unbiblical.

² Tidball, Skilful Shepherds, p. 241

³ Henry Cook, What Baptists Stand for, p. 32

My intention in this chapter will be to expand and explain the view stated above. We will first of all deal with this view from a theological perspective. In other words, we will look at the theological foundations of the view that counselling should be considered in the context of the community of believers. In this connection, then, we will consider the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the community of believers. It will be shown that there is a close relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology. Although much has been written about pneumatology, most material has been individualistic. We will see that the Holy Spirit operates in the church, using it as his instrument.⁴ It will be shown that the church is a place of change and healing, it is a place of growth and maturing. It is as the believer relates in the community of believers that change is brought about. What about the place of the Bible in counselling? Or to be more specific, how does the Holy Spirit relate to the Bible? As we have seen in the previous chapter, for Adams there is an inseparable connection between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. It is through the Bible that people are changed. Holding a high view of the Bible as Adams does, we will attempt to demonstrate that deep, biblical change comes as the Holy Spirit uses the Bible in the community of believers. It is as the believer is brought within the sphere of the community of believers that the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to bring about change. How does this compare to the position Adams holds? For Adams, change comes as the believer reads and obeys the Bible. The position put forward in this dissertation is that change

⁴ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 53

comes through the Holy Spirit and the Bible within the church. The Bible must never be separated from the community of believers. The Holy Spirit operates through the Bible not just individualistically, but within the community. The Holy Spirit being personal, comes to the believer through a relationship with himself and others. For Adams, the Holy Spirit's witness is in the Bible. The position that is put forward here is that the Holy Spirit's witness is found in the church as he interprets the Bible and is again interpreted by the Bible. By this I mean there is a two-way conversation involving the community of believers and the Scripture and the Scripture and the community of believers. This dual interplay is essential to a correct understanding of the viewpoint we intend put forward.

Finally, we will consider the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the world. In other words, we will look at the extent to which the Holy Spirit works outside of the confines of the community of believers. This is the kingdom aspect. From this viewpoint it will be shown that the psychological sciences do have a legitimate role to play in counselling. Although fully accepting the uniqueness of God's special revelation through the Holy Spirit in the Bible, it will be shown that the Holy Spirit is in fact the source of all truth, which is not only confined to the Christian community. From this stand point it is accepted that not only Christian, but also non-Christian counsellors can assist people with their problems. In evangelical theology this kingdom aspect is better known as the doctrine of common grace. It is significant that the doctrine of common grace was formulated by

Reformed theology with its emphasis on the depravity of humanity to account for the fact that unbelievers, that is, society at large, is endowed with special gifts, talents and can make contributions to the development of science and art, and can speak the truth and do good to others. This also means that it is possible to assist people with their problems in a significant way even if they do not become Christians in the evangelical sense of the word. Counselling must be related to the place of the Holy Spirit in both the church and the world. It will be shown that the basic weakness of both Adams, as well as most other models of counselling is that they are both individualistic and problem centred. In our discussion on the pneumatological dimension of counselling we will be looking at perspectives on the Holy Spirit within Reformed theology as they relate to the church, the individual and the kingdom. The reason for this is because Adams claims that his theological position is Reformed.⁵

4.3 Relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church the individual and the scripture.

In this section we focus on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church. In this dissertation we use the Dutch and Reformed theologian, Hendrikus Berkhof's definition of the church. According to Berkhof, the church is the community of believers, or the people of God who can be identified in outward acts, like baptism, communion and preaching, as well as various ministries and organisations.⁶ We prefer this definition to

⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 34

⁶ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 51

Klaas Runia's definition of the church as the people of God, the congregation of believers,⁷ or even the Baptist theologian, Beasley-Murray's definition as "a community of believers gathered together out of the world, who have committed themselves to Christ and to one another".⁸ Both these definitions do not place enough emphasis on the institutional aspect of the church. In other words, the church is not just a community, but an organised community with certain outward characteristics.

With this definition of the church we need to consider the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the community of believers. It may seem unusual to begin with a discussion on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church when the focus of our study has been change in the individual through the Holy Spirit. Why not begin with the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the individual? The point has already been made that the Holy Spirit relates to the individual within the context of the community of believers. This is in fact the point which is being demonstrated in this section. In this regard, Berkhof has convincingly shown that it is not possible to understand the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the individual without understanding the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church.⁹ He argues that the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church precedes that to the individual. In other words, the Holy Spirit

⁷ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 315

⁸ P. Beasley-Murray, Radical Believers, p. 49

⁹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, pp. 42-65

Spirit is mediated to the individual through and in the context of the church. We will expand on this later in this section.

We admit at this point that we are not interacting with Adams. What is being offered should be seen as an addition and a possible corrective to his methodology. This added dimension, of course, is the Holy Spirit which we believe is directly involved within the church and with the church, as he witnesses to Christ through Scripture. If we believe God in Christ is the answer to man's problems and take seriously God's presence in the world through the Spirit it should become clear that Adams requires this additional dimension.

What then is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church in both its communal and its institutional aspects? That there is a close relationship between the Holy Spirit and the church is universally accepted in theology. According to Klaas Runia: "No Christian will deny that there is a close relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church".¹⁰ However, the precise nature of this relationship is differently understood in theology. According to George Hendry:

When we take up the question of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church, it is clear that we are entering one of the most controversial areas of current theological discussion in the ecumenical field.¹¹

In providing a corrective for Adams we will look at Hendry's and

¹⁰ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 304

¹¹ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 53

Berkhof's understanding of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church from within Reformed theology. But first we will see that this relationship has been differently understood in the various church traditions. We do so to explain the background against which Adams has imprisoned the Holy Spirit in the Bible. It will be shown that there has been a tendency in the various church traditions to stress one aspect of the Holy Spirit's work over against other aspects. We will rely on insights drawn mainly from Berkhof and Hendry. We do so because they have provided a masterly analysis of how the different church traditions have understood the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church and the individual.

At this point we wish to explain the relevance of our discussion in the next section to the corrective we wish to offer for Adams' counselling theory.

We have seen that Adams is concerned with change in the individual. How does this take place? Adams consistently maintains that it is only through the Holy Spirit that a person can experience change. But, as we have already seen, for Adams, the Holy Spirit brings about that change through the Bible. This means that the Holy Spirit relates to the individual through the Bible. For Adams, the individual finds the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The Bible is the means through which the Holy Spirit brings a person to salvation and continues the work of change or sanctification. In other words, what Adams does is to place the Bible between the Holy Spirit and the individual. As will be

shown in the discussion to follow, this is an illustration of the tendency in the various church traditions to stress one aspect of the Holy Spirit's work over against the other aspects. It will be argued that the Holy Spirit relates to the individual in the community of believers to bring about change and that the Bible is one of the means of grace and not the only means of grace as Adams appears to believe. Consideration should also be given to the community of believers as a means of grace. This will be the corrective that we will offer.

4.3.1 Different perspectives on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church, the individual and the scripture.

Hendry points out that in the two best-known creeds of the ancient church, namely the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed, the church has sought to show that the Holy Spirit is the author of what Hendry calls solidarity, authority and vitality.¹² By this he means the Holy Spirit brings the church into being, is in authority over the church and is the source of spiritual life.¹³ Hendry is adamant that these three aspects of the Holy Spirit's work should not be isolated and made predominant.¹⁴ However, he shows that it was the Reformation, that led to a partial dissolving of this three-fold work of the Holy Spirit so that, depending on the particular church tradition, emphasis was placed on one aspect of the Spirit's work to the neglect or virtual exclusion of the other.¹⁵ This led to an imbalance in

¹² Ibid., p. 120

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 153

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 121

the relation of the three aspects so that emphasis was laid on one aspect to the neglect or virtual exclusion of the other two.¹⁶ For example, Roman Catholic theology emphasises the element of solidarity.¹⁷ In other words, the Holy Spirit is identified with the institution of the church. This does not mean that the work of the Holy Spirit as creator of authority and spiritual life is left out, but they are subsumed under the aspect of solidarity.¹⁸ What this means is that authority is vested in the church which is also held to be the source of spiritual life.¹⁹ This aspect of solidarity is summed up in the formula: "The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church".²⁰ Hendry explains that this means

the Church is primarily the successor of Christ; the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are then regarded as endowments bequeathed by Christ to the Church to enable it to discharge its supernatural role.²¹

Power and authority are possessed by the church and exercised by the bishops in the administration of the sacraments. Berkhof points out that in Roman Catholic theology, the church comes between the Spirit and the individual.²² It is the church that possesses the Holy Spirit.²³ The ordinary members are thus

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 55

²¹ Ibid.

²² Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 56

²³ Ibid.

dependent upon the clergy for the ministry of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ The Holy Spirit is passed on by the imposition of hands which is handed down through episcopal consecration.²⁵ According to Hendry there is "a radical distinction in the Church between those who exercise authority and those upon whom it is exercised".²⁶ In other words: "The gift of the Holy Spirit in the Church is 'channeled' through some of its 'higher members'...."²⁷ Thus the connection between the Holy Spirit and the individual believer is indirect, being mediated through the clergy.²⁸ Berkhof explains it thus:

"The individual partakes of the Holy Spirit to the extent in which he partakes of the sacramental and hierarchial life of the Church".²⁹

The individual can, therefore, only relate to the Holy Spirit in the church. However it is the church in the institutional sense. Runia observes that "In this way the Holy Spirit is imprisoned in the sacramental institution of the Church...."³⁰ This obviously leads to the impoverishment of the individual's personal relationship to the Lord. According to Roman Catholic theology, the witness of the Holy Spirit is found in the

²⁴ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 59

²⁵ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 309

²⁶ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 59

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 44

²⁹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 43

³⁰ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 308-309

institution of the Roman Catholic Church.

A view directly opposite to the Roman Catholic view was that formulated by what Berkhof calls "radical Protestantism".³¹ Here the desire was to stress the direct relation between the Spirit and the individual. This direct relationship was understood in terms of an immediate subjective experience in the heart of the individual.³² Berkhof explains how this view differs from Roman Catholicism:

Whereas the Catholic type considered the relation between the Spirit and the Church as a direct one and that between the Spirit and the individual as an indirect one ... the radical or 'spiritual' forms of Protestantism advocated the exact reversal of this order.³³

What about the place of the church? The individual's relationship to the church was considered to be indirect.³⁴ The church was not considered to be the creation of the Holy Spirit but a human creation.³⁵ It was no more than like-minded people coming together to share in their common experience.³⁶ Berkhof explains this view of the church thus:

Their church is at most an organized group or sect, in many cases a loose convention In every case this church, as such, is not the work of the Spirit but it is a human consequence of the spiritual work in individual hearts, founded on the natural impulse of congenial to seek out one another. So the relation of the Spirit to

³¹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 45

³² Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 68

³³ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 45

³⁴ Ibid., p. 46

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

this community never can be more than an indirect one.³⁷ To use Hendry's terminology, the vitality aspects of the Holy Spirit's work subsumed the authority and solidarity aspects of his work.³⁸ Authority was reduced to the individual's subjective experience. Berkhof points out that the fruit of this tradition is seen in Evangelicalism, Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism. Whilst admitting that this tradition has enriched our understanding of the experience of the Holy Spirit in the individual, its weakness has been its understanding of the church. He explains:

They have no clear idea about the relation between the Spirit and the Church ... to most of them the Church is hardly more than a human community.³⁹

How does this compare with the Roman Catholic understanding of this relation? In Roman Catholic theology the witness of the Spirit is found in the institutional church. For the radical Protestants, the witness of the Holy Spirit is found in the heart of the individual believer as a subjective experience.⁴⁰ They were concerned for the vitality of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. However, as Hendry points out:

where the concern for vitality is detached from due regard for solidarity and authority, it tends... to breed subjectivism and sectarianism.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 122

³⁹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 47

⁴⁰ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 133

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 122

Runia explains the difference in this way:

While Rome institutionalized the Spirit, the Radical Reformation individualized Him. The dwelling place of the Spirit is the heart of the individual believer. All stress is laid on the immediate subjective experience of the Spirit. The Church as an institution hardly plays a part in their lives.⁴²

For those identified with classical Protestantism, the Reformers, the issue with which they were concerned was the question of authority. For Rome, authority was found in the church. The church, under direction of the Holy Spirit was both the custodian and interpreter of the Scripture.⁴³ This meant that the word of Scripture always coincided with the word of the church.⁴⁴ They accepted that what the Scripture said was authoritative but it was solely for the church to say what Scripture said.⁴⁵ In this way the Roman Catholic Church subsumed authority under solidarity. This view was rejected by the Reformers who sought an authority above the church, to which the church itself was subject.⁴⁶

Both Calvin and Luther located that authority in the word of God.⁴⁷ What was their understanding of the word of God? For

⁴² Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, pp. 309-310

⁴³ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 40

⁴⁴ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 143

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 121

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Luther, that word was primarily the word of Christ, the good news of his work for us,⁴⁸ the gospel in the Scripture.⁴⁹ It is a word that comes to us mainly through preaching.⁵⁰ It is not found in books or letters but in an oral and living word.⁵¹ This word speaks directly to the heart of the individual believer so that he/she can encounter the Living Word, Jesus Christ.⁵² This is so because there is power in the word.⁵³ This power is the Holy Spirit who is able to make the word a living word.⁵⁴ Thus the witness of the Spirit is primarily in the preached word as it testifies to Jesus Christ, the Living Word. Hendry puts it like this:

It is in the Gospel in the actuality of being proclaimed ... that the witness of the Spirit becomes operative to produce assurance of faith.⁵⁵

It is important at this point to note that for Luther the efficacy of the Scripture was not in the letter of the Scripture but in the fact that through it the Holy Spirit brings the individual into a personal experience of the Living Word. In this connection, Hendry makes it clear that

for Luther the witness of the Holy Spirit was not a witness concerning Scripture itself, but a witness to

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 139

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 72

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 139

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 140

⁵² Ibid., p. 72

⁵³ Ibid., p. 73

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 74

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Christ, to whom Scripture stands in an instrumental relationship.⁵⁶

Although Calvin also associated the witness of the Spirit with the efficacy of the Scripture, he argued that Scripture itself is the object of the Spirit's witness.⁵⁷ In other words, he believed that the word cannot be effective without first accepting the divine origin of the Scripture. Calvin made the witness of the Holy Spirit in the word contingent on the witness of the Holy Spirit to the word.⁵⁸ This means that the witness of the Spirit came to be associated with the letter of the Scripture itself.⁵⁹ Thus authority was located in the Scripture itself.⁶⁰ As Hendry points out:

The authority of the Spirit in the word very soon came to be objectified in an authority of Scripture, and later, the authority of a doctrinal system based on, or deduced from, Scripture.⁶¹

In this way, in Protestantism, authority of the Holy Spirit was tied to the Scripture and it subsumed the vitality and solidarity aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁶² In this connection we should not think that classical Protestantism totally ignored the vitality and the solidarity aspects of the Holy Spirit. In fact, as Hendry points out, they strove to restore the true meaning of

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 75

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 89

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 75

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 83

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 122

⁶² Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 121

solidarity as the communion of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life giver.⁶³ Their problem was that in their desire to free the Holy Spirit from the institution of the church, they tied the Spirit to the Scriptures. In this way, solidarity and vitality was subsumed under the Scripture. Thus, as Berkhof points out, Calvin believed that the Holy Spirit can meet the individual through the Scripture apart from the church.⁶⁴ The church is a helpful support of faith but not essentially bound up with faith. The church is a concession of God.⁶⁵

We have seen that Roman Catholicism imprisoned the Spirit in the institutional church, radical Protestantism imprisoned the Spirit in the individual and classical Protestantism imprisoned the Spirit in the letter of the Scripture. Where concern for authority is detached from vitality and solidarity, it tends to breed dogmatism.⁶⁶ According to Eduard Schweizer, the church was looking for a guarantee of the Spirit's presence:

On the Catholic side ... the guarantee was sought in the magisterium; on the Protestant side, in the Bible. Both sides wanted to have the Holy Spirit under human control. In one case the guarantee was ordination to the Church's ministry; in the other, a minister's experience in expounding the Scripture"⁶⁷

It is at this point that we can see the relevance of our discussion to our analysis of the position that Adams holds. It

⁶³ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 121

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 123

⁶⁷ E. Schweizer, The Holy Spirit, p. 5

would appear that Adams has also linked the witness of the Holy Spirit to the letter of Scripture, and in this way he has subsumed the Holy Spirit in the Bible. We have already seen that with the central place Adams gives to the Scripture, he has subsumed the aspects of solidarity, the place of the church, and vitality, the direct experience of the Holy Spirit, under the Scripture. It is through Scripture that spiritual life, spiritual growth and change are mediated to the individual. The church plays mainly an instrumental, not an essential role. It is for this reason that we have spent so much time in our discussion outlining Hendry's and Berkhof's analysis of the how the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the church and the individual have been understood in theology. Our aim is, of course, to provide a corrective to Adams' imbalance at this point. The corrective is to bring into view the relationship of the Holy Spirit not only to the Scripture, but also the church and the individual. With this in mind we will now proceed to discuss both Hendry's and Berkhof's solution to the problem.

4.3.2 Relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church and the individual.

Hendry is concerned in recovering the true relationship of unity between the three elements in the work of the Spirit, which became separated at the time of the Reformation.⁶⁸ It is this balance which we believe is needed as a corrective to Adams' one sided emphasis on the Bible. It is a corrective that comes from within Reformed theology. Hendry's desire is to emphasize that

⁶⁸ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 123

authority in the church, together with vitality and solidarity is the work of the Holy Spirit and that not one of these should be isolated or made predominant.⁶⁹ Each aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit should be kept in tension. The Spirit is the creator of vitality. His primary office is to give life to man.⁷⁰ But at the same time he is also the creator of solidarity. He does not simply give life to the individual, that individual is brought into community. The church is the creation of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who brings the church into being through the preaching of the word, which is the word of Christ or the gospel,⁷¹ coming to us through the Scripture by the Holy Spirit who witnesses to the Living Word, Jesus Christ.⁷² This is contrary to the position of radical Protestantism for whom the church hardly plays a part.⁷³ For them the church is nothing more than an assembly of those who share a common experience. those who share a common experience.⁷⁴ By way of contrast, Berkhof points out:

The church as a community is not the result of the natural impulses of congenial men to seek one another (though this impulse is used in the work of the God); it is a 'letter from Christ ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God'⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 129

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 141

⁷² Ibid., p. 85

⁷³ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 310

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 55

Robert Banks also stresses this point about the church when he states that it "is not merely a human association, a gathering of like-minded individuals for a religious purpose, but a divinely-created affair".⁷⁶ The Baptist, Wheeler Robinson, whilst admitting that the church, outwardly, has the form of a human fellowship, yet that which makes it uniquely different from a human association, is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷ Those with new life are brought together into a community of reconciliation by the Spirit.⁷⁸ However, this community is not just a grand ideal, something spiritual. The community expresses itself in ekklesia.⁷⁹ According to Hendry: "The New Testament knows no spiritual solidarity that does not express itself in corporate solidarity".⁸⁰ Those given new life by the Holy Spirit are brought into "a visible concrete society in an organized, constitutional form".⁸¹ It is in this community that the Spirit relates in outward acts like baptism, the laying on of hands, communion and the preaching of the gospel.⁸² He also relates in ministry so that individuals are able to build each other up.⁸³ And he relates in organizations through

⁷⁶ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 37

⁷⁷ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p. 121

⁷⁸ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 128

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 129

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 130

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 129

⁸² Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 52

⁸³ Ibid.

authority and discipline in the church.⁸⁴ In this connection Runia points out: "We should never forget the Lord has given his promise to grant us his Holy Spirit through institutional means".⁸⁵ But the Holy Spirit is not so bound to the solidarity of the body that it is imprisoned in it.⁸⁶ Hendry puts it thus: "The Church is not the custodian of the Spirit".⁸⁷ According to Van Dusen: "The Holy Spirit is the creator of the Church but not its creature".⁸⁸ Likewise David Ewert points out:

Although the Spirit dwells within the church as God's new temple, one cannot equate every institutional church today with the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit remains free; it is not bound by ecclesiastical structures and human traditions. The Spirit also works outside the institutional church. But even when the institutional church is full of imperfections, the Spirit keeps on speaking to the church, as John reminds us.⁸⁹

However the church has no reality apart from the preaching of the gospel.⁹⁰ It is not above the gospel, it is bound to the gospel. The church is a creation of the word and the Spirit.⁹¹ In this connection Hendry observes:

The Spirit is in the Church only where it is a Church of

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 314

⁸⁶ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 131

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father, p. 58

⁸⁹ D. Ewert, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament, p. 211

⁹⁰ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 141

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 142

the Word, and the Spirit is in the Word only where it is the Word in the Church.⁹²

It is for this reason that Berkhof believes that the correct order is, firstly the church and then the individual.⁹³ The Spirit calls the individual into community with himself and with others.⁹⁴ In other words, the individual's relationship with the Holy Spirit should only be considered in the context of community. It is contrary to the New Testament thought, especially the Acts of the Apostles and the letters to the churches, to consider the Holy Spirit's work with a person individualistically. The Holy Spirit relates to the community, and through that community, he relates to the individual. This is clearly demonstrated in the Acts of the Apostles which shows the Spirit poured out on the disciples together. He is poured out on the whole community.⁹⁵ Swete has pointed out that "as the end approached and the Pentecostal effusion drew near, Jesus spoke of the Spirit as to be given to His disciples collectively".⁹⁶ And this is what happened. Not only did the eleven receive the Spirit, but all one hundred and twenty believers who were gathered together. Later on the new converts received the Spirit, when they were added to the body of Christ by baptism and/or the

⁹² Ibid., p. 94

⁹³ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 49

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Acts 2:14

⁹⁶ H.B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament, 1919, 4th edition, p. 306 [publisher]

laying on of hands.⁹⁷ According to Van Dusen:

There is no question that the initial gift of the Holy Spirit, as the New Testament reports it, came to the disciples-in-community, in the events of the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. Moreover, prevailing though by no means exclusively, the presence of the Holy Spirit as the Book of Acts records it was 'in the Church', i.e., within the intimate fellowship (koinoinia) of Christians.⁹⁸

This is not only stressed in Acts. Runia points out: "In the letters of Paul we notice the same emphasis on the corporate aspect of the reception of the Spirit".⁹⁹ For example in Paul's letter to the Ephesians we see the apostle stresses that individual believers are together being built into a holy temple, a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.¹⁰⁰ It is the community that is God's temple in which God's Spirit lives.¹⁰¹

Marie Isaacs comments on this as follows:

the image of the Church as the temple in whom the Spirit dwells is only another example of the corporate nature of Pauline pneumatology.¹⁰²

We have the same concept of corporate fellowship with the Spirit in the Pauline phrase "in the Spirit".¹⁰³ This is how Ridderbos explains this phrase:

⁹⁷ Acts 8:15ff., 9:17, 19:5ff.

⁹⁸ Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father, p. 142

⁹⁹ Runia, "The Holy Spirit and The Church" Evangelical Review of Theology, Vol 9, No 1, January 1985, p. 307

¹⁰⁰ Ephesians 2:21

¹⁰¹ I Corinthians 2:16

¹⁰² Isaacs, The Concept of the Spirit, p. 93

¹⁰³ Ridderbos, Paul, p.221

Being-in-the-Spirit is ... not in the first place a personal, but an ecclesiological category: 'You are in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you', namely, as the temple of God, as the new fellowship, as the body of Christ.¹⁰⁴

He continues: "to belong to the one body of Christ signifies also to share in the one Spirit".¹⁰⁵ There is no place for individualism for as Ridderbos points out:

The thought is not that the Spirit first shows himself to individual believers, brings them together into one whole, and constitutes the body of Christ the sequence is the reverse.¹⁰⁶

On the other hand, according to Wheeler Robinson:

The Holy Spirit creates a new individuality in the believer, but the very content of the new individuality is social, issuing in a new consciousness of fellowship.¹⁰⁷

Lloyd Ratzlaff has shown that there is

a growing recognition of the fact that the emphasis on individual, personal salvation does not exhaust a biblical conception of the nature and meaning of salvation.¹⁰⁸

In this connection he argues "that in biblical perspective, salvation is seen as a corporate, and not merely individualistic, phenomenon".¹⁰⁹ He shows that the popular evangelical conception of salvation as an almost exclusively intra-personal phenomenon fails to do justice to Paul's emphasis on the communal aspects

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p. 149

¹⁰⁸ Ratzlaff, "Salvation: Individualistic or Communal" Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4 (1), Winter 1976, p. 108

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

of the gospel.¹¹⁰ In fact, he argues that the creation of the Christian community lies at the very heart of the gospel.¹¹¹

Banks similarly points out that the gospel is not a purely personal matter, it has social dimensions, it is a communal affair.¹¹² Ratzlaff convincingly shows that this concept of community was the basis of the Jew-Gentile debate. For example, he argues that Paul in his letters was not thinking merely of private reconciliation of many individuals with God, he was thinking rather of the removal of the hostilities between Jews and Gentiles so that corporately they might be reconciled to God.¹¹³ He makes the point that

The Jew-Gentile debate was forgotten in church history and Paul's message was modernized and westernized into the language of modern man's concern for his own authenticity.¹¹⁴

What about the gifts of the Spirit? What role do they play? Are they individual or communal? The gifts of the Spirit are not given to individuals for their own edification, but for the edification of the whole community.¹¹⁵ In the church at Corinth there was a great danger of spiritual individualism so that each member of the church exalted in his or her own gift. An

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 33

¹¹³ Ratzlaff, "Salvation: Individualistic or Communal" Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4 (1), Winter 1976, p. 108

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ I Corinthians 12

individualistic attitude to spiritual gifts is contrary to the whole purpose of spiritual gifts. Abraham Kuyper referring to the communal aspect of spiritual gifts states: "Properly speaking, the chrismata are given to the churches, not to individual persons".¹¹⁶

But the Holy Spirit is not only the source of spiritual gifts, he is also closely involved in the work of making people holy, in other words, changing them. It is in this new community created by the Holy Spirit, a community of the Holy Spirit, that the individual changes and comes to maturity. In this connection, Marie Isaacs states: "The ethical nature of the Spirit's activity is one of the most prominent features of Pauline pneumatology".¹¹⁷ This too takes place in community as is illustrated when one looks at the fruit of the Spirit, which represents the outward characteristics of those who live by the Spirit. This fruit can only develop in the context of a relationship with God and others. In this connection, Wheeler Robinson states: "The peculiar fruit of the Spirit is displayed in qualities of character and conduct chiefly affecting fellowship".¹¹⁸ It is for this reason that Berkhof insists: "The individual cannot flourish outside the community".¹¹⁹ He is adamant that

As long as we put the individual first, we cannot get the right view of the Church as ground and mother of the

¹¹⁶ A. Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 181

¹¹⁷ Isaacs, The Concept of the Spirit, p. 87

¹¹⁸ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p 141

¹¹⁹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 50

individual life.¹²⁰

It is only in community that the individual is able to share in the Holy Spirit.¹²¹ Vidler points out:

in the New Testament the presence and life of the Spirit are a corporate experience, a shared experience. No individual can recapture that experience by himself for himself.¹²²

It is in the church that the Holy Spirit manifests his power and presence. In this connection Marie Isaacs states:

The concept of pneuma as the power of God at work in the life of the Church is one which dominates the thinking of the New Testament writers.¹²³

According to Lemmer:

It has to be acknowledged and consciously recognised that the ecclesia as God's habitation is the sphere of the operation of the divine Spirit.¹²⁴

It is in the church, then, that the individual is able to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit relates to the believer in the context of the community. For this reason Berkhof insists: "It is impossible to have communication with the Holy Spirit in an individualistic way...."¹²⁵ Likewise Duncan explains:

In the New Testament the sphere of the Spirit's working is thought primarily as the Christian fellowship and not

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 57

¹²² Vidler, Christian Belief, p. 56

¹²³ Isaacs, The Concept of the Spirit, p. 86

¹²⁴ H.R. Lemmer, "Pneumatology and Eschatology in Ephesians -The Role of the Eschatological Spirit in the Church", (unpublished Doctors's dissertation, University of South Africa, June 1988, p. 509

¹²⁵ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 50

the Christian individual.¹²⁶

In this connection E.F. Scott affirms:

The sphere in which (the Holy Spirit) works is always the Christian Church ... The Spirit is the gift of Christ to his people, and no one outside their fellowship can share in it....¹²⁷

According to Van Dusen: "So the Spirit is the animating principle of the community of Christians as of the individual Christian".¹²⁸

Lemmer puts it thus: "The Church is both the creation as well as the sphere of operation for the Spirit".¹²⁹

It is this emphasis of the work of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers that is lacking in nouthetic counselling. Adams, as we have seen, has a limited understanding of the Holy Spirit. He limits the witness of the Spirit to the Scriptures, which for him is synonymous with the word of God. However, it is important to understand that the witness of the Holy Spirit within the Scripture is not to Scripture itself but to the Living Word, Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh.¹³⁰ The purpose of the Spirit's witness in Scripture is to point to Jesus Christ. This was the point stressed by Karl Barth.¹³¹ The Holy Spirit witnesses to the Living Word through Scripture so that the

¹²⁶ G.S. Duncan, The Epistles of Paul to the Galatians, p. 187

¹²⁷ Scott, The Spirit in the New Testament, [London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd] p. 76

¹²⁸ Van Dusen, Spirit, Son and Father, p. 140

¹²⁹ Lemmer, "Pneumatology and Eschatology in Ephesians" p. 509

¹³⁰ John 1:14

¹³¹ Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol 1, Part 1, p. 157

individual can come to a personal experience of Jesus Christ. The emphasis is a personal encounter with the Living Word.¹³² It is an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not an encounter with a body of doctrine, or with the letter of the Bible but an encounter with a living person. However, James Barr clarifies Barth's point of view when he states:

This does not mean that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, can be understood or approached apart from the Bible The Bible is the essential witness to Jesus Christ....¹³³

According to Hendry, this was the main insight of the Reformation, that faith is a personal relation with God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit and that it is the function of church, Bible, sacraments etc., to serve as means to this end.¹³⁴

From this perspective it is therefore important not to limit the witness of the Spirit to the Scripture. Berkhof makes it clear that the word is the instrument of the Spirit but the Spirit is not the prisoner of the word.¹³⁵ The Living Word meets us not only in the Scripture, in the preaching as it points to Jesus Christ, but also in the fellowship, where two or three are gathered together in his name he is there in their midst.¹³⁶ It is in the fellowship of believers assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus that the power of the Lord is present.¹³⁷ In this

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Barr, The Bible in the Modern World, pp. 18-19

¹³⁴ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 90

¹³⁵ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 38

¹³⁶ Matthew 18:20

¹³⁷ I Corinthians 5:4

regard, Berkhof observes that "The Spirit makes the Living Word present among us in baptism, preaching, the Eucharist and in the work of the ministry in general".¹³⁸ According to Hendry:

Wherever any of these mediating factors is elevated to a position that obscures the end it serves, wherever it interposes itself between faith and its true object, faith becomes depersonalized, and it is time to protest.¹³⁹

In other words, the individual meets the Living Word not only in the Scripture, but also in the community of believers. The community itself can be regarded as a means of grace.

With this theological framework we will now consider more specifically the role of the church in counselling. In our discussion we will attempt to show that although Adams insists that counselling should be undertaken in the context of the church, his approach remains individualistic and problem centred. He fails to take seriously the potential for change within the community itself. We will then attempt to give reasons why the church is a therapeutic community. In this discussion we will seek to interface our insights with the findings of the psychological sciences to show that there is in fact much common ground between psychology and theology.

4.3.3 The role of the church in counselling.

The point of all this for our discussion here is that Christian counselling should take seriously the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church. If, as we have seen, the Holy Spirit

¹³⁸ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 63

¹³⁹ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, p. 90

operates within the community of believers and that he relates to the individual within that community, then, it is as persons are brought into the sphere of his operation, the church, that they are changed. Berkhof stresses this point when he states:

It is in this community that the Spirit does his converting and sanctifying work in the individual through the word, sacraments and ministry.¹⁴⁰

Likewise Lemmer, points out that it is through the believing community that the Spirit enables the believer to live an ethically correct life.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Arnold Come believes that it is in fellowship with God and others that the believer can achieve his or her own individual, unique personality and full spiritual potential.¹⁴²

In the light of this, Christian counsellors should have a high view of the church and should seek to integrate their counselling practice in the context of the church, the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to bring about change in persons. However, this is an aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit which has largely been ignored amongst evangelicals in general and evangelical counsellors in particular. It certainly does not play an important part in nouthetic counselling. The role of the church is helpful, but it is not in reality essential. As we have already seen, nowhere in his writings does Adams deal with the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church as such. All we

¹⁴⁰ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 42

¹⁴¹ Lemmer, "Pneumatology and Eschatology in Ephesians" p. 498

¹⁴² Come, The Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit, pp. 103, 105

have is a statement that "Jesus Christ dwells invisibly in His church in the person of the Holy Spirit".¹⁴³ However this statement is not explained or expanded upon and it would appear that this is not important in nouthetic counselling. It is the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Bible and to the individual believer that plays a more prominent role. In fact, it is quite possible to use nouthetic counselling techniques outside of a church situation as such. Which does not mean that Adams would advocate this, in fact he would be totally against counselling outside of the context of the local church, as will see in our next section. However, from a practical point of view, the church or the community of believers is not really necessary. It is the counsellor's role that is more important. We will clarify this point at a later stage.

Adams' approach to counselling is individualistic. This is not only a weakness in nouthetic counselling but it is also a weakness of most models of counselling. As we have already seen, evangelicals, in a desire to stress the individual believer's relationship with the Holy Spirit, neglected the communal aspects of the Spirit's ministry. For the most part, the believer's relationship with the Holy Spirit has been understood individualistically and "bound to subjective experience".¹⁴⁴ McDonnell argues that there is a need to "overcome the

¹⁴³ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 5

¹⁴⁴ McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", Theology Today, Vol XXXIX, No 2. July 1982, pp. 105-151

subjectivistic privatizing view of the Spirit in pietism"¹⁴⁵

In this connection Arnold Come explaining this development of individualism states:

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Christianity developed a strong emphasis upon a man's lone confrontation with God and upon the development of his own private religious life of devotion and piety. The fact that this emphasis was unbalanced and even unhealthy was evidenced by the accompanying loss of a high doctrine of the church as the communal dimension of the Christian life.¹⁴⁶

This trend toward individualism was aggravated by a general shift in the West toward individualism. David Wells shows that in the West there has been a rising tide of individualism.¹⁴⁷ According to P. Hicks:

Modern individualism has its roots in the humanism of the Renaissance, the Reformation's stress on each individual's personal relationship with God, the Enlightenment ... and the search for personal and political freedom¹⁴⁸

Further explaining the development of individualism in the church, Ratzlaff observes:

A preoccupation with personal acceptance by God in the tradition of Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and Kierkegaard has come to dominate Protestant conceptions of salvation. For centuries this emphasis has seemed to be so self-evidently valid that it has hardly occurred to anyone that there might be a broader thrust in the Bible

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Come, The Human Spirit and the Holy Spirit, pp. 103-104

¹⁴⁷ Wells, God in the Wasteland, pp. 95-96

¹⁴⁸ Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, P. Hicks, "Individualism", p. 481

which transcends individualism.¹⁴⁹

This trend, according to Wells, was particularly marked in America.¹⁵⁰ Because stress was laid on the right and freedom of each individual to make decisions and implement actions independent of others, the community and family played a less significant role.¹⁵¹ An interesting point made by Wells is that American revivalism resulted in a further severing of ties with the church and a greater stress on the individual's experience with God.¹⁵² Billy Graham's organization is an example as is also the case with many twentieth century evangelists.

From this it would appear that to a large extent Adams is caught up in American individualism in that in practice he does not have a high view of the church. The stress is laid on the individual's relationship with the Holy Spirit through the Bible. Change comes as the individual learns to put off bad patterns of behaviour and learns to put on righteous patterns of behaviour. But this is totally unrelated to that person's relationship with other believers. To this end, the counsellor assists the counsellee. This has resulted in an individualistic as well as a problem centred approach to counselling. The implications of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the community of believers

¹⁴⁹ Ratzlaff, "Salvation: Individualistic or Communal" Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4 (1), Winter 1976, p. 108

¹⁵⁰ Wells, God in the Wasteland, pp. 95-96

¹⁵¹ Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, P. Hicks, "Individualism", p. 481

¹⁵² Wells, God in the Wasteland, pp. 66-67

is not consciously or deliberately worked out. Rather, the emphasis is placed on a person's personal individual relationship with God mediated by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, together with that person's relationship with the counsellor. Nowhere is attention given to the fact that the community of believers is itself an instrument used by the Holy Spirit to bring about change. In other words, the Holy Spirit draws people into fellowship with Jesus Christ in the community of believers and works within that community to change those in that community.

What then is Adams' understanding of the role of the church in counselling? Although Adams gives attention to the place of the church in counselling, his approach is largely individualistic and problem centred as we will attempt to show in the next section.

4.3.3.1 Adams' understanding of the role of the church in counselling.

Adams clearly believes that counselling must be undertaken in the context of the church. This is obvious from direct statements he makes and can also be inferred from the emphasis of Adams' writings.¹⁵³ For example, Adams maintains that it is vital to develop a biblical form of counselling within the church. Similarly Adams appeals:

Let the church...assume her counseling duty, and let Christians of all sorts encourage her to do so. Let no one stand in her way, lest he be found opposing her

¹⁵³ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 277

Head and King Himself. ¹⁵⁴

In speaking to a group of students at The Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology, Adams specifically stated that counselling is the work "of the organized church (in general) and the pastor and elders (in particular)...."¹⁵⁵ For this reason, Adams insisted that there is no justification for training people to undertake counselling independent of a local church.¹⁵⁶ Counselling must come under the authority of the church.¹⁵⁷ In this connection, Adams made the point:

Counseling may not be set up as a life calling on a free-lance basis: all such counseling ought to be done as a function of the church, utilizing its authority and resources. ¹⁵⁸

He was amazed, he writes, to discover that many of the students he addressed found this to be a novel concept. He saw this as proof of a lack of understanding of the place of the visible church.¹⁵⁹ He decries the fact that it is possible to study counselling even to doctoral level without ever being confronted with the need to centre counselling in the church.¹⁶⁰ He observes that with the growing professionalism of the modern counselling movement, there is a distrust of the organised church and a

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 280

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 276

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

proliferation of para-church agencies involved in counselling.¹⁶¹

What is the reason for Adams' insistence that counselling must be centred in the church? Adams answers:

God has given (1) the ordained teachers and ruling officers (2) the task of changing people's lives (3) through the authoritative ministry of the Word.¹⁶²

Christ has given these officers of the church the authority and powers by virtue of their calling to the work of ministering the word.¹⁶³

In other words, for Adams, it is a question of authority. It is only the church that has the authority to be involved in the task of counselling. The question of authority in counselling is one which is very important to Adams.¹⁶⁴ He insists that there is a need for divine authority in counselling.¹⁶⁵ The authority of which Adams speaks is not given to all within the church. It is only given to specially called men.¹⁶⁶ Those specially called men are to be set aside or ordained for this ministry.¹⁶⁷ According to Adams, the Christian minister "in a special way, has been appointed and set aside by God and the church ... by the laying

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 276-277

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 278

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 15

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 278

¹⁶⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 12

on of hands", to preach and counsel".¹⁶⁸ Adams insists that

There is no indication in the Scripture that anyone but those who have been recognized should undertake the work of counseling or proclaiming of the Word officially (i.e., as an office work of life calling).¹⁶⁹

Why is ordination important? Adams answers:

because it is the orderly appointment of a man to his office and work; in Christ's name it grants him the right to authoritatively use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has already given¹⁷⁰

Another reason is that ordination brings both the counsellor and counselling under the scrutiny and regulation of other elders.

That is why he is adamant that

The unordained Christian counselor, working outside of the organised church of Christ has not received and cannot exercise such authority.¹⁷¹

Adams mentions that it is for this reason he has always advised those who wish to enter into counselling as a profession to do so via ordination to the Church ministry.¹⁷² What about the place of specialist training for counsellors? It is Adams' opinion that "the best training for Christian counselors is a good seminary education to provide a solid biblical and theological background".¹⁷³ Adams believes that

that someone especially gifted in counseling could spend the principal part of his time doing counseling, perhaps as an associate pastor, even having the responsibility for counseling in several local

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 278

¹⁷¹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 12

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 12

congregations.¹⁷⁴

As we have seen, the question of authority is vital in Adams' understanding of Christian counselling. Without that authority there can be no biblical counselling, in fact no counselling at all. The authority is only conferred through ordination into the ministry. The question that arises at this point is, where does this authority lie? Is the authority in the church? Are we talking about the Roman Catholic understanding of authority which is tied to the institutional church? That is not where Adams centres authority. The authority is centred in and based on the word of God, the Bible.¹⁷⁵ It is as counsellors use that word, they can claim divine authority. We saw earlier that Adams attributes divine and supreme authority to the Bible.¹⁷⁶ It is only as the minister uses the Bible that he can claim divine authority. That authority does not lie so much in the office or the church as in the Bible. It is for this reason that he must be ordained. Ordination gives him the authority to preach and teach the word. For Adams, the functions of the minister are linked to the Bible. He states:

the two functions, counseling and preaching, correspond to the designation pastor and teacher...he is called to this work as his function or office to the church.¹⁷⁷

He regards both counselling and preaching as ministries of the Bible.¹⁷⁸ However, counselling is ministry of the Bible to the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁷⁵ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 278

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 18

¹⁷⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 12

¹⁷⁸ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 278

individual.¹⁷⁹ From this it is clear that the authority Adams speaks of lies not in the individual counsellor, or in the church, but in the Bible. It is the Bible that gives the counsellor the divine authority. That divine authority is conferred on him through ordination. Ordination is connected to the ministry of the word. This is consistent with Adams' view of the centrality of the Bible in counselling.

From this we can see that although Adams wants counselling to be undertaken in the context of the church, it is not because he has a high view of the church per se. In other words, it is not because he sees an inseparable link between the Holy Spirit and the church, or because he locates the sphere of the Holy Spirit's operation in the church, in the community of believers. He believes the Holy Spirit is in the Bible. Adams has a higher view of the Bible than the church. To use Hendry's terminology, Adams subsumes solidarity under authority, which he links directly to the Bible.¹⁸⁰

The point that is being made here is that in spite of Adams' insistence that counselling should be undertaken in the context of the church, he does not do so because he sees the church as a place where the Holy Spirit operates on the individual to bring about change. Rather, it is because it is in the church that the Bible is preached and taught and because its ministers are

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, pp. 121-122

ordained to the ministry of the Bible. His model of counselling is still individualistic and not community based.

What role does the whole community play in counselling? Basically, Adams restricts the ministry of counselling to those specially called and ordained, although Adams is not always clear about this. He accepts that in a general way all Christians may be involved in counselling as they are generally all responsible for witnessing to their faith.¹⁸¹ Using Colossians 3:16 and Romans 15:14, he argues that nouthetic confrontation is the work of all members of the church.¹⁸² In this connection Adams counsels: "The pastor, then, must encourage occasional counseling activity across all the members of the flock".¹⁸³ He points out that "the number of exhortations to such mutual ministry ... is striking".¹⁸⁴ Again, he insists:

the pastor cannot do the work alone. And this is what the New Testament record clearly shows - Paul did not do it alone either. Paul expected every Church to join him in this work.¹⁸⁵

However, Adams also makes it quite clear that

While every Christian must become a counselor to his fellow Christians, the work of counseling as a special calling is assigned particularly to the pastor.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 12

¹⁸² Adams, Shepherding God's Flock, p. 190

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Adams, The Big Umbrella, p. 141

¹⁸⁶ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 9

He insists that counselling is par excellence pastoral work.¹⁸⁷ When Adams refers to using others in the work of counselling, it is to provide practical supportive assistance. He sees the involvement of others under the direct supervision of the pastor.¹⁸⁸ Adams is quite clear to what extent others are to be involved when he states:

What I am proposing...is that there should be laymen who are ready and able to be called in to a given session by the suggestion of the pastor...to assist in some specialized way, using gifts in which they excel.¹⁸⁹

For example, a woman with a disorganised home might receive just the boost necessary to change her entire future from a team of women who stand ready to assist her.¹⁹⁰

From this it would appear that Adams' model of counselling is largely problem centred. In other words, the role of the church as a sphere of change and healing is restricted to helping people deal with their personal problems. Furthermore, it is clear that Adams stresses the relationship between the specialist counsellor and the counsellee. The role of the community of believers is limited to practical ministry under the supervision of the counsellor. Adams ignores the potential for healing within the community as it ministers informally and non-formally. The role of practical ministry is not being underestimated. But this ministry can be performed without building loving relationships.

¹⁸⁷ Adams, The Big Umbrella, p. 10

¹⁸⁸ Adams, Shepherding God's Flock, p. 189

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 191

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

In fact practical ministry can be done merely out of duty.

The point that is being made here is that the role of the church, the community of believers goes beyond merely dealing with specific problems. What we are arguing is that there is a need to see that the church is a place of change, that in its normal functioning as a body of believers it acts as a therapeutic community. There is a need to understand the dynamics of change which are inherent in the community of believers because it is the sphere of the Holy Spirit's operation. This remains uncharted territory in counselling theory and practice. There is a need to work out models, concepts, principles and practical guidelines for utilizing this potential of change in the community.

However, it should be acknowledged that Adams has taken a major step in endeavouring to integrate counselling into the total ministry of the church. It would seem that Adams understands that he has not fully worked through the implications of centering counselling in the context of the church. For example, on reflecting on the rediscovery of the place of the church in counselling it is his opinion that "this subject...demands, at the very least a definitive book or two".¹⁹¹ And then in the Westminster Lectures of 1971 he stated:

The picture described in the New Testament shows that God expects an all-pervasive contact among the people of God, contact where brethren are brought close together in Christ. This picture is of people who have come to know one another deeply and intimately in the things of the Lord. They have developed such a deep concern for one another that Paul says they are members

¹⁹¹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 277

of the same body. When one weeps, the rest weep with him; when one rejoices, the rest also rejoice. There ought to be a kind of spontaneous reverberation among the people of God; but that is a concept that we don't know much about today. When something happens, it should either rock or bless the whole church. Nouthesia demands that very sort of involvement. The Scriptures speak of provoking one another to love and of stimulating one another to good works. This involves regular daily contact on a level of depth.¹⁹²

We have quoted extensively from Adams here to illustrate the point that he obviously felt a need for a more radical counselling theory. However, it is unfortunate that Adams has not developed this point further in any of his writings. We suspect that Adams is still too tied to the Bible and that he, therefore, cannot break free from a cognitive understanding of change. It would seem from this quote that Adams himself realises that a corrective is needed to his counselling theory. It is this other perspective to which we will now turn.

From what we saw in 3.2 and 3.3, there is a need for a counselling model that takes seriously the role of the church as a place of change. There is a need to move from a problem centred, individualistic counselling model. In other words, we need a model of counselling that takes seriously the fact that the Holy Spirit operates within the community of believers to change people in a radical and deep way. In the next section we will attempt to justify our assertion that the church is a therapeutic community, a place of change. As already stated, we also hope to show that here is an area that should provide a fruitful interfacing between theology and psychology. Both these

¹⁹² Adams, The Big Umbrella, pp. 141-143

disciplines have much in common at this point and an interfacing between theology and psychology will benefit both in their objectives to help people change.

4.3.3.2 The church as a therapeutic community.

In looking at the place of the church in counselling as a place of change, we should consider it in the context of human psychopathology. As we have already seen, a Christian understanding of the cause of humanity's problems is sin. This is the point that Adams consistently maintains. He believes that it is sin that has led to human misery. Sin has affected humanity emotionally in feelings of estrangement from God, other people and from self. At this point we would agree with Adams's analysis of the human predicament. In this connection, Francis Schaeffer states that sin prevents any human being from realizing complete psychological balance.¹⁹³ According to Carter and Narramore:

Every area of theology's understanding of sin...can be shown to relate to the condition of personal maladjustment that applied psychologists are addressing.¹⁹⁴

One of the most serious consequences of sin as far as humanity is concerned has been the effects on relationships. According to Kirwan: "We were intended to be related to our Creator and to other human beings in a unique and fulfilling way".¹⁹⁵ To be more

¹⁹³ Schaeffer, True Spirituality, p. 129

¹⁹⁴ Carter, Narramore, The Integration of Psychology, p. 59

¹⁹⁵ Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 38

specific, God created humanity with spiritual and social needs.¹⁹⁶ These needs are only filled in a good interpersonal relationship with God and with other people.¹⁹⁷ If these needs are not met by good interpersonal relationships then persons become spiritually, psychologically and emotionally disorientated.¹⁹⁸ However, through sin these relationships have become broken.¹⁹⁹ This in turn resulted in mental and emotional suffering known as psychopathology.²⁰⁰

What is the solution? For Adams it is being brought into relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and receiving spiritual life through the Holy Spirit. In other words, Christian conversion. This is not a point which would be disputed by evangelicals. According to Jeeves, Honorary Research Professor of the School of Psychology at the University of St Andrews, fundamental to Christian conversion is that it represents a turning to God, a re-establishment of one's relationship with God.²⁰¹ However great an event Christian conversion may be, it is also recognised that conversion does not necessarily lead to emotional and psychological healing. Kirwan accuses Adams of assuming that with salvation emotional healing should come

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 38

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Atkinson, D.H. Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, M.A. Jeeves, "Conversion", pp. 259-260

automatically.²⁰² In this connection Abraham Malherbe, using the church at Thessalonica as an example, argues that Christian conversion can in fact initially lead to emotional problems.²⁰³ He observes that

I Thessalonians shows, conversion resulted in psychological trauma, discouragement, grief, uncertainty about the implications of the new faith for everyday life, and dislocation from the larger society.²⁰⁴

It is for this reason that, as Malherbe explains, Paul's letter to the Thessalonians places a great deal of stress on the importance of mutual care and concern within that church.²⁰⁵

What happens when a Christian has problems? For Adams, a Christian should be able to overcome any personal problems by obeying the Bible. According to Adams, in the Bible we not only have all that is necessary for saving faith in Jesus Christ, but in addition, in it we have all "that is necessary to bring about a process of change that will lead to mental health".²⁰⁶ In other words, obedience to God's word results in emotional and psychological health. Obviously, Adams sees a direct relationship between obedience to the Bible and mental health. At times a counsellor may be necessary to guide and assist the Christian to learn obedience. Adams believes that because a Christian has

²⁰² Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 190

²⁰³ Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, p. 73

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 61

received spiritual life, therapeutic change is merely a matter of the will, simply obey the Bible. In other words, Adams' solution is the Holy Spirit's resources in the Bible.²⁰⁷ In this way a person can determine to change his or her behaviour, to give up certain compulsions, or even not to feel a certain way, to change sinful behaviour patterns by simple obedience, irrespective of feelings. However as Kirwan points out:

That advice takes too mild a view of the fall and its effects on human functioning. The will, along with the cognitive and affective aspects of the heart, has been badly damaged; to a large extent human beings no longer have control over themselves....We cannot by an act of our will change ourselves into what God wants us to be. That requires the empowering of the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁸

We would agree with Adams that at conversion there is a change in a person's basic orientation toward God, and that a person receives spiritual life through the Holy Spirit. However, at conversion a person is also brought into the family of God, theologically known as adoption.²⁰⁹ In other words, a person is brought into the community of believers. According to Robert Banks: "To embrace the gospel...is to enter into community. One cannot have the one without the other" ²¹⁰ In that community the person experiences the reality of his or her restored relationship with God and with others. According to Kirwan, persons are united to God and to each other in a mystical

²⁰⁷ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, pp. 73-74

²⁰⁸ Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 89-90

²⁰⁹ I Thess. 1:10, Gal. 4:4-4

²¹⁰ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 33

but dynamic way.²¹¹ But, as Ratzlaff points out:

The intense interpersonal exchanges required of a vital community necessitate more than a periodic gathering on the pulpit-and-pew principle....It is fallacious for the church to assume, as long as it is operating on the pulpit-and-pew principle (which includes not only the worship service but also the average Sunday School class and week-night Bible study), that its members will come to Christian maturity or change in any significant way.²¹²

The point that is being stressed here is that community plays a vital role in the whole process of change. It is in the community of believers that the Holy Spirit enables the person to grow gradually to maturity. It is this aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit that Adams has ignored. It is for this reason, as we will see later, that for Adams, change can only be superficial and/or legalistic.

How does the church function as a therapeutic community? As we saw, one of the serious effects of sin has been a break in our relationship with God, others and ourselves. It is in the community of believers that these relationships are restored, thus bringing healing. In this connection Carter and Narramore lay the foundation for the conceptual framework of the church as a therapeutic community. They propose that the dynamics of Ecclesiology are analogous to the properties of social psychology. Referring to Ephesians 4:11-16 they demonstrate that the New Testament stresses three concepts that have to do with

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ratzlaff, "Salvation: Individualistic or Communal" Journal of Psychology and Theology, Vol 4 (1), Winter 1976, p. 114

relationships: ecclesia, koinonia, and agape.²¹³ Ecclesia points to the fact that Christians are a called-out-people joined together with a common bond. In the New Testament, this word is invariably used to refer to an identifiable group of people who are characterised by koinonia, and agape. Banks points out that ecclesia, "could only be applied to an actual gathering of people, or to the group that gathers, viewed as a regularly constituted meeting" ²¹⁴ Koinonia conveys the idea of fellowship or sharing.²¹⁵ Agape speaks of a deep and unconditional love for other persons.²¹⁶ In this connection, Carter and Narramore point out:

According to Scripture, the dynamics of these three concepts provide a cornerstone for the maturing of the member of the body of Christ. It is within the context of the church as a body of believers that the Scripture discusses personal growth.²¹⁷

According to Tidball: "True fellowship should provide security and be an ideal soil in which hurts can be healed and maturity reached".²¹⁸

Some of the primary biblical interpersonal relationship passages

²¹³ Carter, Narramore, the Integration of Psychology and Theology, pp. 66-67

²¹⁴ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 36

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, D.J. Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology", p. 47

are delineated and elaborated upon by Getz.²¹⁹ He examines twelve major "one another" Pauline injunctions and stresses their relational nature and orientation with respect to their implications for application within the community of believers. Paul clearly expected the believers in their various local churches to enter into loving relationships with one another.²²⁰ He prays that the Thessalonians will "increasingly abound in love to one another, as we do to you".²²¹ The Christians at Rome are reminded that in a very genuine way they should "love one another with brotherly affection".²²² These interpersonal relationships provide social reinforcements of encouragement, fellowship, affection and compassion to shape behaviour.²²³

Another concept which stresses interpersonal relationships in the community of believers is that of family. This is how Brister explains it:

Those adopted into God's family had a unique brotherly relationship and responsibility to one another. They were to 'bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2)²²⁴

According to Clinebell:

A local church is part of an extended family - a part

²¹⁹ Getz, The Measure of a Church,

²²⁰ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 57

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ E.P. Bolin, G.M. Goldberg, "Behavioral Psychology and the Bible: General and Specific Considerations", Journal of Psychology and Theology, Fall, 1979, 7(3), p. 172

²²⁴ Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church, p. 22

of that web of meaningful relationships which encircle and undergird the inner circle of the family.²²⁵

Those who belong to the community then are to see one another primarily as members of a common family.²²⁶ This accepting community of the church can help its members to be released from the scars left by sins of the past, either their own sins or sins against them, and to grow toward maturity and wholeness.²²⁷

Paul's use of the metaphor of the body also stresses this communal interdependence.²²⁸ Each member has a unique role to play, yet is also dependent upon everyone else.²²⁹ The body has a common nerve. There is a common life within it, in which each is identified with the other.²³⁰ So close is the link between members of the community that what affects one necessarily affects all.²³¹ According to Banks:

Paul's description of the community as a 'body' indicates that its goal is not just the creation of harmony between the members...but also its development toward maturity.²³²

But:

God's intention is not merely the fashioning of mature

²²⁵ Clinebell, The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church, p. 24

²²⁶ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 53

²²⁷ Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, D.J. Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology", p. 46

²²⁸ Banks, Paul's Idea of Community, p. 63

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 64

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 64

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid., p. 71

individuals, but of a mature community...a mature community is an influential factor in shaping the individual maturity of its members.²³³

Malherbe points to a very interesting example of a church acting as a therapeutic community in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.²³⁴ Communal interest pervades this letter and indicates the extent to which Paul expected all the Thessalonians to nurture one another in community.²³⁵ In this connection Malherbe points out:

Every item of conduct that Paul takes up in the latter half of the letter is communal in nature....He...becomes more explicit: 'And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with all.'²³⁶

Clinebell argues that an essential part of the church's mission is to be a therapeutic community.²³⁷ He gives a number of reasons for this assertion:

It is directly linked to the fundamental purpose of the church, which is to increase among men the love and God and neighbour. Spiritual health and mental health are inseparably linked. Mental health has been a central concern of the church community throughout the centuries.²³⁸

Bufford and Johnston of The Psychological Studies Institute at Atlanta, Georgia, have shown that the church can also play an

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, p. 75

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Clinebell, The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church, p. 19-21

²³⁸ Ibid.

important role in primary prevention of emotional problems.²³⁹ In this connection they point out:

a growing body of evidence has developed which demonstrates the vital role of social support systems and natural care givers in enhancing the individuals ability to cope with the difficulties of life in an effective fashion....The church seems uniquely suited to fostering primary prevention in the areas just discussed.²⁴⁰

From this it should be evident that spiritual growth and change should not be considered individualistically but within the context of ecclesia, koinonia, and agape.

Carter and Narramore point out that over the last two decades the Christian church has begun to address the role of interpersonal relations in spiritual growth and change. However, the role of interpersonal relations was recognised even earlier. For example, Samuel Southard explicitly stated:

one of the characteristics of the Christian church is its ability to demonstrate God's love through human relationships. In the Christian fellowship a believer may find tangible expressions of the supernatural grace that endows his life....The church is a school where men learn to live a new life.²⁴¹

For Adams this concept of the role of the church in bringing about change is largely ignored.

²³⁹ R.K. Bufford, T.B. Johnston, "The Church and Community Mental Health:Unrealized Potential", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1982, Vol 10, No 4, p. 356

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 356-357

²⁴¹ Wayne Oates (ed.) An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, S. Southard, "The Purpose of the Church and its Counseling Ministry", p. 28 Broadman Press (Nashville, Tennessee), 1957

The point that is being stressed here is that the church has within it the dynamics of growth and change. As we have seen, it is in the church that the Holy Spirit operates to change people. It is in context of relationships that people change and mature. It is within the context of those same relationships that people are healed of their emotional and psychological problems.

It is a weakness of much Christian counselling that it is too individualistic and for this reason tends to be problem centred. There is a real need to look at the church as a place of change. This point is even stressed to some extent by Southard when he states:

Unfortunately, both pastoral and psychiatric practice has been highly individualistic. Little attention has been given to the able or consecrated lay people who could perform many pastoral functions.²⁴²

Realising this was a new concept he points out:

This is a new frontier in counseling but one that is necessary and rewarding. It will give laymen concrete evidence of the priesthood to each other and provide care for the entire flock of God.²⁴³

It is also significant that Robert Lambourne, psychiatrist and theologian argued against the institutionalization of pastoral care in Britain. He was a lecturer in pastoral studies at the department of theology at the University of Birmingham. His major book Community, Church and Healing printed in 1963 was a study of the theology of healing. He studied the healings in the

²⁴² Wayne Oates (ed.) An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, S. Southard, "The Purpose of the Church and its Counseling Ministry", p. 37

²⁴³ Ibid.

Gospels and argued for a view of humanity as social beings, in that the healings of Jesus were community events as they were ministry to individuals.²⁴⁴ He decried the individualism of pastoral counselling.²⁴⁵ Christian caring should be "lay, corporate, adventurous, variegated and diffuse".²⁴⁶ Alastair Campbell, the pastoral theologian carried the debate further, seeking to rescue pastoral care from "professional captivity" and release it into the practical love expressed by the body of Christ.²⁴⁷ James Knight, Professor of Psychiatry at Tulane University School of Medicine, also makes this point when he states:

Today, a neglected area of church life is the use of the congregation as an instrument of therapy. The church as a therapeutic and redemptive community can have profound influence upon the health of the individual and the group...the congregation has within its very structure the ability to heal...to rescue ... to give direction²⁴⁸

In this connection we would agree with Carter and Narramore that

one suspects that if the church had been operating on the basis of a scriptural model of interpersonal relations, it would have been a much more effective healing agent than has been the case.²⁴⁹

In this regard they ask a very pertinent question:

If Scripture portrays the church as a caring, accepting

²⁴⁴ Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, p. 64f

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 90

²⁴⁶ Lambourne, "Objections to a National Pastoral Organisation", Contact, 35, 1971, pp. 24-31

²⁴⁷ A.V. Campbell, Paid to Care, (London, 1985).

²⁴⁸ Clinebell, The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church, (introduction)

²⁴⁹ Carter, B. Narramore, The Integration of Theology, p. 67

community, why are so many looking outside the church for growth groups and similar experiences? ²⁵⁰

This is how Kirwan explains the neglect:

Throughout the twentieth century, evangelical Christianity has been preoccupied with contending for propositional truth....The price paid...has cost the church dearly in other areas, especially the interpersonal.²⁵¹

Tidball focuses on another perspective of the problem when he observes that there has been an emphasis in the church on hierarchical and patriarchal structures to the detriment of relationships.²⁵²

What is significant is the increasing recognition by those involved in the psychological sciences of the role of interpersonal relations in the process of healing and change. According to Leigh Bishop of the department of psychiatry at the Medical College of Georgia: "The concept of healing community has been an integral one in social psychiatry over the past three decades".²⁵³

What are the essential qualities needed for a community to act as an agent for healing and change? Firstly, there needs to be a sense of belonging. Each person must experience acceptance and

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 68

²⁵¹ Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 130

²⁵² Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology", p. 47

²⁵³ Leigh Bishop, "Healing in the Koinonia: Therapeutic Dynamics of Church Community", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1985 Vol 13, No. 1 p. 12

a feeling that he or she is "part of a special group in which each member is unique yet important to the group as a whole and fully a participant".²⁵⁴ A second characteristic is a sense of freedom to allow members of the group to realise their full and unique potential.²⁵⁵ This also allows each member to become involved in helping others become whole.²⁵⁶ These qualities allow a person to take responsibility for his or her action without fear of rejection. Through confession each acknowledges his or her own contribution to the problem.²⁵⁷ At the same time confession serves as a request for assistance to move forward to overcome the problem. There is also a strong sense of identification with the group which serves as a motivation for change. In other words, members learn new roles by imitating the behaviour of the other members of the community.²⁵⁸ In this connection Steckel observes that the community of believers is the sort of environment where behaviour modification can be most effective.²⁵⁹ Pointing to the findings of the psychological sciences he states:

The lesson of behavioral psychology and behavioral modification is clearly the lesson that environmental or external reinforcers are constantly involved in shaping how we act.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴ Ibid.,p. 13

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Steckel, Theology and Ethics of Behaviour Modification, pp. 150-151

²⁶⁰ Ibid.,p. 152

However, imitation must move to internalization of the norms of the group. This only comes through long term commitment by the members of the group to one another.²⁶¹ The goal is that the members of the healing community are expected and encouraged to live in a way that transcends their previous life roles.²⁶²

It should be obvious that this is nothing less than a description of the dynamics that should take place within the community of believers. In this connection, Collins points out that precisely because of its group characteristics, "in all society, the church undoubtedly has the greatest potential for being a therapeutic community".²⁶³ Realising that there are differences between the believing community and a therapeutic group, Carter and Narramore nevertheless, point out:

While the goals, composition, leadership techniques may vary, both the 'body life' movement and the group movement within psychology are focusing on similar dynamics.²⁶⁴

Although there are similarities, there is one major difference, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believing community. We have already seen that this is a point Wheeler Robinson makes.²⁶⁵ Similarly Tidball, commenting on the difference states:

The church should be the best therapeutic community in the world. Unlike any therapeutic community built

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 15

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ G.Collins, Christian Counseling, p. 18

²⁶⁴ Carter, Narramore, the Integration of Psychology and Theology, p. 67

²⁶⁵ Robinson, The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p. 142

around a psychological counselor for his clients, it is not an artificial community.²⁶⁶

As an example of this kind of therapeutic community, Bishop refers to the Church of the Redeemer in Houston with which he was involved and where he was able to actually observe the process of community life and the healing experience of members within that community.²⁶⁷ He shows that this congregation developed a communal life style. According to Bishop: "The primary social units of healing interaction in the community were households and relationships within them".²⁶⁸ The community itself consisted primarily of Mexican Americans and black Americans, many of whom had problems with alcohol, drugs, personality disorders, marital problems and thought disorders.²⁶⁹

Although there are factors which are peculiar to this community, nevertheless as Bishop points out:

The life of the community at Redeemer demonstrated how the essential elements of healing community may be found within an established church body, albeit in this case a somewhat unusual church body.²⁷⁰

According to Almond:

The Church may provide an almost ideal setting for formation of healing community with its shared beliefs,

²⁶⁶ Atkinson, Field (eds)., New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology", p. 46

²⁶⁷ Bishop, "Healing in the Koinonia: Therapeutic Dynamics of Church Community", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1985, Vol 13, No. 1 p. 15

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 16

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 16

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 19

involvement with and caring about fellow members and charisma, the sense of something out of the ordinary.²⁷¹

This does not mean that we should regard the church as only a place of emotional sickness. Its membership includes both those who are well and those who have emotional and psychological problems. But the point is that those who have personality disorders should find that the community of believers is a context for healing. According to Clinebell:

A 'good church' like a 'good marriage' is one within which persons find a quality of relationships which satisfies their heart hunger. The inspiration, fellowship, and sense of belonging which comes from involvement in the life of the church where people are 'members one of another' (Rom. 12:5) is an important source of psychological nourishment.²⁷²

From our discussion thus far it is obvious that although Adams has attempted to develop a biblical model of counselling, his theological presuppositions, rooted in classical Protestantism, has been a major obstacle to his understanding of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church. He simply assumes that the primary means the Holy Spirit uses to bring about change is the Bible. Although it is accepted that the Holy Spirit does use the Bible as an instrument of change, it is within the community of believers that this takes place. Adams claims to give the Holy Spirit his rightful place in counselling, however, he focuses on only one means the Holy Spirit uses to bring about change. Nouthetic counselling needs a corrective and that corrective is the pneumological dimension. Adams needs to give

²⁷¹ R. Almond, The healing community: Dynamics of the Therapeutic milieu, p. 141

²⁷² Clinebell, The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church, p. 25

consideration to the important place of relationships within the community of believers. There is a need to develop a counselling theory that sets out the principles for the development of healing relationships. According to Siang-Yang Tan, Professor of Psychology in the Graduate School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary, lay Christian counselling is a significant part of Christian psychology and counselling as it faces the year 2000.²⁷³ In this connection Tan specifically states:

A crucial need will be to focus on the significance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, including appropriate spiritual gifts...and spiritual power as effective lay Christian caring and counseling ministries.²⁷⁴

Having discussed the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the community of believers as a corrective to Adams' individualistic, problem centred approach to counselling, it is now necessary to consider the relationship of the Holy Spirit to society at large. In this connection we will look at those wider aspects of the Holy Spirit's work in the context of his relationship with the kingdom of God. The reason for taking this perspective will become clear in our discussion.

4.4 The relationship of the Holy Spirit and the kingdom.

Our aim in this section will be to show that Adams has too limited a view of the work of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of our discussion will be to provide a corrective for certain aspects of Adams' counselling theory. In particular we will look at

²⁷³ S. Tan, "Lay Christians Counseling: The Next Decade", Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 1990, Vol 9, No. 3, p. 59

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 60

Adams' rejection of the psychological sciences and non-Christian counsellors and his refusal to counsel non-Christians. Why does Adams hold these views? The opinion proposed in this dissertation is that it is the result of Adams' limited view of the work of the Holy Spirit. As we have already seen, Adams confines the work of the Holy Spirit to the believing community and more specifically to the Bible. He subsumes the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. It is obvious then that Adams sees no role for the Holy Spirit outside the believing community, the church. However, we will argue that there is a need to give consideration to the wider aspects of the Holy Spirit's work. In this regard it will be shown that the Holy Spirit's work is not confined to the church. He also is at work in the world, at work in the establishment of God's kingdom. From this perspective it will be shown that if we take the Spirit's work in the world seriously it will be seen that there is no conflict between the psychological sciences and Christian counselling. Furthermore, from this perspective we will attempt to show that there is a place for counselling non-Christians.

4.4.1 Adams' rejection of the psychological sciences.

We have seen that one of the distinctives of Adams' nouthetic counselling is his rejection of the psychological sciences. He consistently maintains that the psychological sciences do not provide more information about human nature, human pathology and the human personality than the Bible.²⁷⁵ Although he claims that he does not totally disregard science, he believes it only serves

²⁷⁵ Adams, The Christian Counselors Manual, p. 92

as a "useful adjunct".²⁷⁶ In other words, the psychological sciences do not have a significant role in supplementing our understanding of humanity. He insists that any truth necessary for counselling that a clinical counselling psychologist may discover, even if it is not contrary to the Bible, "will be found already in purer form in the Bible".²⁷⁷ This means that in reality the psychological sciences can add nothing to our understanding of the man and his problems, everything necessary is already in the Bible. For this reason Adams rejects any eclectic approach to counselling. He is adamant that Christian counselling is in no way "dependent upon psychology for its existence or the existence of any part of it".²⁷⁸

As we have already stated Adams holds this view because he has a limited understanding of pneumatology. In our discussion we will attempt to prove that in spite of Adams' claim that he gives the Holy Spirit his rightful place in counselling, he in fact limits the Holy Spirit. It should be pointed out that although he seeks a firm theological base for his counselling, it appears that he has a limited understanding of many recent developments in theology.

Roman Catholic theologian, Kilian McDonnell, discussing some major issues in pneumatology today observes that one of the most

²⁷⁶ Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. LXXXI

²⁷⁷ Adams, How to help People Change: The Four Step Biblical Process, p. 39

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 34

important tasks facing systematic theology is the development of a mature theology of the Spirit.²⁷⁹ One of the areas of pneumatology which he mentions is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to society at large. According to McDonnell, this has been an area of pneumatology which has not received much attention in Protestant or Roman Catholic theology.²⁸⁰ In this connection he observes:

Protestant theology fell back to a predominantly soteriological conception of the Spirit. In pietism, the Spirit was bound to subjective experience.²⁸¹

As a whole evangelicalism has not taken seriously enough the Holy Spirit's role in society at large. McDonnell warns that

if one loses sight of the relation of the Spirit to creation and to the whole cosmic dimension, then there is no recourse to the Spirit to explain the character and quality of created reality. Then it is difficult to relate the Spirit to nature, to moral, cultural, and political life. Spirit becomes too sacralized, too tied to holy objects and events.²⁸²

For this reason he argues:

What needs to be retained is the cosmic dimension of the Creator Spirit, whose creative act embraces the whole of creation which is destined for redemption.²⁸³

This is the aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit which is absent from nouthetic counselling theory. Adams sees no role for the Holy Spirit in society at large. The Holy Spirit's revelation is confined to the Bible. There can be no legitimate revelation in

²⁷⁹ McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", Theology Today, Vol XXXIX, No 2. July 1982,

²⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 142, 150

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 151

society at large. This is in fact why Adams rejects the legitimacy of the psychological sciences and sees no place for non-Christian counsellors and refuses to counsel non-Christians. Adams' Holy Spirit is too sacralized and too tied to holy objects and events.

In providing a corrective for Adams, we will look at the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the world, society at large. Whilst fully accepting the Holy Spirit's unique soteriological significance, it will be shown that recent trends in theology have alerted us to the importance of the wider role of the Holy Spirit. It will be specifically shown that the Holy Spirit is also at work in non-Christians and that this work must be taken seriously if we are to have a biblical pneumatology. These insights will be applied to Adams' counselling theory as a corrective. Hendrikus Berkhof has convincingly dealt with the wider aspects of the Spirit's work. In our discussion we will draw on some of his insights as he more than any other recent theologian has attempted to develop a more mature pneumatology. Berkhof, who approaches his subject from a Reformed perspective, has to his credit not lost sight of the soteriological significance of the role of the Holy Spirit. In fact he shows that there should be no division between soteriology and eschatology which brings into focus the kingdom dimension. The one is the fruit of the other.²⁸⁴

As we have already pointed out in this dissertation, for Adams,

²⁸⁴ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 104

the Spirit's most significant work is with the believer and the Scriptures. To that end the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the communication and preservation of God's revelation in the Scriptures. The Spirit is also involved in the work of salvation and sanctification of the individual believer. In other words, the Spirit's work is largely confined to believers. This is quite clear when one tries to find references to wider aspects of the Spirit's work in the writings of Adams. There is virtually no reference made to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to society at large, except when he discusses the need to evangelise but not counsel non-Christians.

In contrast to this, Berkhof argues that the whole of creation is the field of the Holy Spirit's operation.²⁸⁵ He shows that the Old Testament stresses the Holy Spirit's work in creation and preservation.²⁸⁶ Similarly Eduard Schweizer points out that in the Old Testament God was not only at work with Israel, but in the other nations as well. God, in fact, has a purpose for whole world.²⁸⁷ Wheeler Robinson, using the Old Testament, also points out "that the Spirit of God cannot be confined to the Christian Church".²⁸⁸ In fact

The God of the Church is also the God of Nature and of History....We shall be nearer that truth if we keep in mind His constant activity as Spirit in the whole extra-ecclesiastical world, whilst emphasizing the

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 95

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Schweizer, The Holy Spirit, p. 19

²⁸⁸ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p. 157

unique and supreme activity of His operation through the historical personality and work of Jesus Christ.²⁸⁹

In the New Testament, the stress falls on the Spirit's work of restoration and reconciliation of the creation.²⁹⁰ Berkhof points out that the cosmic dimensions of pneumatology has not received much attention in theology.²⁹¹ He observes that if the Spirit is the name of God and the exalted Christ in action, then the whole creation is brought into the sphere of his operation.²⁹² Christ is the Saviour of the world and also the head of all mankind.²⁹³ Furthermore, the Spirit's specific work is mission, which encompasses the world. For these reasons Berkhof maintains that the Spirit's work should not be limited to the church.²⁹⁴ In fact, the Spirit's great objective is eschatological, the recreation of all things.²⁹⁵ In other words, the establishment of the kingdom of God.²⁹⁶

Pentecost is significant in Berkhof's understanding of the wider aspects of the Spirit's work.²⁹⁷ At Pentecost the Spirit was

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 96

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.,p. 94

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.,p. 104

²⁹⁶ Ibid.,p. 101

²⁹⁷ Ibid.,p. 100

poured out upon all flesh.²⁹⁸ Pentecost announces to us the truth that God is present and active beyond the borders of the sphere in which Christ is being confessed. The whole world is his abode.²⁹⁹ Another Reformed theologian, Berkouwer, similarly maintains that

Since the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, God's activity in this world, in the Church community and in the individual is operative through the same Holy Spirit.³⁰⁰

Berkhof believes we have not worked out the full implications of this because we limit the Spirit's operation to the church and his work of conversion.³⁰¹ He makes it clear "that the impact of the Spirit as the active presence of Jesus Christ in the world is far wider than we are aware of".³⁰² We need to understand that the work of the Spirit is directed toward the establishment of the kingdom of God.³⁰³ Eschatology is the fruit of soteriology. But Wheeler Robinson reminds us that "we cannot ... identify the kingdom of God with the Church"³⁰⁴ The kingdom embraces all mankind not just

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.,p. 101

³⁰⁰ Berkouwer, The Church, p. 20

³⁰¹ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 100

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.,p. 101

³⁰⁴ Wheeler Robinson. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p 157

the believing community. According to Walter Rauschenbusch, the Baptist theologian: "The Kingdom of God is not confined within the limits of the Church and its activities. It embraces the whole of human life".³⁰⁵ He points out that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is not just to implement the church but to bring about the church in order that the church can be a pointer to the kingdom of God.³⁰⁶ He makes this quite clear when he states: "Since the Kingdom is the supreme end of God, it must be the purpose for which the Church exists".³⁰⁷

In what way does the Holy Spirit manifest himself in the world today in establishing God's kingdom? Berkhof maintains that the Spirit manifests himself in the world in the very process of what he calls secularization.³⁰⁸ This is part of the Spirit's moving out into the world, part of the process of establishing the kingdom.³⁰⁹ The Spirit has entered into a relationship with secular reality.³¹⁰ It is wrong to

³⁰⁵ John Mcquarrie (ed.), Contemporary Religious Thinkers, Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Kingdom of God", pp. 225-226

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 100

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

assume that experience of God in this world is limited to experiences of individual and communal piety within the sphere of Christian faith and of the church. In this regard, Berkhof observes:

The work of the Spirit in our modern so-called secularized world reminds us of the fact that our exalted Lord is not only the Head of his church but also primarily the Head of the world. The Spirit is not locked up in the church. We know that his work in the world is ambiguous; but so is his work in the church.³¹¹

On this basis, Berkhof argues that discoveries of science and the invention of techniques as well as developments in the social and political areas are a fruit of the Spirit's wider work.³¹² The relevancy of Berkhof's understanding of the wider aspects of the Spirit's work is clear when one compares his views with that of Adams. It is obvious that Adams would reject this wider aspect of the Spirit's work. By way of contrast, because Berkhof believes that the Holy Spirit also works outside the church, in society at large, he accepts that the Holy Spirit could work in the psychological sciences and he would accept findings of the psychological sciences as quite legitimate information for Christians to use. This means that there is a place for specialist training in the psychological sciences. This point needs to be made because it should not be concluded from our discussion above that there is no place for the specialist counsellor. What has

³¹¹ Ibid.,p. 104

³¹² Ibid.,p. 102

been stressed is the fact that the primary means of change and healing is the individual's relationship with the Holy Spirit in the community of believers.

What then is the role of the specialist counsellor? With specialist training in the psychological sciences, the counsellor will be in a position to deal with the more complex problems of human pathology. In addition, a specialist counsellor can assist people in understanding and building interpersonal relationships.³¹³ The specialist counsellor can also provide guidance and training and demonstrate specific competence or counselling skills essential to helping people with their problems.³¹⁴ At this point it is pertinent to refer to an appeal made by Neville Heuer in his book, Let My People Go. He decries the fact that generally, the church has under-utilized professional people who are church members in their ministry of caring.³¹⁵ There are many professional people in membership in our churches such as psychiatrists, medical doctors, child guidance specialists, industrial psychologists, social workers, etc.,

³¹³ M.G. Gilbert, R.T. Brock (eds.), The Holy Spirit and Counseling, J.V. Rozell, "Lay Counseling in the Local Church", p. 110

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ N.A.C. Heuer, Let My People Go, p. 16

whose skills are never used.³¹⁶ Heuer appeals:

When will the Church realise that ministry cannot be hogged by the chosen few. When will it realise that ministry is always the work of teams. No human problem has only one perspective.³¹⁷

However, for effective counselling, the specialist must relate within the community of believers, drawing on the healing potential within that body. What is envisaged here is not just making use of lay counsellors, but encouraging the individual to relate to the body and encouraging, assisting and guiding the individual to build relationships in the community. In other words, the specialist must not only be aware of human pathology, but also have a clear understanding of the church as a therapeutic society.

What about the findings of those who are outside the believing community and even those who reject God? According to Berkhof those outside the church "who are not even aware of the source of their inspiration benefit unconsciously from this movement of the Spirit".³¹⁸ Similarly Schweizer points out that the Holy Spirit makes us sensitive to the discoveries of social analysis and new social programmes, even when produced by groups that have little or nothing to

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

do with the church.³¹⁹ Berkhof admits that this movement of the Spirit may not lead those involved in this wider work into the believing community. This is because

The Spirit's work always has a double effect which holds good not only on a personal level but also on the cultural level. The Spirit's liberation can lead to reckless autonomy as well as acceptance of the Father of Jesus Christ as the Lord whom we in liberty have to serve.³²⁰

In other words, it is not true, as Adams maintains that just because men like Freud, Rogers and Skinner work from non-Christian presuppositions, their work has no value for Christians, and that the whole of their work must be rejected.³²¹ Again we see that it is because Adams has a limited understanding of pneumatology that he rejects the findings of the psychological sciences.

4.4.2 Adams and non-Christian counsellors and counselling non-Christians

Another distinctive of nouthetic counselling is Adams' insistence that only Christians should counsel. There is no place for a non-Christian counsellor. We saw that he in fact believes that only those ordained into the ministry of the word are qualified and have the authority to counsel.

³¹⁹ Schweizer, The Holy Spirit, p. 132

³²⁰ Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 103

³²¹ Adams, Competent to Counsel, pp. 102-103

Adams also will not counsel a non-Christian.³²² He believes that merely to assist a non-Christian deal with his or her problems is not getting to the root of the problem, which is sin and that person's relationship with God. He takes a very strong stand on this point when he states:

you must not try to counsel unbelievers because you cannot. If our desire in counseling is to effect change that is pleasing to God, then it is utterly impossible to counsel unbelievers.³²³

Is it not possible to at least help the non-Christian counsellee with his or her immediate problem, even if they do not come to faith in Christ? Adams maintains that he is not interested in mere modification of personal behaviour.³²⁴

In this connection Adams makes it quite clear:

God does not want the counselor to aid and abet non-Christian in exchanging one sinful pattern for another (that is reformation); he has called us rather, to a ministry of reconciliation and renewal.³²⁵

Adams believes that behaviour modification only results in:

outer conformity to the Bible, which is hypocrisy, giving the counselee the impression that his or her behaviour modification is pleasing to God, thus giving the counselee a false sense of assurance, setting the counselee up for a relapse because the root of the problem has not been dealt with, substituting human

³²² Adams, More than Redemption, p. 150

³²³ Adams, Ready to Restore: The Laymen's Guide to Christian Counseling, p. 20

³²⁴ Adams, How to help People Change: The Four-Step Biblical Process, p. XII

³²⁵ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 150

reformation for spiritual transformation.³²⁶

For these reasons Adams maintains that an unbeliever should be "precounseled",³²⁷ by which he means evangelised. Adams makes this quite clear when he states: "To be true to God's commission and to thus offer an adequate solution to man's needs, evangelism is absolutely essential to counseling".³²⁸ The immediate problem is therefore set aside until this precounselling has had its effect. In this regard Adams insists:

in precounseling unbelievers, the Christian counselor must make it abundantly clear from the outset that he has not yet begun to counsel, and that, under the circumstances, it is not possible to do so.³²⁹

What happens if even in the precounselling the person does not come to faith in Christ? Adams answers:

When after adequate precounseling, an unbeliever refuses to trust Christ as Saviour, what can be done? I always weave a brief, pointed Scripture portion into the final counseling session as often as I canThe passage I use is Proverbs 13:15b: 'the way of the transgressor is hard.'³³⁰

The purpose of this approach is that, hopefully, when the non-Christian experiences the hardship of his problem he or she will return and come to faith in Christ. Apart from the

³²⁶ Adams, Ready to Restore, p. 21

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 150

³²⁹ Adams, Ready to Restore, p. 21

³³⁰ Adams, Ready to Restore, p. 22

fact that the work of regeneration is not something in a person's own power but something divine, which Adams admits,³³¹ there are other objections to Adams' attitude to non-Christians.

Is there not a place for helping non-Christians with their problems even if they do not come to faith in Christ? From our discussion regarding the wider aspects of the Holy Spirit's work there is obviously a place for counselling non-Christians. According to Berkhof, the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work is also manifested in the social areas.³³² The Spirit is at work in freeing humanity from various tyrannies, to restore persons to spiritual, emotional and physical wholeness.³³³ Berkhof calls this the humanizing work of the Holy Spirit.³³⁴ On this basis Berkhof would see a place for helping persons irrespective of their becoming Christians. Even a move toward psychological wholeness is a sign pointing to the kingdom.³³⁵ In other words, the non-Christian can also experience some of the liberating effects of the gospel on a personal level. In this regard

³³¹ Adams, More than Redemption, p. 177

³³² Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 102

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 104

³³⁵ Ibid.

then:

The church has to support the process of emancipating as much as she can; at the same time she has to preach the source and the meaning of the revolutionary movement.³³⁶

In this connection, Brister, the Baptist theologian, argues that on the basis of God's concern for the world, we need to place the caring concern of the church upon a broad base.³³⁷ He points to Christ's healing ministry as an example of this. Jesus Christ showed care and concern and healed even those who did not place their complete faith in him.³³⁸ He makes this point when he states:

God's people care for sick humanity as they incarnate his redemptive presence in life, where the real needs are (John 17:15-26).³³⁹

Brister also relates this wider ministry to the mission of the church, which includes all kinds of needs.³⁴⁰

There are obvious parallels between our discussion thus far and what is known in theology as the doctrine of common grace. As this is a doctrine which has developed within Reformed theology, we will deal with it in our evaluation of

³³⁶ Ibid.,p. 103

³³⁷ Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church, pp. 28-29

³³⁸ Ibid.,p. 30

³³⁹ Ibid.,p. XXIII

³⁴⁰ Ibid.,p. 86

Adams' rejection of the psychological sciences and counselling non-Christians.

4.4.3. The implications of common grace for counselling.

In evangelical theology the existence of common grace has traditionally been held. It was formulated by Reformed theology with its emphasis on the depravity of humanity to account for the fact that unbelievers, that is, society at large, is endowed with special gifts and talents and make contributions to the development of science and art, and can speak the truth and do good to others. According to Charles Hodge, the great Reformed theologian, common grace can be seen in the fact that the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of life, "is present with every human mind, enforcing truth, restraining from evil, exciting to good and imparting wisdom or strength"³⁴¹ Hodge was following in the footsteps of John Calvin, who in his Institutes of the Christian Religion made a strong plea for accepting truths discovered by the sciences. Calvin pointed out that ultimately all truth has its origin in the Holy Spirit. We must, therefore be careful not to reject truths when they come from "the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics and other similar sciences, let us avail ourselves of it".³⁴² More recently, it was John

³⁴¹ Hodge, Systematic Theology - Vol. II, p.657

³⁴² John Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, 2.2. pp. 15-16

Murray who argued that all gifts, talents and aptitudes come from God which he gives for the benefit of the human race.³⁴³ The relevance of common grace for counselling and the for our discussion is obvious. According to John Carter:

Any view of counseling which calls itself biblical must recognise that God is at work in His world (which includes mankind) and also in redemption.³⁴⁴

This means that discoveries made by non-Christians in the areas of psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy etc., should not be rejected as Adams does. According to Kirwan, Adams is going beyond van Til, on whom he bases his presuppositional thinking, who in his younger days stressed that non-Christian scientists using Christian presuppositions,

Bring to light a great deal of truth about the facts and laws of the universe....And as Christians we may and should make grateful use of truth, from whatever source its springs, because ultimately all truths spring from God.³⁴⁵

This means that the Christian counsellor, on the basis of common grace, can legitimately make use of, and build upon, the findings of non-Christian scientists. The doctrine of common grace recognises that the Holy Spirit's endowments of intellect, reason and talents are distinct from his work of

³⁴³ John Murray, Collected Writings - Volume 2. p. 102

³⁴⁴ Carter, "Toward a Biblical Model of Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 45:8, Spring 1980, p. 45

³⁴⁵ C. van Til, Articles on Science, p.38, quoted in W.T. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p. 26

regeneration and sanctification in the individual. That is why Kirwan states:

Sigmund Freud, Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner and others ...although their philosophical conclusions are doubtless anti-Christian, their empirical findings are not. Whether or not they acknowledge that human personality is made in the image of God, the fact remains that they have made a thorough study of personality.³⁴⁶

On the basis of common grace, "we accept the findings of non-Christian scientists to the extent that their non-Christian presuppositions have not coloured the truth discovered".³⁴⁷

This point is not disputed when it is applied to other disciplines, for example medicine, physics, chemistry, literature, engineering or business science. The question that needs to be asked is, what makes the psychological sciences different? Is God not really the Creator of the psychological laws as of the physical laws? John Carter has interestingly pointed out that Adams himself relies on the psychological theories of Glasser, Mowrer and Szasz to fill in the specifics of counselling theory and psychic functioning that is not supplied in the Scriptures.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-26

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 58

³⁴⁸ Carter, "Nouthetic Counseling Refuted: Reply to Ganz", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p. 208

Competent to Counsel cannot be read by those who have read Mowrer's Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion and The New Group Therapy without perceiving Mowrer's influence.³⁴⁹

It is obvious that in rejecting the findings of the psychological sciences Adams is in fact out of step even with the main body of Reformed theology which he claims, forms the basis of his counselling.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to show that Adams' counselling theory needs a corrective. Our discussion has taken place in the context of Reformed theology and in particular, recent trends in the area of pneumatology. We have seen that Adams claims to give the Holy Spirit the central place in his counselling, however, from our discussion we have seen that in fact, he has a very limited understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. He limits the Holy Spirit to the Bible and the individual believer. It is through the Bible that a person is brought to faith in Christ, and it is through the Bible that the individual changes and grows to maturity. The Holy Spirit is mediated to the individual through the Bible.

We believe that this is probably one of the major weaknesses in nouthetic counselling. Because Adams has not understood, or taken into account, the wider aspects of pneumatology, he has ignored one of the most important means the Holy Spirit uses to bring about change and maturity in an individual, the church as a community of believers, in the context of loving and accepting relationships. Adams' neglect of the wider aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit has resulted in an individualistic and problem centred approach to counselling. Although Adams claims that nouthetic counselling restores counselling to the church, the focus of his counselling is

the pastor/counsellor rather than the resources of the whole body.

We have also seen that Adams' limited understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit has resulted in his rejection of the psychological sciences as well as a refusal to counsel non-Christians. It is unfortunate that the point which Adams wishes to stress, the need for counselling to take the ministry of the Holy Spirit seriously, is the point where he is weakest. He has not taken the ministry of the Holy Spirit seriously. His approach to counselling is not pneumatological, but biblicist.

What is the alternative which we suggest as a corrective for Adams? In providing a corrective we have argued that counselling should be seen in the context of the full ministry of the Holy Spirit. What is thus being offered is another perspective on change and growth that moves the focus from counselling per se to the healing potential within the church. If the church is the visible means through which the Holy Spirit ministers healing and growth then attention must be given to creating and developing structures within the church that can promote and release this healing potential that exists within the community. There is a need to understand the dynamics of change which is inherent in the community of believers. This is uncharted territory, but it

is suggested that we need to work out models, concepts, principles and practical guidelines of utilizing the full potential of change in the community of believers.

From a theological perspective, this brings into view the whole concept of sanctification. To a large extent, in evangelical circles, sanctification is largely understood individualistically and as a result it has been approached either legalistically or mystically. There is a need to relate the process of sanctification to the community. Sanctification needs to be seen corporately and not individualistically.

To be more specific, we have seen that relationships in the body are the channel through which the Holy Spirit can significantly touch the lives of those in that community, as well as those who are under the weight of heavy problems that cause havoc in their lives. It is therefore necessary to look more carefully at how meaningful relationships can be developed in the church community. This will mean that interaction in the church must move beyond formal services and formal teaching. Fellowship must mean more than programmes that only promote superficial interaction between people.

We have a model in the early church. This emerges

particularly in Paul's letters to the churches. It is obvious from these letters that Paul had to deal with many behavioural problems, for example, immorality, impurity, strife, jealousy, idolatry, sorcery, drunkenness, carousing³⁵⁰ homosexuality, adultery, and stealing³⁵¹. These were the kind of behaviour problems in the society of that time. In the context of these problems, Paul's goal was to help each member of the community become mature in Christ and a vital functioning part of the community. We have already referred to the "one another" Pauline injunctions which all relate to close personal relationships in the community of believers. Paul expected the believers in these various local churches to enter into loving relationships with one another. These interpersonal relationships provided social reinforcers of encouragement, fellowship, affection and compassion to shape behaviour.

How can this work out in practice in a twentieth century church? It is suggested that structures be developed within the local church that would encourage the growth of close fellowship ties through small fellowship groups. The focus of these groups would not be Bible study but the development of close caring relationships. Recently such groups have been

³⁵⁰ Galations 5:19-21

³⁵¹ I Corinthians 6:9-12

emerging in many evangelical churches throughout the world, variously called Cell Groups, Home Churches, Home Groups. These have been developed to promote nurture and ministry in the community. There is a need to provide teaching and guidance on the dynamics of relationships within these groups. In this regard, specialist counsellors could assist in the development of relational and problem solving skills in such groups. Such groups would need to be brought under the control of the church leaders so that they would be related to the whole church and do not just become isolated groups within the church. These groups would need to be based on biblical principles, and focus on developing fellowship and mutual caring and concern.

What about prospects of future development? There is a real need to set up models where these principles are worked out in practice. It will be necessary to monitor progress. In other words, there is a need for empirical research to test the workability of this model. Acknowledging that much of what we wish to see is beyond the realm of human observation, in that it has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, nevertheless, if, what has been argued in this dissertation is true, then it follows that the principles of change in the body of believers should yield positive results.

That this is a long term project should not deter us since

increased alienation in our society means that there is going to be an increasing need for the church to be a therapeutic community. Perhaps this will be the main area of mission for the church as we move into the twenty first century.

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