Pastoral care: A calling or a profession?

While reflecting on our professionalising process over the past year, we are constantly confronted with the question of why we need to professionalise. Do we want to make money, do we want to feel more important, or do we want to be more responsible and competent in our profession?

It became clear that some members wanted professionalisation desperately for recognition, others for protection, and many wanted it to be able to generate an income.

Whatever the desire, we have to rethink the whole reason for our professionalisation process. Yes, it is about the recognition of our very dear profession, our whole business of providing the best competent help and care for people in need, but it is also about integrity, where the caregiver puts himself on the line for the wellness of others.

While the world aims for recognition and works for financial reward, caregivers work for the satisfaction of making a meaningful difference in other peoples’ lives.

The professionalisation process has created a pathway to learning. The different designations are there to motivate us to further our training and to better participate in our education.

As caregivers who represent the great Caregiver, our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to be excellent in conducting our business, because His honour is at stake. Can we be satisfied to be just mediocre caregivers, or do we need to be excellent in our caregiving practice?

Our focus and dedication will determine our level of input and the outcome thereof. In order to be truly professional, we need to be aware of all the disciplines of Pastoral Care and Counselling as a profession.

The Executive is currently refining the scope of practice and the ethical code for the proposed new professional body. We are also documenting the process of setting up a private practice.

As soon as we receive the new company registration number from CIPC, we can submit our final application for the recognition of the Professional Body for Pastoral Care and Counselling of South Africa.

Let us pray for guidance and patience to keep on focusing on our goal, but also ask our Lord to give us the passion, dedication and caring for the people in need, for the uplifting of our communities and for the glory of the Kingdom of God.

Dr Tertius Erasmus


Post traumatic stress in chaplaincy: Debriefing within pastoral care giving

Rev Frank Meulneld, SAAP Vice-chairperson, recently started his doctoral studies. Following is an introduction to his thesis.

Motivation for the study

This academic study will discuss the topic of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) in the (military) chaplaincy, and debriefing within pastoral care giving. Although PTS debriefing has always been regarded as being in the domain of psychology, a strong case exists to include pastoral care and counselling in the debriefing process.

In debriefing members of the City of Johannesburg Emergency Management Services (EMS) after they had attended traumatic accident scenarios and/or house or shack fires with loss of life, PTS and debriefing had been approached from a psychological stance. The author always wondered why pastoral care and counselling within PTS and debriefing was lacking.

As a result, the need to research the role of pastoral care and counselling within PTS and debriefing has been identified. This research brings the case for the relevancy of military chaplains to be involved with PTS and its debriefing, but from the perspective of pastoral care giving.

Research problem

What is the role of the chaplain regarding Post Traumatic Stress? How is pastoral care giving applied within Post Traumatic Stress?

As can be derived from the motivation for the study, the military chaplain plays a vital role regarding PTS, as well as the pastoral care and counselling within PTS and debriefing.

In too many instances the role of the chaplain is minimised regarding PTS and he, due to his unique involvement with military personnel and the important principle of “ministry by presence”, is present wherever his "clients" might be. Even on the battlefield, one will find a chaplain present, unlike the other health care professionals e.g. social work officers or psychologists. As a result, soldiers trust chaplains and share their experiences, including PTS. This highlights the important role that pastoral care and counselling plays, by means of the chaplain, in ministering to the soldiers.

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been involved with external deployments for over ten years, by sending its soldiers and chaplains to numerous African countries. These soldiers are exposed to PTS and need to be debriefed. The military chaplain, by being “on site”, can indeed provide the debriefing needed.

From his own experience, the author has seen that the introduction of religion/faith into the entire process of Post Traumatic Stress Debriefing, assists the traumatised victims greatly. This remains an area where extensive research has been lacking and further studies and research in this regard are much needed, particularly with the many faith-based communities within (South) Africa.

The SANDF personnel are getting more exposed to trauma due to the military assistance within the context of human security and it is vital that the chaplain, as part of the multi-disciplinary team, provides pastoral trauma support to these soldiers, as many of them are poorly equipped to deal with trauma themselves.

The chaplain, being trained in pastoral care and counselling, has an important role and function in assisting those under his care, who have experienced traumatic events. He should be able to conduct debriefing by means of a pastoral care and counselling model.

If the chaplain can indeed integrate pastoral care and counselling in his military ministry, with specific reference to Post Traumatic Stress and debriefing, the importance of a pastoral model will be advocated amongst the various debriefing models available today, which still excludes pastoral care giving.

Soldiers are currently deployed externally (outside the borders of South Africa) and internally (within South Africa, including border patrols) and are consequently exposed to traumatic events like shooting incidents, loss of life and injuries involving members of the community, other military forces (including rebel forces) and their own members.
Facebook and Marriage

By Emily Macke

Two recent headlines on Discovery News, an online news aggregator, gave conflicting thoughts regarding the effects of social networking on dating and marriage.

“How social media overload can lead to break-ups” shares studies that show a link between social networking and failed relationships. On the other hand, “Facebook gets credit for lasting marriages” highlights a study that found that couples who meet via the social networking site report higher satisfaction with their marriages.

What is the relationship between social media and romantic relationships, particularly marriage? Does it help or harm? That depends, say the studies, on why one is using social media and how much time is devoted to it.

In a sample of 18,527 adults from the United States who were married between 2005 and 2012, seven percent said they met their spouse through social media sites. The same study noted no significant difference in divorce between those who met online and those who met in real life. At the same time, the study noted that those who met via social media “tended to be more satisfied with their relationships than those who met in other ways.”

Study author Jeffrey Hall, a communications researcher at Kansas University, is unsure of why social media results in happier relationships, but he notes that one’s Facebook profile “tends to be a pretty honest representation of who they are.”

From a different perspective, could that profile honesty lead to the demise of a relationship? One study noted that those who spend more time on social networking sites report more conflicts in their relationships and are more likely to break up.

“If you’re looking through your newsfeed and you see stuff related to your partner and you find out that an attractive person you don’t know is posting likes or comments on your partner’s photos, you might start wondering, ‘Who is this person?’ That can be a huge catalyst for jealousy for certain individuals.”

“Before social media, if you wanted to find information about ex-partners or new partners, you had to do more digging with high risk strategies. Now, having Facebook, which is anonymous and free, it’s much easier to track people.”

Something as seemingly innocuous as using Facebook can have disastrous consequences. A 2011 survey found that Facebook was “cited in as many as a third of divorce filings, often mentioning inappropriate messages to other friends or mean posts and comments.” More than 80 percent of American attorneys had seen a rise in social networking evidence in divorce trials during the past five years.

With more than a billion monthly Facebook users, and 550 million Twitter users, these statistics could have far reaching consequences.

The most active Facebook users experience the most Facebook related conflicts. Similarly, the more active Twitter users reported more conflicts on Twitter and in their relationships.

The concrete reasons remain unclear, but one potential conflict documented in other studies is the pervasive use of social media during situations that were once reserved for meaningful conversation.

In 2011, British researchers found that adults spend an average of 48 minutes on their smartphones during a date. Those under the age of 25 reportedly spend double that time. The focus shifted to technology-enabled relationships that sought the emotional without the physical.

Essayist Caitlin Dewey paints a crisp picture of the struggle between Internet dating and real life. She writes of her Skype and instant messaging relationship with Will, a young man she met at a conference, who lives hundreds of miles away. Although months of online interactions fueled an intimate friendship, Dewey’s description of their “real life” encounter reveals a struggle between what they could share between screens versus in-person:

“But after we kissed and ate pizza and went back to his house, we struggled for things to talk about. In real life, Will stared off at nothing while I talked. In real life, he had no questions about the drive or my work or the stuff that waited for me when I went back to school.”

“He took me out for dinner and read his e-mail while we waited for our food. He apologized profusely, but still checked his Web site’s traffic stats while we sat in his living room.”

“He took me to a party at his friends’ house where they proceeded to argue for hours about Web design while I sat on a futon and stared at the ceiling, drunk and bored and terribly concerned that I looked thinner online. At points, he grabbed my hand and gave me small, apologetic smiles. It seemed like a strategy game: a constant dance of
reaching for me and pulling back, of intimacy and distance, of real life and Internet make-believe.”

Dewey’s essay was entitled, “Even in Real Life, There Were Screens Between Us.” The studies profiled on Discovery News underscore this delicate dance between the social media world and “real life” interactions for those who are married or dat-

ing, highlighting the impact, for good or ill, the Internet or smartphone screen can have on our face-to-face relationships.

Extracted from http://www.foryourmarriage.org/facebook-and-marriage/

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**SILENCE**

“There are all kinds of silences and each of them means a different thing.

There is the silence that comes with morning in a forest, and this is different from the silence of a sleeping city.

There is silence after a rainstorm, and before a rainstorm, and these are not the same.

There is the silence of emptiness, the silence of fear, the silence of doubt.

There is a certain silence that can emanate from a lifeless object as from a chair lately used, or from a piano with old dust upon its keys, or from anything that has answered to the need of a man, for pleasure or for work.

This kind of silence can speak.

Its voice may be melancholy, but it is not always so; for the chair may have been left by a laughing child or the last notes of the piano may have been raucous and gay.

Whatever the mood or the circumstance, the essence of its quality may linger in the silence that follows. It is a soundless echo.”

— Beryl Markham, West with the Night

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**Innerlike Vrede**

As jy die dag sonder koffie kan begin;
As jy altyd opgewek is en die pyne en skete ignoreer;
As jy mense nie met jou klagtes verveel nie;
As jy elke dag dieselfde kos kan eet en dankbaar bly;
As jy kan verstaan dat die mense vir wie jy lief is, waarskynlik te besig is om aandag aan jou te gee;
As jy kritiek en beskuldigings sonder griewe kan verduur;
As jy spanning sonder mediese hulp kan oorkom;
As jy sonder alkohol kan ontspan;
As jy sonder slaappille kan slaap,
... DAN IS JY WAARSKYNLIK DIE GESIN SE HOND!

‘n Dominee behandel die tien geboeie met die Sondagskoolklas en spesifiek die gebod: “Jy mag nie steel nie!”

Hy vra toe vir die klas: “Wat sou die koekblik in die spens vir julle sê as dit kon praat?”

Pietie steek sy hand op en sê: “Laat die kindertjies na my toe kom en verhinder hulle nie!”
Resesearch has proven that happy families are good for health, longevity, peace of mind, productivity, and success. In *The Secrets of Happy Families*, dr Scott Haltzman offers an original approach to building family contentment. The ingredients that contribute to happy families are:

1 Happy Families ... Stick Together
Know your core values and work together to set a course for happiness that includes everyone in the home. Happy families don’t fall apart easily, but go through the good and the bad regardless. Your knowledge that, through thick and thin, your family will be there for you, provides the safety net to take chances and make mistakes.

2 Happy Families ... Commit and Communicate
Children feel more secure when they know that parents are committed to stay together. Using good communication seals the deal! Sharing your inner world with the people who care about you, through words or actions, is paramount to growing as a family.

3 Happy Families ... Lean
You don’t have to do it all on your own. Reaching out to others makes you and your family sturdier and steadier. Families need a support system within core members and also from extended family and friends. People who have strong support systems are less prone to emotional problems.

4 Happy Families ... Teach to and Learn from Children
Parenting takes patience, but while you’re teaching your children, they’re teaching you! Children change everything and only families know the combination of stress and reward that comes along with child rearing. Learning how to raise a child successfully not only helps you to grow as a parental team, but it provides a message to your children that they are safe.

5 Happy Families ... Blend
Grouping and re-grouping with post-divorce families, step-families, adopted families, families with members from different backgrounds and culture does not come easily, but it comes with its own rewards.

6 Happy Families ... Handle Conflict
Knowing how to master conflict can lead to a more cohesive family. It would be nice if the protective cloth of family could make conflict disappear, but many families find their greatest source of conflict in their home! Learning how to cope with family conflict gives you strength and helps you master interpersonal conflict in work and among friends.

7 Happy Families ... Bounce
A recurrent theme in research is that every happy family learns to cope with financial, emotional and medical problems. As members rebound from adversity it grows stronger as result of these challenges. Resiliency and optimism are keys to staying happy during good times and tough times.

8 Happy Families ... Breathe
Making quality time for fun, adventures, holidays, and rituals sets the stage for a loving family over a lifetime. You work hard to maintain a happy family; you should be able to reap the rewards that come from the efforts.

The Institute of Christian Psychology in 2015

By Prof Nicolene Joubert

The Institute of Christian Psychology (ICP) was founded in 2000 with the vision to uphold the Christian worldview in the sphere of higher education. Since its inception the focus has largely been on teaching and training Christian counsellors and psychologists. In this regard a BA degree has been accredited and a number of short courses developed to equip people interested in the helping professions.

At the heart of the ICP is God’s calling to follow Jesus in his healing ministry. Luke 4:18: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

Thus, we value compassion and empathy in relationships. We further value hope and truth as pillars of strength in our organisation.

The fulfilment of our vision is supported by our aim to provide excellent higher education and to encourage religious and spiritual processes in our courses.

We place a high premium on collaborative learning and the creation of knowledge through interaction with others. This philosophy stimulates critical thinking and the expression of diverse ideas.

Online short courses: RapiDeo

During 2014 the management of the ICP decided to create a separate division for online short courses. This development stems from the need expressed by Christian psychotherapists and counsellors to expand their training in the field of Christian psychology and counselling.

Christians that obtained formal secular degrees in the mental health field are acutely aware that a faith-based model for counselling and psychological interventions are absent in curriculae.

Thus, the need for additional training to further knowledge and understanding of how to integrate Christian spirituality in one’s profession underscored the decision to create Rapid Education Online, or RapiDeo.

The short courses offered through RapiDeo are designed to equip counsellors and psychotherapists in a specific field of study (for example, HIV/Aids) or to provide an all round training (Certificate in Pastoral Care and Counselling).

The different short courses offered include marriage counselling and enrichment, HIV/Aids counselling, counselling adolescents, crisis and trauma counselling and dealing with issues pertaining to anger, depression, anxiety, loneliness, low self-worth and life skills.

The marriage counselling course and workshop include preparation for marriage, how to know and understand your partner, marriage as a covenant, dealing with financial problems, how to handle sexual relationships and family traditions.

Adolescence tends to be a very difficult time, as one is transcending from one developmental stage to another. In this time, identity is often explored, which can confuse both the adolescent and those around them.

Due to this, it is important to supplement basic counselling skills with those specifically targeted at this age group. This course places an emphasis on some of the specific challenges met by adolescents, as well as interventions used by counsellors.

We live in a country where trauma is a widespread pandemic. What this calls for is more trained individuals who can care for and support people working through various forms of trauma. This course aims to equip counsellors with the skills in order to do so. This course explores the meaning of trauma before delving into the effects and types of trauma. The course concludes with an exploration of post-traumatic stress responses.

In all the courses the use of the Word, sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the application of sound counselling techniques are emphasised.

For more information visit our website www.icp.org.za or contact us at reception@icp.org.za (Riana) or registrar@icp.org.za (Marzaan) or tel. +27 (0) 11-827-7611/ +27 (0) 11 021 8930.

I hope to meet many of you who share the calling to heal the broken hearted and set the captives free. ■
**News from the SAAP Executive**

**Professionalisation process**

We are still waiting for the company registration number for the Professional Body for Pastoral Care and Counselling of South Africa (PBPCC of SA). We need this number to be able to finally submit our application to SAQA for the professional body to be recognised.

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**Annual fees**

SAAP fees for both membership and accreditation are payable annually. These payments ensure annual renewal of membership and accreditation. It is also our only source of income, essential for the Executive to manage our Association effectively.

The invoices for SAAP membership fees are currently being sent to all our members. As in the past, fees for 2015 were increased by 5% and rounded. Accreditation fees were increased slightly more, to align it better with the increase in membership fees.

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**SAAP CONTACT DETAILS**

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<thead>
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