

Melvin C. Blanchette

A Philosophical Foundation for Professional and Ethical Issues in Pastoral Counseling

“The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had.” (Philippians 2:5)

“What we mean by ethics is what has traditionally been thought of as the ‘ought’ questions, as distinguished from the ‘is’ questions. ‘You are here’ is a fact. ‘Ought you to be here?’ is an ethical question.” (Willard Gaylin, President, The Hastings Center, 1988, p. 3)

In a May 1987 issue of *Time* magazine, the cover story began with the question: “What Ever Happened to Ethics?” by Ezra Bowen, the senior writer. The author went to great lengths to explore the rules and practices of American politics, business, and society at large. Combined with the breadth of coverage was also an in-depth analysis of the people and the events of that time. The reader may recall that it was during this time that Ivan Boesky pleaded guilty to trading on inside information, Jim Bakker was defrocked because of a tryst with a church secretary, and former National Security Advisor, Robert McFarlane, testified about the secret Contra funding scene. There are many more people who could be added to this list. Those mentioned are included only to illustrate the above-named categories. Violations of ethical behavior have a recent as well as a remote history.

Even in the Bible (2 Sam 11), we are told how King David, an ancestor of Jesus, while remaining at home in Jerusalem as other determined Israelites were waging war, seduced the wife of one of his most dedicated soldiers. Only the prophet Nathan, through a small but effective case study, was able to get the king to reflect on his

moral and ethical behavior. Nathan fulfilled his task and spoke to the king in God's name so that justice might be served and the king's conscience might be reconciled. Nathan tells the king a story about a poor man who had a lamb as a family pet until on a certain day a wealthy neighbor made off with the animal, killed it, and then served it for dinner. The king was enraged by this injustice and was stirred to compassion for the poor man. The king went so far as to say that the wealthy man should die. At this point in the story, Nathan declared to the king the resounding moral message of the story: "You are the man."

Whether in examples taken from this morning's newspaper or those contained in the collective accounts of the scriptures, the question "What Ever Happened to Ethics?" is both relevant and meaningful. It is relevant because these issues touch the lives and work of pastoral counselors. It is meaningful because clients bring into the consulting room manifold examples of how they were either the victims or the perpetrators of unethical or immoral behavior.

This chapter places a high value on ethical judgment and conduct for the ministry and profession of pastoral counseling. Rather than bemoaning the question "What Ever Happened to Ethics?" which is really more symptomatic than problematic, two prior and inter-related questions will be asked. First, "Why and what are ethics?" In order to provide answers to these questions, there will be an exploration into the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. After answering "Why and what are ethics?" we will turn our attention to "How are ethics applied?" from the theoretical world of moral philosophy to the everyday world of people's lives and professionals' behavior. Lastly, the chapter will discuss some pastoral and practical reflections dealing with the lives and ministry of pastoral counselors. There is an underlying conviction that an ethical culture and society will result only when there is a harmony between the sciences and humanities.

Part I. Philosophical Foundation

"Techniques without theory are blind, and theory without techniques is empty." (Kant, quoted by Ekstein, 1956)

The insight provided by this inspirational quotation will inform the two sections for this chapter. To answer the questions "Why ethics?" and "What are ethics?" it will be necessary to review philosophi-

cally what constitutes good or bad, right or wrong. The study of ethics finds its origin in moral philosophy. History records to what degree, and what importance, ethics has held at any particular point in time. To paraphrase Dickens, the era can be the best of times or the worst of times—more recently, “it has been the worst of times, it has been the worst of times.” Gerard Piel, the recent editor of *Scientific American*, explained why our time has been “the worst of times” for ethical and moral behavior. What Piel (1972) said does not result in peace of mind, but it does give a perspective permitting a context for understanding:

It was a cowardly and costly truce in the academics of the nineteenth century, at the close of the great Darwinian scandal, that set up the false dichotomy between the sciences and humanities, that is, if truth can be sought in the absence of concern for values, or values cherished without courage to face the truth.

At that time, ethical concerns were given renewed emphasis because of a changing view in the philosophy of science. From 1930 to 1965 in the behavioral sciences, there was a disinterest in the scientific study of moral philosophy. This phenomenon was traced by Warwick (1980) to the triumph of logical positivism. This school of philosophy held that evidence was meaningful only when it was empirically verifiable or when it served as a needless repetition of an idea in logic or mathematics. Hence, during the positivism period, ethical statements, which are experiential and are expressions of values, but which cannot be deducted from logical and mathematical argument, lost their currency of meaning because they did not fulfill the definition of what is verifiable by empirical observation. This fallacy was pushed to the extreme, and is evidenced in this statement by Nielsen (1972): “We have physical tests for tone deafness or color blindness, but not for moral blindness.”

More recently, there has been a decline in the excessive dominance of logical positivism. What is becoming more apparent is simply the fact that the nature of evidence in ethics is different in degree and kind from that provided in the study of sensory problems similar to those noted.

Along with this new awareness of difference, a renewed focus is being given to the construction of ethical principles within the philosophy of science. On a more practical level, since 1987, when the *Time* magazine article signaled a clear and present danger caused by the

absence of ethics, three major professional associations—the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (1990–1991), the American Psychological Association (1987, 1991), and the American Association for Counseling and Development (1988)—have given a considerable investment in terms of time and energy in developing ethical guidelines for their members and other professionals engaged in helping relationships.

There are reasons, many and compelling, for a renewed interest in the theory of ethics. One, very visible, is the attention caused by the media which has heightened public awareness of ethical issues. A less subtle but no less important force is a renewed interest in moral philosophy. Ethics, a synonym for moral philosophy, includes the analysis, evaluation, and development of criteria for judging moral problems. Accordingly, the study of ethics reviews three types of theories: normative, meta-ethical, and good-reason theories. The first type, the normative theory, is the one of greatest concern to pastoral counselors. According to the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. “Normative ethics tries systematically to establish the general principles for determining right or wrong or good or evil” (Nielsen, 1972). The term *normative* refers to what the behavior of professional counselors ought to be rather than what it is.

Immanuel Kant (1785/1969) is perhaps the most important critical thinker and proponent of normative ethics. His seminal book, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, is foundational for pastoral counselors, not only because of its historical value on ethical reasoning, but also because of its practical value as a foundation for pastoral counselors to examine the implications of their ethical behavior.

In *Foundations*, Kant investigates the fundamental and integrative principle of morality. It is important to bear in mind that moral actions instituted actions governed by reason rather than passion. They are undertaken because of the principle or maxim they embody rather than from some ulterior motive or drive. Hence, actions are good or bad not because of their effects, but rather because of the maxim from which they are undertaken. This maxim must be in keeping with fundamental ethical requirements. Kant will be remembered for his formulation of the “categorical imperative” expressed through individuals asking themselves whether they would want their principle for action to become a universal law grading the actions of all other individuals faced with similar situations. This famous categorical imperative is expressed as follows: “I should never act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law” (Kant, 1785/1969). Pastoral counselors faced with

ethical decisions must begin the process of self-examination with this basic question: "Would I want my action to become a universal law?"

The two interrelated questions "Why ethics?" and "What are ethics?" have been answered through the Kantian principle of universality. Kant's sound and seasoned reasoning provides the foundation from which action can be judged to be either good or bad, right or wrong. Moral philosophy defines ethics as being a science which deals with the analysis, evaluation, and development of criteria for deciding moral problems and situations. Gerard Piel's sage advice must be remembered, for only when there is a coherent relation between the sciences and humanities can there be a contemporary ethical culture. In the next section, "How are ethics applied?" will be discussed using as a context the Code of Ethics for the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) in which normative ethics are embodied and through which ethics are expressed. A brief historical account of pastoral counseling and its becoming a profession will provide necessary introductory background.

Part II. Professional and Ethical Issues

As a profession, pastoral counseling does not enjoy the time-honored position it has held within the history of the church. Pastoral counseling is a specific form of individual pastoral care in which ministers utilize the knowledge and skills from the contemporary helping profession within a ministerial and theological framework.

Historically, individual pastoral care has been a rich part of the tradition of Christian ministry. Clebsch and Jaekle, in *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (1983), provide an excellent overview of the various functions of ministry and pastoral counseling in particular. For the reader who is interested in a more detailed account of how pastoral counseling is both a ministry and a profession, please confer my chapter in *Pastoral Counseling* (1991). James W. Ewing (1991) describes the role of pastoral counseling by using the metaphor of a bridge:

Because the field links together religion and behavioral science and consequently sacred tradition and secular lifestyle, it functions as a structural bridge over the chasm of contemporary compartmentalization of knowledge and professional activity. Those persons attracted to the field usually function with multiple intellectual and professional commit-

ments. At a time when our Western culture is witness to rapid change and fragmentation, pastoral counseling is attempting to bridge such through attention to the integrative and holistic process of human living and knowing.

Accordingly, pastoral counseling hinges on the tradition of ministry as well as being a profession among the other helping professions.

As a profession, pastoral counseling is a twentieth century phenomenon. This recognition of its professionalism is evidenced through the publication of the AAPC Code of Ethics. Ethics code development is a necessary and essential step in the professionalization of any occupation (Wilensky, 1964). A profession such as pastoral counseling requires a code of ethics because society maintains a different relationship with professions than with a business enterprise. As a profession, the underlying notion of pastoral counseling is its proclivity to profess, that is, to claim to have some knowledge, special training, or skill not shared by the non-professional. It is, however, insufficient for the professional simply to profess in any helping relationship. What is professed must also be believed by the public. Thus, the over-arching concern of all professions is the adage *credat emptor*—freely translated as “that the client may believe.” This expression is quite different from the more familiar one which governs the sale of goods, *caveat emptor*—“let the buyer beware.” It is of the greatest importance that members of the public believe or trust in the claims made by the professional. This is especially true in a profession such as pastoral counseling when clients are expected to disclose the most intimate details of their lives, those not ordinarily shared with others.

After reviewing the ethical codes of the American Psychological Association, the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and the American Association of Counseling and Development, one is struck by the similarity among them. The principles of each code are primarily directed toward ensuring the safety of the public served by the counseling professional. Through ensuring the public's safety, the ethical principles provide a climate and foundation of trust from which helping professionals can build a therapeutic and healing relationship. Hence, the significance of trust in the helping relationship gives additional conviction and speaks to the absolute necessity of “Why ethics?” Ethical principles inform the practice of counseling professionals and protect the trust upon which any relationship is based; conversely, whenever there is a violation of this trust, the public as well as the reputation of the profession is harmed.

In terms of code development, the American Psychological Association (APA) created an ethics committee in 1938; however, a formal ethics code was not adopted until 1953. The first code was developed using a quasi-empirical method. Input from the membership was requested and this information was utilized to develop the code. The fact that this code has undergone change and significant revision through the years indicates how ethics codes must be adaptive to the cultural context and circumstances of the times. The most recent edition was issued and amended June 2, 1989 (*American Psychologist*, July 1990). At this writing, after almost three years of revising the prior document, a new code will be issued probably within a year of this publication.

The most recent American Association of Pastoral Counselors' (AAPC) Code of Ethics was adopted by its Board of Governors on recommendation by the Association's Ethics Committee during the Annual Convention on April 11, 1986. However, during its recent meeting (1990) in the historic city of Williamsburg, Virginia, the Association's Ethics Committee presented for review a new Code of Ethics to the Board of Governors. This proposed new code, when compared and contrasted with the 1981 edition, can only be described as—transformational. This new code commanded the attention and is the result of hard and tireless work on the part of the Association's Ethics Committee. They are to be commended for their effort in generating a document of such elegance in style and substance, yet doing so with an economy of words. During the coming year, Principles I–VII of the proposed new code will be used as a study document. It is recommended that these principles be read with care, and responses be sent to the regional or national Association Ethics Committee. Principle VIII, entitled "Procedures," was appended to the current Code of Ethics and was voted on to take effect immediately.

With this historical overview and in light of Kant's ethical imperative, we now consider the AAPC Code of Ethics as normative ethics. According to the Prologue of the Code of Ethics (1990), pastoral counselors are committed to a vision of what constitutes their identity as ministers and competent mental health professionals:

Principle I—Prologue

As members of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors we are committed to the traditions and values of our faith communities and to the dignity and worth of each individual. We are dedicated to advancing the welfare of those

who seek our assistance and to the maintenance of high standards of professional conduct and competence. As members of AAPC we are accountable for our ministry whatever its setting. This accountability is expressed in relationships to clients, colleagues, students, our faith communities, and through the acceptance and practice of the principles and procedures of this Code of Ethics.

Flowing from this Prologue (1990), seven foundational premises are derived which serve as the means for members to uphold these standards. They are as follows:

In order to uphold our standards, members of AAPC covenant agree to accept the following foundational premises:

- A. As pastoral counselors we maintain association with the faith group in which we have ecclesiastical standing.
- B. We seek to remain abreast of new developments in the field through both educational activities and clinical experience. We agree to continue post-graduate education and professional growth, including supervision, consultation, and active participation in the meetings and affairs of the Association.
- C. Recognizing that isolation can lead to a loss of perspective and judgment, at all levels of membership we agree to seek out and engage in collegial relationships.
- D. We agree to manage our personal lives in a healthful fashion and agree to seek appropriate treatment for our own personal problems or conflicts.
- E. We do not attempt to diagnose or provide treatment for problems or issues that are outside the reasonable boundaries of our competence.
- F. We agree to maintain supervision and/or consultation at all levels of membership.
- G. We agree to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationship boundaries (see Principles III, G. & H. and V, A.-D.).

Professional responsibilities are delineated in terms of general principles, leaving room for pastoral counselors to use discretion and moral reasonableness in handling individual situations. The remaining principles are: Principle II—Professional Practices; Principle III—Client Relationships; Principle IV—Confidentiality; Principle V—

Supervisee, Student & Employee Relationships; Principle VI—Interprofessional Relationships; Principle VII—Advertising; and Principle VIII—Procedures. When several principles apply to a given situation, as they often do, pastoral counselors must balance one principle against the other. When faced with balancing principles, pastoral counselors should consider the problem in terms of the universal principles.

These ethical principles (AAPC, 1991) are both deontological and teleological. Deontological theories of normative ethics insist “that certain kinds of actions are inherently right, or right as a matter of principle, because of their being the kinds of actions that they are or because of their conforming to some formal principle” (Gewirth, 1975). Accordingly, these ethical principles pass the test of deontology because they conform to the fundamental ethical principles.

The ethical prologue conforms to the categorical imperative’s test of universality and expresses one of the mandates that follows from the imperative: “Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end and never as a means only” (Kant, 1785/1969). Teleological theories of normative ethics purport “that actions are right because of the goodness of their consequences” (Gewirth, 1975). This importance of the consequences of behavior is in keeping with the term teleology; however, it has a different meaning for pastoral counselors, who employ this term to describe purposive behavior rather than the consequences of behavior. In this sense, the ethical principles of the AAPC Code of Ethics are congruent with Kantian ethics in which an action is or is not ethical because of its purpose or maxim, rather than because of its effects.

The AAPC Ethics Committee on both regional and national levels deals with ethical complaints and adjudicates cases. Principle VIII—Procedures reflects a concern for the seriousness of the behaviors involved in a situation. Accordingly, in addition to considering the potential harm involved, which would be a teleological consideration, it also evaluates the behavior in terms of its deontological significance. Hence, the ethical principles and their use in applying sanctions against the inappropriate or unethical behavior of pastoral counselors reinforce the obligations of pastoral counselors and the consequences of their behavior—reflecting the interrelationship between the deontological and teleological aspects of normative ethics.

The ethical principles of the AAPC Code of Ethics enable pastoral counselors to reflect on their intentions and what motivates

their behavior as those who continue the healing ministry of Jesus. All pastoral counselors have the same ultimate goal for their clients, namely: ". . . to make the best of him that his inherited capacities will allow and so to make him as efficient and as capable as is possible" (Freud, 1923).

In addition, pastoral counselors would enter into a helping relationship in order (1) to enable a person to become free in order to become responsible, and (2) to enable a person to deal with pain in its many forms in order to understand the deeper significance it plays in life (Blanchette, 1991). Although pastoral counseling is a ministry practiced in faith by religiously oriented people, the AAPC Code of Ethics plays an important role in framing what pastoral counselors ought to do in various situations. The Code of Ethics is the embodiment of what constitutes ethical behavior, and provides in practical and pragmatic terms how theory is made operational through clear statements of objectives and goals.

A unique feature of the AAPC Code of Ethics is its explicit affirmation that pastoral counselors are committed to a belief in God and in the dignity and worth of each person. Aside from this explicit declaration of a belief in God and the dignity and worth of each individual made in God's image, the AAPC Code of Ethics closely parallels the Ethical Principles of the American Psychological Association. While these codes vary in length and specific content, they contain similar themes: to promote the welfare of the consumer, to maintain competence, to protect confidentiality and/or privacy, to act responsibly, to avoid exploitation, and to uphold the integrity of the profession. To appreciate the full meaning and the converging nature of these ethical codes is to generalize their content into two broad moral categories:

- I. *Care of the Public*: Direct care for the public underlies the ethical standards of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and the American Psychological Association. These principles are: *responsibility, moral and legal standards, and the welfare of the consumer*. According to each of these principles, two related questions are being asked: Did the pastoral counselor honor the trust of the client? Did the pastoral counselor take unfair advantage of the client, either intentionally or unintentionally through negligence or ignorance? Whether the lack of care resulting in offensive behavior was intentional or unintentional, the effect on the client or other person is almost always the same.

- II. *Care for Pastoral Counselor's Education and Training:* The remaining principles concern the professional's ability and competence to serve the public properly. These include: specific discussions of the meaning of professional competence; the ethical issues involved in the making of public statements; the issue of confidentiality of the professional relationship with clients; the issue of dual relationships; the use of various assessment techniques; and for the APA Code of Ethics, the ethics of the use of animals in experimentation. Pastoral counseling is governed by a standard of caring expressed through a Code of Ethics. Thus far we have established the philosophical basis for these codes.

In turn, the AAPC Code of Ethics and the APA Ethical Standards embody and apply these standards of care through explicit principles and procedures. Now we turn our attention to some pastoral and practical reflections regarding the lives and ministry of pastoral counselors.

Pastoral and Practical Reflections

1. Pastoral counselors are mandated to live lives of exemplary conduct. Remember that the ethical code applies to members not only in their roles as pastoral counselors, but also in their lives as well. There can be no ethical gap between the life and the work of the pastoral counselor.
2. Pastoral counseling continues the healing ministry of Jesus and so comes under the greatest and most severe sanctions imposed by God spoken through the prophet Ezekiel (see especially chapter 34). Note the adjective *pastoral*. As shepherds, pastoral counselors are called to be not only copilgrims, but also guides for those who are searching for meaning and purpose.
3. Pastoral counselors are not simply counselors with additional training in theology and in the pastoral arts and sciences. Pastoral counselors are mandated to be members in good standing with their supporting faith groups. As such, pastoral counselors maintain a vital denominational connectedness with a religious body.

Pastoral counselors function within a unique context. This context alone gives a correct understanding of what the ministry and profession entails. Pastoral counseling is pastoral

because its origin is rooted within the religious ministry of the *cura animarum*, a tradition of care and cure of souls. Accordingly, pastoral counselors derive their authorization to practice this religious ministry from their respective religious bodies or denominations. From this empowerment comes the energy and vitality of the pastoral counseling ministry, a work done in faith within the community of believers.

4. As members of a helping profession which seeks to establish human relationships and techniques for bringing about personality and behavioral change, pastoral counselors must be eminently aware of those principles which guide the beginning, continuation, and termination of any therapeutic alliance. These principles are clearly delineated in the ethical codes referred to above. Accordingly, pastoral counselors are encouraged to have an organizing structure which can guide their conduct and influence their practice throughout the therapeutic process. An excellent article which provides such an organizing structure is provided by DePauw (1986).
5. During the contractual phase of building a therapeutic alliance, pastoral counselors are directed to secure "informed consent." This is basically a strategy for the pastoral counselor to provide potential clients with necessary and sufficient information about their initial evaluation, treatment plan, and projected length of counseling so that clients can make an informed judgment regarding their participation in the process. A practical article dealing with this issue and guidelines is provided by Rodgers (1991).
6. Pastoral counselors frequently serve as ministers in a local congregation. As such they are in a position to counsel parishioners. In this regard, pastoral counselors would do well to review Principle II—Welfare of Others, A-5, 6, and 7 in the Ethical Principles of Psychologists, and Principle III—Client Relationships, G., and Principle V—Supervisee, Student & Employee Relationships, A.–D. and sexual behavior with former clients (Principle III, H. of the AAPC Code of Ethics). Each of these principles speaks of the necessity for avoiding dual relationships with current or former clients. This is the clearest and most direct declaration that sexual behavior with a client is both illegal and unethical. It is unfortunate that this ethical principle is the most frequently cited in ethical misconduct charges (*American Psychologist*, July

1990). Young has an excellent article entitled "Professional and Ethical Issues for Ministers Who Counsel" (1989).

7. Confidentiality is the foundation and the bedrock upon which is built the counseling relationship. Under confidentiality's protective cover clients freely discuss their most private lives. Pastoral counselors must be aware of the duties and limitations of confidentiality. Confidentiality prohibits any disclosure of communication made to a pastoral counselor by a client during the course of professional employment. While confidentiality originated in professional ethics codes, it has been incorporated in legislation and court rulings. Hence, disclosure of a client's communication may subject the pastoral counselor not only to an ethical reprimand, but also to civil or criminal liability (DeKraai and Sales, 1982).

A concept which is closely aligned with confidentiality is that of privileged communication. As such, privileged communication is a legal term involving the right not to reveal confidential information in a legal procedure. Privileged communication is granted by statute and protects clients from having their communications revealed in a judicial setting without explicit permission. The privileged information belongs to the client and is vested in the client by legislative authority. Pastoral counselors are encouraged to explore the statutes regarding privileged information of their respective states. Unless the state has a law that says communication between counselor and client is privileged, then judges can force pastoral counselors to provide information about their clients. Accordingly, it is very important that pastoral counselors clearly and directly inform their clients that private communication ceases when public peril begins. This would involve issues of suicide, homicide, and child physical/sexual abuse. In these circumstances, pastoral counselors, because they are mental health professionals, must exercise their responsibility as mandatory reporters.

8. Being a competent pastoral counselor means having the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the functions relevant to the ministry and profession of pastoral counseling. It always involves a judgment between the ability of the pastoral counselor to practice in a given setting and the needs of the person receiving a specified standard of

care. Areas where pastoral counselors must make an ethical judgment regarding competence are those of cross-cultural concerns and issues involving gender, race, and culturally distinct groups (Cayleff, 1986).

9. Pastoral counselors are encouraged to know the laws and statutes relevant to counseling within their respective states and jurisdictions. While the meaning as well as the often strict enforcement of ethical principles may make them appear to be synonymous with law, there is one important difference between laws and ethical principles. An important legal principle is the qualifying factor of degree of negligence or intention. Determining a violation of an ethical principle rarely involves consideration of such a qualifying factor. Ethical principles and violations tend to be absolute. This is because of the nature of the population governed by ethical codes, namely well-trained professionals from whom the public demands such exemplary conduct.
10. Lastly, an issue which has been surfacing in a number of professional meetings is whether or not pastoral counselors should be certified or licensed as professional counselors. It would seem reasonable that as long as pastors are doing short term counseling in their parishes, there is no obligation to seek further legitimacy since that counseling is an integral component of the *cura animarum* expected of the pastor by the congregation. However, if a pastoral counselor is doing counseling in a state or private mental agency, that counselor should receive certification as a professional counselor even though the adjective *pastoral* might be expressed only through an attitudinal presence. In addition, pastoral counselors who are practicing in their parishes and seeing people from the wider community should be regulated by the prevailing laws of certification and licensure in the same way as other professionals since they are offering mental health services to the general public, an activity which is becoming increasingly regulated by the state. This issue of certification or licensure is intimately related to the identity of pastoral counselors. A decision must be made regarding one's professional work. Am I a pastor who counsels? Am I a counselor who is also a pastor? If pastoral counselors are functioning within the boundaries of their parish ministry, such is clearly a ministry done for God. If pastoral counselors

are working within a state agency and outside parish boundaries, this is an activity clearly under the activity of state regulation.

This chapter has founded the philosophical and theoretical basis for ethics in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. The interrelated question of "Why and what are ethics?" has been established through the Kantian principle of universality. How these theoretical principles become expressed in ethical terms is through a Code of Ethics for respective professions. Certain ethical and professional issues of pastoral counseling as a ministry and profession were reviewed.

Some pastoral and practical reflections provided a framework to respond to some specific issues of pragmatic and immediate significance in the lives and ministry of pastoral counselors.

In conclusion, pastoral counselors, like all mental health professionals, are called to have a current and comprehensive understanding of the ethical principles which govern their lives and infuse their work. In addition, pastoral counselors are invited to have the attitude that Christ Jesus had, because pastoral counseling is a continuation of the healing ministry of Jesus. Moreover, pastoral counselors need to possess the compassion and courage of Jesus, who was able to stop an outraged crowd from stoning to death a woman whose behavior they considered immoral. Jesus stepped forward and stopped the revenge while exhorting values such as compassion, understanding, forgiveness, and reforming one's life. The pastoral counselor can do nothing more—and certainly nothing less.

The Clients' Rights¹

Listed below are some of the rights generally agreed upon as belonging to clients seeking and engaging in therapy. Consumer rights may differ from state to state.

Clients have the right to:

- have full and complete knowledge of the therapist's qualifications and training
- be informed fully regarding the terms under which service will be provided
- discuss their therapy with anyone they choose, including another therapist
- have a detailed explanation of any procedure (whether psycho-

- logical or medical) or form of therapy that the therapist or any other professional recommends prior to treatment
- refuse evaluation or treatment of any kind unless the right of refusal is limited by law (as in instances of court-ordered evaluation or commitment)
 - request summaries of or, in many states, direct access to their files or to have pertinent information in their files shared with another therapist, an organization, or any other party, assuming that the clients provide signed consent if requested to do so
 - question the therapist's competence and, if they so desire, to complain to the therapist's superior or to file formal complaints with pertinent professional bodies or legal bodies
 - request a copy of ethics codes and other guidelines and procedures that govern the therapist's practice
 - terminate therapy at any time or, in the case of court-ordered treatment, refuse to participate in therapy (recognizing that the client may have to face legal consequences as a result of his or her refusal)

Note

See B.K. Bennett, B.K. Bryant, G.R. Vandenbos, & A. Greenwood, *Professional Liability and Risk Management*. American Psychological Association, 1990.

Bibliography

- American Association of Pastoral Counselors. Proposed AAPC Code of Ethics. Fairfax: *American Association of Pastoral Counselors' Newsletter*, Summer 1990, Vol. 28, No. 3.
- American Psychological Association. Committee on Science and Professional Ethics and Conduct. May 1984. Ethics Statement issued, *APA Monitor*, 36.
- American Psychological Association. *Ethical Principles of Psychologists*. Washington, D.C.: APA, 1981.
- American Psychological Association. *Standards for Providers of Psychological Services*. Washington, D.C.: APA, 1977.
- American Psychologist. *Journal of the American Psychological Association*, July 1990, No. 7, 873-875.
- Blanchette, M.C. "Professional and Ethical Issues in Pastoral Counsel-

- ing," in B. Estadt, M. Blanchette, & J. Compton (eds.), *Pastoral Counseling*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1991.
- Cayleff, S.E. "Ethical issues in counseling gender, race, and culturally distinct groups," *Journal of Counseling and Development*, January 1986, Vol. 64, 345-347.
- Clebsch, W. & C. Jaekle. *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*. New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1983.
- DeKraai, M.B. & B. Sales. "Privileged communications of psychologists," *Professional Psychology*, June 1982, Vol. 13, No. 3, 372-388.
- DePauw, M.E. "Avoiding ethical violations: A timeline perspective for individual counseling," in *Journal of Counseling and Development*. January 1986, Vol. 64, 303-306.
- Ekstein, R. "Psychoanalytic techniques," in *Progress in Clinical Psychology*. New York: Greene & Stratton, 1956, 2, 79-97.
- Ewing, J.W. *Pastoral Counseling*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1991.
- Freud, S. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, T.J. Paolino Jr. (ed.). New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981, 13.
- Gaylin, W. *Ethics in America*. Cultural Information Service and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O. Box 786, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.
- Gewirth, A. "Ethics," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1975, Vol. 6, 976-998. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Habermas, J. *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (T. McCarthy, trans.). Boston: Beacon Press. Original work published 1976.
- Habermas, J. *Theory of Communicative Action* (Vol. 1), T. McCarthy, trans.). Boston: Beacon Press. Original work published 1981.
- Kant, I. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, R.P. Wolff (ed.), L. Beck (trans.). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969. Original work published 1785.
- Kohlberg, L. "Moral stages and moralization," in T. Lickona (ed.), *Moral Development and Behavior*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976.
- Nielsen, K. "Problems of Ethics," in P. Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (reprint ed.), Vol. 3, 117-134. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Piel, G. *The Acceleration of History*. New York: Knopf, 1972.
- Warwick, D. *The teachings of ethics VI: The teaching of ethics in the social sciences*. Hastings-on-Hudson: Hastings Institute of Society, 1980.

- Wilensky, H.L. "The Professionalization of Everyone?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 1964, 70, 137-158.
- Young, M. "Professional and Ethical Issues for Ministers Who Counsel," *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 1989, Vol. XLIII, No. 3, 269-275.