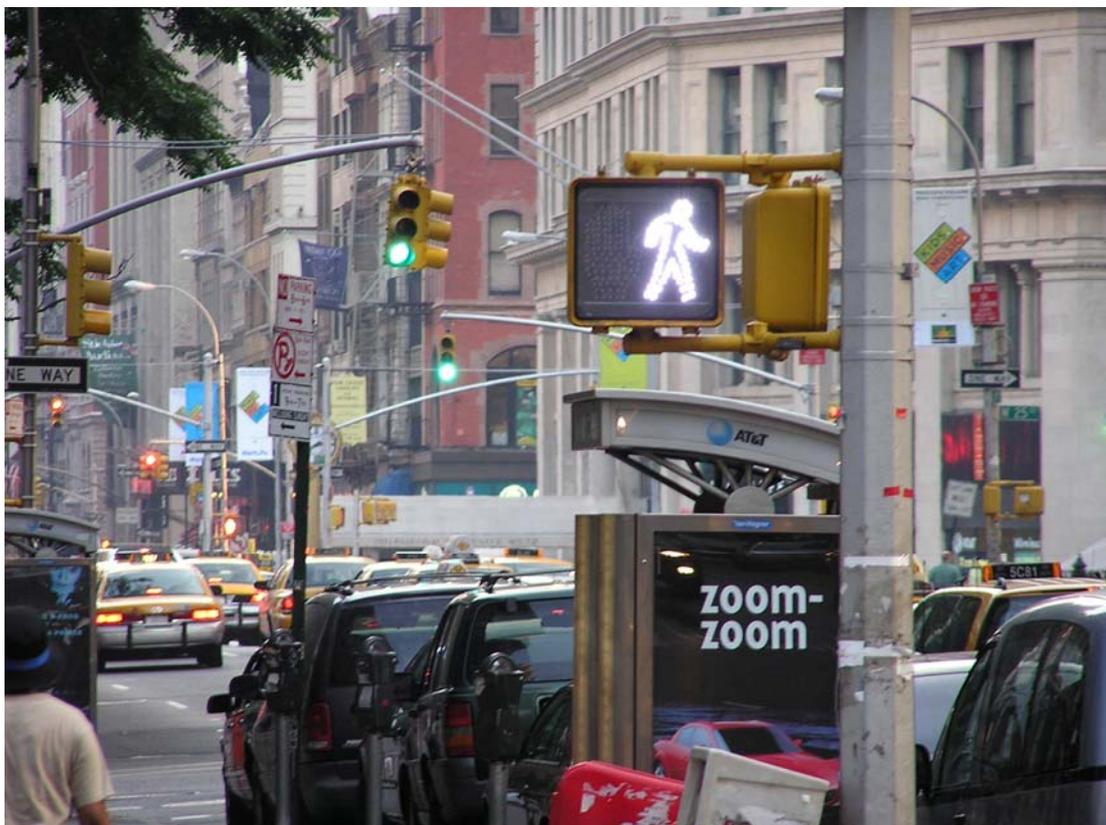


A Report on a Pilot Multifaith Training Program in Pastoral Care

# CARING TOGETHER



The Program was conducted by the Canberra and Region Centre for Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education Inc under the direction of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT. It took place at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra from August to October 2006.

Compiled by Geoffrey Hunter.

# CARING TOGETHER

## A Report on a Pilot Training Program in Multifaith Pastoral Care

Canberra 2006

The program was developed and conducted by David Oliphant.

Report compiled by Geoffrey Hunter and David Oliphant. It is based on observations during the Program and Trainee Evaluations. It was presented at the Inauguration of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

### **Introduction:**

In February 2005, a Search Conference on Pastoral Care was held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra. More than 50 people met for two days to consider the needs of pastoral care in Canberra and the Southern Region of NSW. They represented a cross section of organisations that were considered to have an interest and responsibility in this matter, including the various churches and religious traditions (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem, Jewish). They considered the current nature and future needs of pastoral care in the region within such institutions as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, universities, jails, and the courts. From within the diversity of religious faiths, the conference recognised the need for a common and shared approach in providing pastoral care.

Pastoral care is defined as the offering of emotional and spiritual care to people in the community who are going through a difficult or demanding time, and helping those people connect with their own inner and community resources. It is not counselling or therapy, but the offering of care and support.

The Search Conference resolved two significant objectives: Firstly to develop a community body to set standards for pastoral care, pastoral care training, and the ongoing support and supervision of pastoral carer practitioners. Secondly, to develop a training program that would enable people from different faith traditions to train and work together within a shared philosophy of pastoral care. This second objective became a Pilot Project known as the Multifaith Training Program, '*Caring Together*'

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### **Copies of this Report can be obtained from:**

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## **The Multifaith Training Project: "Caring Together"**

This report is about the initial outcome of the second objective of the Search Conference. The first objective is already a reality, with the inception of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT, and the NSW Greater Southern Area Health Service Pastoral Care Advisory Committee.

The Project was developed around an introductory unit of Clinical Pastoral Education that was appropriately adapted to explore the multifaith aspect of the group and a common commitment to pastoral care. As a pilot project it was to test a philosophy of pastoral care entitled *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* developed by David Oliphant, a Clinical Pastoral Educator working out of The Canberra Hospital.

During August to November 2006, the 10 day training program was led by David Oliphant, with the assistance of Mary Waterford, both supervisors in CPE. Geoffrey Hunter was an independent observer with a responsibility to assess and report on the project. There were 10 participants, with at least one person from each major faith tradition.

- A senior Presbyterian minister
- An educational institution multifaith chaplain (Baptist)
- The president of the Canberra Jewish community
- The president of the Canberra Islamic Centre
- A vice president of the Mandir Society of the ACT (Hindu)
- The Spiritual Care coordinator of the Canberra Rigpa Centre (Buddhist)
- A proponent of modern Christian and General spirituality
- An educational institution multifaith chaplain (Jewish)
- A member of the Islamic community

### **Objectives:**

The Project set out to test the following:

- The feasibility of training people from different religious traditions together for pastoral care in the community.
- The appropriateness and effectiveness as a theoretical basis for multifaith pastoral care of the document *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care*.

### **General Affirmation by the Participants**

Comments by the participants reflect a general discovery within the course. They affirmed that the provision of mutual multifaith pastoral care is possible.

As one person reflected: *"I am better able to see others from their perspective and to journey together with them, while remaining true to my beliefs."*

Another affirmed that now religion was no longer considered simply as a dogma that could focus on differences or separation from others, but rather is now seeing religion as a context for people to share in *"an action with love and caring relationships"*.

Perhaps the outcome can be best summed up with this comment: *"Despite the baggage of my previous understandings of other faiths, I am now more accepting of other perspectives."*

### **Features of the program:**

The program provided a philosophy of pastoral care that provides opportunities for care of an individual without conflict with a particular faith tradition. Participants were provided didactic teaching and discussion about pastoral care, together with take home papers each week for further reading. There were sessions that provided workshop and action/reflection activities to enable practice of the skills of pastoral care. In the final week, each trainee had the opportunity to present a verbatim, about a pastoral care encounter they had experienced, for group supervision.

### **The Course:**

There were four aspects that were addressed. These were interwoven throughout the course.

- A. A sharing by each participant of the unique focus of their own faith tradition that might test and challenge the assumptions which underlie this philosophy and approach to the provision of pastoral care. (pages 3-4)
- B. The introduction of a philosophy that sought to provide a framework that enabled people from differing faith traditions to mutually develop pastoral care without causing conflict with their traditional and personal beliefs. (pages 5-9)
- C. An understanding of pastoral care as a caring modality. (page 9)
- D. An awareness of and introduction to the skills involved in pastoral care. (page 10)

### **Experiences from the course:**

Over the period of the ten days of the course, participants affirmed the relevance of the underlying philosophy in assisting to focus on providing care for a person, in such a way as to affirm that person's faith tradition and without imposing one's own expectations.

The evaluation comments of the participants are found at the end of the report. This is a sample of the verbal and written comments made at the end of the course:

- *"In contrast to the past, I can now relate easier to people of other faiths or no faith."*
- *"It has been an experience of understanding human faith (rather than only from my own religious perspective) - no barriers."*
- *"I discovered how to seek the meaning from others rather than approach with my own projections."*
- *"I found how to be open to others and listen to them without imposing a religious perspective."*
- *"I found how to be clear about my perspective and identity so as to be confident in myself when seeking to stand beside others."*
- *"The approach of this philosophy enabled me to reframe my use of "religion", thus removing previously conceived barriers."*
- *"Hope that others will be involved."*

## **A: DISCOVERING THE FAITH PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERS**

### SHARING ABOUT PASTORAL CARE

During the first session people were invited to share their perceptions about the nature of pastoral care. Each described how care was provided from the perspective of their faith tradition. It became apparent that the term "pastoral care" was seen as having a Christian origin, and at first it seemed that other traditions did not have the same emphasis on 'being pastoral'. 'Pastoral' is a concept that emerged from the idea of the shepherd caring for the flock. After further discussion there was the recognition that within each tradition caring activities occur than can be described as 'pastoral'.

However, each tradition identified particular religious rituals that were important at times of crisis, such as at the time of death. In Muslim communities the term "pastoral care" is not used. Visiting the sick is highly recommended but it is provided by families rather than by

the Muslim religious organisation. Similarly the Hindu relies on families to visit rather than a specifically religious figure. As one Jewish participant commented, "Family look after family".

#### 'THE FAMILY' AS THE ORIGIN OF PASTORAL CARE

It became clear that there was a distinction emerging between rituals of religion and the provision of pastoral care. While particular religious activities were important in times of crisis, and the spiritual understandings were often given perspective through a religion, it was family and cultural groups who tended to provide what may be described as "pastoral care". This affirmed 'the family' as the origin of pastoral care as presented in the Philosophy.

In Australia, with the increased isolation experienced in our society, particularly when crisis occurs in an institution such as a hospital, there has been a growing emphasis on the need for pastoral care. An older member of the training group, born in Australia, reminisced that in contrast to the isolating nature of our current society, urban community in the 1940's was communal with neighbours personally knowing and caring for each other. This family and community care was still occurring within particular ethnic groups, but increasingly more of the population can experience isolation. The concept of pastoral care within an institutional context is comparatively recent, and has become recognised and used in the secular context. The term "pastoral care" comes from a predominantly Christian perspective, but it was obvious from the responses with this group that the concept and need is consistent with the other faith traditions.

#### SHARING ABOUT FAITH TRADITIONS

It was during the third and fourth weeks that members shared about their own faith tradition. They had been asked not only to briefly outline their religious tradition, but also to nominate some saints and heroes within it and to share about what their tradition has provided for them. This was an opportunity to share about their own faith tradition and to understand better other traditions. More importantly it brought a sharing together about what is basically important for each member as a person. As one group member said, *"There is such similarity in different words."* Another, *"There was excitement today in how much we have learnt at depth from each other."* And at the end of the course it was said, *"In contrast to the past, I can now relate easier to people of other faiths"*.

While there were many common aspects that could be recognised between the traditions, the diversity of understandings also stood out. For brevity in this report a couple of aspects are noted. For example, while the Jewish, Christian and Moslem traditions have emerged from a common source with Abraham, each view their own distinct dogma and rituals as essentially the revealed truth. In contrast, the Buddhist and Hindu traditions focus on the journey of the individual towards a divine reality. For them there are various deities and processes which can assist them discover truth in that journey.

What emerged from this sharing was a greater awareness and understanding of the background of people of other traditions. At the same time, it was said that *"In the course there has been an experience of inclusiveness and community with understanding so as to not preclude the opportunity to share with people of other faith traditions."*

#### CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Cultural differences were also identified as an area that required sensitivity in developing relationships. Even within faith traditions there can be a variety of cultural differences between different countries. In the exercises for developing listening skills for pastoral care, there was a realisation of the need for sensitivity to different cultural and religious expectations, such as relationship between the opposite sexes, and appropriate eye contact or touch. For example, Western culture values eye contact, while Eastern or Asian cultures minimise eye contact.

## **B: *INTENTIONAL FRIENDSHIP: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care***

*Developed by David Oliphant*

In Australia, *chaplaincy and pastoral care* has traditionally been an initiative within individual Christian denominations seeking to keep in touch with members of their own church or group within hospitals, nursing homes, jails and schools. It is now becoming a professional caring modality in its own right, apart from but including churches and religious organizations, working in both stipendiary and voluntary capacities in the general life of the community. It is gaining a unique place within our secular society alongside other caring modalities such as social work, community work, and general counselling, specifically to help 'meet the religious, spiritual, emotional and pastoral needs' of the general community

The general community however is no longer largely Christian. It is multicultural and multifaith within a broadly secular society. This is the context within which modern pastoral care in the community is seeking to establish itself as a profession in its own right. There is a growing recognition that to be fully accepted as a caring modality within the broader community, and to be in the position to be supported by Government and funding bodies generally, the profession of pastoral care needs a theoretical base that is inclusive of our different traditions, including secularity and atheism.

Some would say such a theory of multifaith pastoral care is inevitable, even *desirable* and *necessary*, if the profession is to fully complete the transition it is in and take its place in society alongside other caring modalities.

This then is the **challenge** my thesis is addressing. How *can* people from different faith and spiritual backgrounds, admittedly united in a commitment to care for others emotionally, spiritually and religiously, work and train together in paid and volunteer capacities as the 'profession' of pastoral care and chaplaincy?

My **thesis** is that such a challenge cannot be met without a common philosophical basis that makes clear the nature of pastoral care and its relationship to human nature and community, and is able to accommodate and include the various empirical traditions that make up our multifaith and secular Australian society.

*Intentional Friendship, A Philosophy of Pastoral Care*, seeks to fulfill this theoretical need. The framework offered also lays the foundation for a reframing of the most widely used training method for chaplaincy and pastoral care, Clinical Pastoral Education.

For all the difference in belief and practice that is found between the different religious traditions in our society, there is a common commitment to values that enable human community to form and function, and love and care are two of those values. So a theory of multifaith pastoral care can immediately assert a central and unifying commitment to acts of love and care that can give it focus, regardless of tradition. Thus '*friendship*', considered philosophically, adequately carries the sense of this common commitment of love and care, but not only as a happy circumstance between individuals; rather as an '*intentional*' commitment by specific people, namely in this case chaplains and pastoral carers, in their emotional, spiritual and religious support of struggling individuals and communities.

People who relate together positively form *friendship*. Friendship is the relationship closest to the relationship of care and love we enjoyed with our parents, but in its most developed form it requires that the friends feel free and equal toward each other while intending the good interest of the Other in their actions. This is primary friendship or friendship of the good. The other major forms of friendship derive from this and follow the form of the personal, a central concept in this philosophy; friendship of pleasure and friendship of utility. These two forms are dependent on their mutuality and reciprocity to be sustainable, because they are friendships in which the underlying motive is ultimately egocentric. Only friendship of the good has genuinely positive motive and leads to genuinely heterocentric actions which are not calculated on an ultimate return to the Self; primary friendship in fact contains and is constituted by the other two in a genuine mutuality that does not have the strain

that friendships built only around pleasure or utility can have. Pastoral care in this thesis is founded in primary friendship.

Even a well functioning family needs the *intention* of positively motivated actions and friendship to be present, at least within the parents, to enable the personal community of the family to cohere, and have the ways and means to stay together positively. To say that pastoral care is **intentional friendship** is to say that pastoral care intends the actions that enable personal community, that enables open personal engagement between people, which necessarily includes all that those people bring to those engagements, the pain and hurt and misunderstanding that has negatively shaped their lives by their becoming entrapped in withdrawal from relationships, along with the joys and triumphs and the gathering of inner resources that have helped them cope.

To focus pastoral care primarily in intentional friendship marks a *fundamental shift* in its traditional theoretical base. This highlights two important issues in understanding this thesis.

**Firstly**, whereas traditional pastoral theory has been theological and centered in ideas and concepts of God, in this thesis the **SELF becomes the primary focus**. While pastoral care as a *form* of care is universal and has its origins in family life and its personal extensions into the wider community, it has only been formally reflected on as a function and discipline of religious organization within the western church. It became theoretically based in theology, in official thoughts about the nature of God, and practically based in the religious and ritual functions of the church.

Making the Self the primary focus for pastoral care, consequently takes pastoral care out of theology into a philosophical anthropology; not a scientific anthropology, for as we shall see, intentionality and action are key concepts in an adequate conception of the Self for my purposes, and intentionality and action cannot be adequately incorporated in a scientific appraisal of the world. This shift in no way lessens the importance of the word 'God' in human life. It simply grounds pastoral care in a concept that we can all share as human beings in a secular, multifaith society, regardless of our religious tradition, if any.

**Secondly**, this thesis places **pastoral care within the religious functions of community life**. However, I make a clear distinction between religion as it finds outward expression in a community, and religion as an inward process that contributes to the inner structure and relationships that constitute the individual's soul or inner life. It is this second expression of religion that is the particular focus of multifaith pastoral care in the community, and its clear delineation allows pastoral care practitioners to develop skill in helping people connect to their inner resources when facing difficult situations regardless of the person's spiritual or religious tradition or beliefs.

Focussed in the concept of the Self, pastoral care properly conducted is a true expression of religion in culture in its fullest and most positive and generic form. This re-instates religion's fundamental importance as that form of reflection that focuses primarily on the behaviour and interactions, especially communicative interactions that occur between people in community

**Pastoral care** in a secular multifaith society is made up of acts of intentional friendship in which the carer is positively motivated through his or her own convictions and commitments and is trained to act intentionally in a way that is based in the interests of the other person.

The modern pastoral carer is sensitive to what a person believes, not for the content of what she or he believes necessarily but for the value the person invests in that belief and the place that belief has in determining the person's actions. The carer is especially sensitive to inner relationships that positively structure the other's inner world. These can constitute the person's inner resources and resilience. Most of all, the modern pastoral carer works with a concept of the Self as primarily an Agent, someone who intentionally acts, and who is only secondarily a Subject who feels and an Object who is thought. In fact, an essential process in the formation of a pastoral carer is learning to think about what we do from the point of view of Action, and how our feeling and thinking contribute to that action.

## **Elements of the Philosophy:**

**1 - Pastoral Care in the Community:** Modern pastoral care in the community is a unique caring modality with characteristics not necessarily found in associated modalities, such as counselling, therapy, social work and community work. Pastoral care as a discipline arose within church life in the West, and was expressed in society as chaplaincy. However, the origins and principles of pastoral care are universal and present in all personal community of which the family is the primary example. These same principles undergird church and religious organizations in their personal life together, and modern pastoral care in the community as proposed here is an extension of this type of care into our modern, general and secular society. This is its unique generic relationship with 'religion'.

**2 - Tradition and Understanding.** Interpreting the meanings of what people are saying is at the heart of interpersonal communication; this phenomenon is central to pastoral care. We attempt to understand the Other and his tradition more fully, and in so doing we can come to understand ourselves and our own tradition more fully also. At the same time we seek a sense of the objectivity or reality of what we are saying and hearing, and the degree to which it helps or hinders our engagement with the world.

**3 - "The Form of the Personal" as the basic paradigm.** Thinking of the Self primarily as an Agent constituted as an 'I-You', and not only as an isolated 'I', allows a third logical form to emerge, alongside the mathematical form of identity and the organic form of dialectic that structure our inorganic and organic apprehensions of the world. The *form of the personal* structures all aspects of personal life, from seeing the universe as material, organic, and personal, to culture as constituted by the sciences, the arts and religion, to persons in community as an 'I' a 'You' and a 'He, She, It', to understanding the Self as a person who acts, feels and thinks, to the individual as an 'I, Me and Myself'. We can think of the Self from three different but integral perspectives, the first, the second and the third personal perspectives.

**4 - The Motives that Drive Our Lives.** The *form of the personal* can be applied to the formation and structure of our feelings and motives, differentiating between those feelings that are formally negative and those that are formally positive; one is the basis of necessarily egocentric behaviour and actions that constitute the first and third personal perspectives of the Self, the other the basis of heterocentric behaviour and actions that constitute the second person perspective. The movement between them, paralleling the movement between action and reflection, is identified as the *rhythm or pattern of withdrawal and return*, a fundamental aspect of our engagement with the world at all three levels, especially the personal. Knowledge and understanding at the level of the personal is the goal of pastoral care, to best inform our pastoral actions.

**5 - Friendship.** The crucible of friendship is in the relationship between mother and child, and in the complex movement between self interest and interest in the other, egocentricity and heterocentricity. Friendship takes us to the very heart of the human condition. Friendship of the good or primary friendship is the intention and goal of pastoral care, and the outcome of true religion, formally speaking.

**6 - Religion and Pastoral Care:** A unique capacity of the human person is the ability to objectify the world in reflection and to understand and engage it rationally. Whereas our culture tends to think such objectivity and rationality belongs only to our capacity to think, which finds an ultimate if not absolute form in science through the scientific method we can and need to be equally objective or rational in our feeling and acting functions. Macmurray called this capacity for objectivity self transcendence, which finds its fullest form at the personal level in the capacity to act empathically in the interest of another person. Whereas a *scientist* self-transcends in his relationship with the physical and material world, and an *artist* in relation to the world of form and organism, a *religionist* self-transcends in relation to personal life in community. He or she is an expert 'non-expert' in helping and supporting human community, and enabling its members to live together positively. This is pastoral care.

**7 Religion as Outward and Inward Processes.** Religion can be thought of as having both an outward and an inward emphasis. The outward arises within the external relationships we have with others, including cultural and religious heroes some of which we may consider divine. But these figures can also be internalized as relationships we carry within ourselves; this constitutes the inward emphasis of

religion. Pastoral care within religious organizations tends to focus more on the outward rather than the inward; modern multifaith pastoral care in the community on the inward. However as we change the locus of pastoral care to the community life of our institutions, multifaith pastoral care has the potential to also facilitate the outward processes as well.

**8 - *The Structure of Our Inner Life.*** The structure of our souls or inner life at the personal level is formed through our relationships with other persons or objects that we imbue with personal meaning. These relationships, which are internalized as inner self object relationships, can be analyzed according to the *form of the personal*. The pastoral care practitioner becomes skilled at relating to this inner structure within pastoral conversation, because it constitutes a person's inner resourcefulness and resilience, and conversation imbued with this positive feeling in a relationship where the carer shows genuine regard and interest can completely alter their capacity to cope with their situation.

**9 - *Belief and religious identity.*** This has traditionally played an important role in our understanding of 'who we are', but often worked defensively in helping us to know 'who we are not'. The emphases of different forms of religious belief can be analyzed according to the *form of the personal*, just as can the different types of belief. Primary belief is about what we know in interpersonal relationships, secondary belief and tertiary belief in what we apprehend through feeling and thought respectively. Primary belief is largely expressed through action; secondary and tertiary belief is reflective and hence problematic and is validated through action. Tertiary belief about the world is what James referred to as 'over-belief'; both science and theology are forms of over-belief. It does not play a large role in interpersonal activity except where the belief lies close to our sense of self and identity. Pastoral care seeks to be expert in primary knowledge, and in relating to the personal meanings a person may place in their over-belief.

**10 - *Illusion and Religion.*** Illusion and delusion are important forms of belief. Overcoming illusion in life is the way to personal growth and self transcendence. This is Macmurray's understanding of illusion. It is an inevitable part of the *rhythm of withdrawal and return*, entrapping only if we are unable or unwilling to test our beliefs formed in reflection through action in the engagement of the real. This understanding stands in contrast to Freud's, and is closer to the views of Kohut and Winnicott. Pastoral care practitioners need to be skilled in managing illusion in their own practice, and in appreciating how it might be at work within those they visit.

**11 - *The Inner Conversation.*** Internalized self object relationships that carry positive feeling form the positive structure of the soul, and are the basis of inner resource and resilience. We can talk inwardly to such figures as we might talk to ourselves, and we can talk outwardly as if they were there with us. This is the basis of prayer as real everyday activity and not just a formal aspect of some people's lives. Internalized second person perspective relationships in which there is a degree of idealization are more likely to become conversational or prayer partners, ranging from people we know to cultural figures who traditionally embody accepted values and virtues, such as Christ, the Buddha and God. Even atheists will have internal figures they have inner connection with, if only an idealized sense of themselves.

**13 - *The Pastoral Carer in Reflection.*** Learning to reflect on a pastoral visit after the visit is over, and drawing others into that reflective process, namely a supervisor and a supervisory peer group, is the basic method of Clinical Pastoral Education. Learning to think from the standpoint of action and agency alters the focus of this reflection to what is known of the patient by the carer, what is known of him or herself, and what is known of the relationship between the two; and how that knowledge can be checked for error and increased by reflection, so that the carer can return to visiting having learnt more about all three points of attention, increasingly able to use that knowledge while they are actually acting.

**14 - *Reflection- and Knowledge-in-Action.*** The central skill in good pastoral care is being able to reflect-in-action that makes knowledge-in-action available while in the act of visiting. This capacity grows out of the practice of withdrawing to reflect as described in chapter 13, and in learning to let the reflection process go on within so that we are paying attention primarily to the patient, secondarily to what is happening in ourselves, and thirdly to what is happening in the relationship between us; all on the run as it were.

**15 - Self Revelation in Pastoral Care.** Pastoral care as intentional friendship, unlike other caring modalities, subordinates the impersonal to the personal. Self revelation is then an essential aspect of the skill base of the pastoral carer, but always within the intention to care and act in the interest of the other or patient. The relationship intends freedom and equality, and this finds expression in the carer not being caught up in needing to 'fix up' the patient, but to befriend them, letting them go as much and as easily as joining them for the moment in their life's journey.

**Some Evaluation Comments** from course participants directly related to the philosophy presented:

- *"I feel that the philosophy worked well for me, in that I did not need to put aside my own beliefs and traditions."*
- *"This allowed a reframing a definition of 'religion' that helps towards bringing down barriers."*
- *"Religion is now not just dogma but an action involving love and care relationships."*
- *"The understanding of self identity with head heart and hand analogies helped."*
- *"It seems to provide a new way of approaching something (called pastoral care) that is inherent in all faith traditions."*
- *"In this course it was apparent that regardless of faith or culture we are people with the same fears, needs or joys, and who can care for each other."*
- *"This course was a wonderful academic and analytical approach in a multi-faith setting. Wow!"*

All the participants overwhelming affirmed the helpfulness of the philosophy.

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**The full text of *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* will be made available to interested persons in the near future. Please contact:**

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## **C: THE UNIQUENESS OF PASTORAL CARE**

Pastoral Care initiates contact and conversation, operating in the normal contexts of people's lives.

The Pilot Training Program focused on the unique character of pastoral care as distinct to other caring modalities, such as counselling, psychotherapy, social work, welfare and community work. In other caring modalities, personal connection is for the sake of impersonal and professional assessment and treatment. Pastoral care is the only caring modality in which personal connection is the prime goal of interaction. Hence the naming of pastoral care as intentional friendship.

Nowhere is this illustrated better than in the question of self disclosure by the carer. Because the nature of friendship is the mutual self disclosure of each person, pastoral care includes the skill by the carer of appropriately revealing him or herself as a person in the pastoral conversation. Other modalities have an intersubjective relationship that is not mutual and reciprocal carers does not 'give themselves away' as equals in the relationship, and the interaction is not 'free', in that the conversation is for a particular purpose and not an interaction for its own sake out of which important issues for the patient might arise. The fundamental premise of primary friendship is that the self revelation is not egocentric but is

offered with an interest of the other person. The value of this offer of friendship becomes important when the other person is interested to receive it.

An effective pastoral carer is an expert 'non expert'. The conversations he or she initiates are between two or more free and equal persons where there is no necessary assumption of 'expertise' as there is with a counsellor or therapist. It requires high levels of interpersonal skill focussed in the free and equal relationship of friendship in which the carers intentions are formed in the interest of the patient or person, undergirded by a general motive of love and care.

## **D: PASTORAL SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

Participants were involved in skill awareness activities as the course progressed.

- Exercises that focused on the skills of listening and responding to another person.

*Issues that emerged with multi-faith and multi-cultural activities:*

1. *There are cultural variations as to what is the appropriate eye contact. Western cultures value strong eye contact, while Asian defer away in eye contact.*
2. *There are difficulties encountered about an appropriate manner for male / female contacts with people of some cultural backgrounds.*

- Exercises that addressed the skills of being empathic. This drew a distinction between the motive and intention of communicative action, and highlighted an understanding of the inner life as something constructed over time by mirroring, twin-shiping, idealizing and adversarial relationships that become self-object relationships within the person.
- An exercise that used the psychodrama techniques to assist participants practice various skills.
- A case study that offered an opportunity to reflect as a pastoral carer on the "intention" of another person. Participants were asked to imagine having an interview as a pastoral carer with a self declared atheist, and to seek ways to respond to the person empathically that respected his views but also connected him to any inner and spiritual resources he might have.
- Use of role plays enabled the participants to test their skills under the observation of the group, and in so doing learn skills and strategies from each other.

*Again in evaluation it was recognised that there can be limitations in a situation of female and male with interaction in role plays between Christian and Muslim and Hindu cultures.*

- A workshop on attention and reflection in action to develop spontaneity. Here participants sought to focus with concurrent attention on both the other person and the self. When acting to seek to maintain simultaneous focus in care there is a readiness engendered in the carer for spontaneity with regard to the other person.

- Finally the process of verbatim reports was introduced as a basic tool for ongoing Clinical Pastoral Education training. Each participant was assigned the task of returning in the final week with a verbatim report of a pastoral care encounter. These were presented and discussed in the final session.

The skill building training in this program is equivalent to the 5 day Introductory Course in Clinical Pastoral Education.

## EVALUATIONS

### **A Compilation of Trainees Evaluative Comments on the Pilot Multifaith Training Program 'Caring Together'.**

The purpose of this evaluation is to enable participants to reflect on the course generally and to specifically comment on the effectiveness and applicability of the philosophy of pastoral care that was introduced in the pilot program in providing a unifying theory of multifaith pastoral care without compromising the content of any particular faith system.

#### ***General:***

1. *What was the most important thing you learnt in the course?*
2. *How has this course affected your idea of pastoral care?*
3. *What did you enjoy most about the course?*
4. *How have you grown in this course?*
5. *What insights and skills do you feel more aware of since completing the course?*
6. *How would the course have been more effective in your opinion?*
7. *Would you recommend it to others?*

#### ***Specific:***

1. *How well so you think you grasped the philosophy of pastoral care presented?*
2. *Did the philosophy conflict in any way with your personal beliefs or your tradition?*
3. *Do you think the philosophy conflicted with any other group member's beliefs or tradition?*
4. *Do you think the philosophy might provide an adequate theoretical base for multifaith pastoral care?*
5. *Do you have any suggestions on how the philosophy might be more adequately presented?*

#### ***General:***

1. *What was the most important thing you learnt in the course?*
  - How to approach strangers.
  - Positive intention to friendship is powerful, and allows even beginners to make mistakes.
  - A way of being with someone irrespective of differences in culture and belief.
  - I would like to think that I am becoming more a "hand" person.
  - Skills in listening and developing intentional friendships.
  - The commonality in the differences and sensitivities of multifaith and multi-cultural.
  - Regardless of faith or culture we are people. How similar are our faiths and beliefs; with the same fears, needs and joys.
  - This course has provided valuable theory that has enhanced previous CPE training.
  - The value of seeking to "mirror" the other person.
2. *How has this course affected your idea of pastoral care?*
  - It was a completely new experience.
  - Encouraging an open acceptance of other faith traditions.
  - Redefined my understanding into a positive sense of what "religion" provides.
  - Increased my awareness of being with another person in a more connected manner.
  - Realisation that intentional friendship is the friendship that we all need in times of crisis. Needing to be with rather than being for the other person.
  - Provided insights and understanding about what I am doing in pastoral care.
  - To be totally present with the other person, regardless of faith traditions.
  - Strengthened my trust that pastoral care is appropriate for common humanity needs, rather than only from a religious perspective.
  - Ability to analyse the process of my intentions in relationships as a fellow human being.
3. *What did you enjoy most about the course?*
  - The Interfaith similarities.
  - Group interaction and especially personal insights from other faiths.

- Involvement with participants of other faith backgrounds, and my changing perceptions as we progressively revealed ourselves.
  - Sharing our stories.
  - Sharing with others in mutual desire to care, and better understanding their approach from other faith traditions.
4. *How have you grown in this course?*
- Expanded my horizons
  - From feedback on how to provide pastoral care.
  - Value of considering a wider selection of ideas and approaches.
  - Grown to be more tolerant and more questioning; less likely to assume that I know what is going on for the other person.
  - Grown more sensitive and effective.
  - Learnt to find my voice and to have a go.
  - Through the activity of action, withdrawal and reflection, I have gained in a deeper knowledge of the processes of intentional friendship.
5. *What insights and skills do you feel more aware of since completing the course?*
- Meeting people where they are.
  - Seek avoiding theological debates.
  - Confident to try to alter my habits and use new techniques.
  - Increased self awareness in approaching others; and staying with what they present.
  - Reflecting during the conversation and asking myself "What are they meaning?"
  - How to have language that "mirrors" the other person's perspective.
  - A greater awareness of cultural sensitivities.
  - Ability to "mirror", which enhances conversations.
  - More aware of my motives and intention as well of my clients.
  - Ability to reflect while in conversation.
  - Listening and effectively following the conversation of others without directing with my answers; helping them to strive for their own answers.
  - More aware of the moment of connection, the transcendence of "walking in the spirit", the importance of idealisation in a person's eye (with heroes and anti-heroes), and how people talk within themselves to "someone".
6. *How would the course have been more effective in your opinion?*
- Provision of a course overview or structure.
  - Provide more practical training.
  - More interactive work earlier in the course Didactic is valuable but the real learning is in doing.
  - More role plays with feedback by the group.
  - More time for sharing and discussions.
  - Simpler synopsis or breakdown of each paper.
7. *Would you recommend it to others?*
- Yes (unanimous)
  - Highly recommended.
  - Absolutely; I already have!
  - I feel that it is essential.
  - Provided a wonderful journey of understanding intentional friendship.

**Specific:**

1. *How well so you think you grasped the philosophy of pastoral care presented?*
- Reasonably.
  - Fairly well.
  - It took a while through the course before it "clicked".
  - I have absorbed the essence of the "head", "heart" and "hand" trilogy in harmony equals wisdom.
  - I need more time to reflect and digest.
  - Especially the "religion" aspect being the Action of Love, Care and Concern; rather than being "dogma".

2. *Did the philosophy conflict in any way with your personal beliefs or your tradition?*
  - No. (unanimous)
  - No conflict. Instead, by addressing the term "religion" this way, it brought down barriers.
  - By the feedback from others provided more insights.
  - It enhances a Buddhist perspective.
  - It worked well for me with a Christian view.
  - On the contrary, it encouraged, enhanced and acknowledged what I believe.
3. *Do you think the philosophy conflicted with any other group member's beliefs or tradition?*
  - No.
  - Unsure
  - Seems a new way of approaching something that is inherent in all traditions.
4. *Do you think the philosophy might provide an adequate theoretical base for multifaith pastoral care?*
  - Yes. (unanimous)
  - It provides a cutting edge to encourage further exploration.
  - Needs to be published.
5. *Do you have any suggestions on how the philosophy might be more adequately presented?*
  - Raise public awareness.
  - Simpler language in presentation.
  - (Also a variety of particular suggestions to address strategies)

Comments relating to General Q 6:

- Structure of a syllabus in the course
- Needs reduction in didactic intellectual component, so allow more time for practice.
- Less volume in reading, and more open discussion and active participation.

Editorial comments: Duplicate comments are not included in responses to these questions. Occasionally there was editing to clarify or simplify a comment.

The evaluation comments about the course presentation and structure has challenged us to re-write aspects in the presentation of the philosophy.

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**Copies of this Report can obtained from:**

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