



WCLTA 2013

Graduate Education and the Cure of Souls

Thomas St. James O'Connor, ThD and Elizabeth Meakes, DMin

Abstract

Cure of the soul is a concept used in Christian pastoral care and counselling through many centuries starting with the Hebrew Scriptures. It involves healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling. Other world religions such as Islam and Judaism have a similar concept. Graduate education in spiritual care and psychotherapy involves learning, guiding and occasionally healing. These are part of the cure of the soul. The workshop will explore the cure of the soul in a graduate educational setting. The workshop answers the question: How does graduate education facilitate the cure of the soul?

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCLTA 2013.

Keywords: graduate, education cure, souls.

Introduction: Graduate education and the cure of the soul, some might think that these two terms are contradictory or an oxymoron. For these folks, graduate education breaks the soul and does not cure it. Certainly, graduate work involves long hours of endless reading and researching, in-depth analysis that is never in-depth enough and revisions, revisions and revisions to papers and thoughts. Even the question: 'why am I doing this?' gets revised! Finally, there is the thesis or dissertation that often stretches students far beyond anything they have done before...like climbing Mt. Everest. As one of my advisors told me, the key to success is perseverance. The process of graduate studies often produces negative feedback from professors and peers and can far too often wound the student's soul. For these people, the cure of soul in graduate education is an oxymoron. However, our thesis is that graduate education can cure the soul as well as burden and wound. Our argument starts with a brief description of our standpoints. Second, we describe what the cure of the soul means. Third, there is a description of graduate education in Ontario universities and how the cure of the soul may unfold in them. Fourth, we describe the role spirituality in the cure of souls. Finally, we provide examples of graduate students in our program in spiritual care and psychotherapy that experience the cure of their souls.

1. Our Standpoints. We are a married couple who teach in a graduate program in spiritual care and psychotherapy at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Waterloo is the home of the Blackberry. We are Roman Catholic pastoral theologians teaching at a Lutheran Seminary. We also practice psychotherapy in family therapy and have supervised graduate students in clinical placements from a variety of

Corresponding Author: Thomas St. James O'Connor
E-mail: stconnor@gmail.com

disciplines and faith groups including Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian, social work, occupational therapy, nursing and medicine. Each of us integrates various approaches in psychotherapy that include evidence based, narrative, solution focused and feminist informed. (O'Connor, Koning, McLarnon-Sinclair, Loy, Davis, & Meakes, 2001) Of the students who attend our program, about 60% are Christian and 40% belong to other faith groups. We are trained and educated to work both within ecumenical and multi-faith settings. This presentation focuses on a Christian understanding of the cure of souls. Within Christianity, there are many approaches to this concept. The cure of the souls appears in many other faith groups in various forms but space and lack of expertise do not allow us to address them.

2. Description of the cure of souls. The English phrase “cure of the soul” is a translation of two Greek words and two Latin words. The English word “psychotherapy” arises from two Greek words “psyche” and “therapia” and literally means cure of the soul. (Webster, 1965) The Latin phrase is “cura animarum” and is the one that appears most often in the literature. Some argue (Benner, 1998; Moore, 1991; Meiburg, 1990) that the Latin “cura” can also be translated by care which would be the care of the soul. John McNeill (1951) in his classic *A History of the Cure of Souls* notes that the cure of the soul predates Christianity and the concept was important to Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. For these Greek philosophers, the pursuit of truth cured the soul especially through beautiful words or rhetoric. (Kolbet, 2010) The term is also present in the Hebrew Scriptures where God was interested in healing both the Hebrews and indeed all of humankind’s broken soul. (Benner, 1998) McNeill (1951) also describes other world religions like Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and their understandings and practices of the cure of the soul. However, McNeill’s presentation of these non-Christian notions of this concept is done superficially as he spends most of the time focusing on various Christian denominations.

McNeill (1951) offers two aspects of the cure of souls: healing and sustaining with healing being the dominant one. However, sustaining is also important especially for persons who have chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma, depression or anxiety. Sustaining means having God’s help to endure the illness and make sense of it. William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle (1985) in their history of pastoral care argue that pastoral care in the Christian tradition is synonymous with the cure of souls. They use pastoral care instead of cure of the soul in their book. Clebsch and Jaekle (1985) building on McNeill add two more dimensions to pastoral care or the cure of souls. These are guiding and reconciling. Clebsch and Jaekle emphasize four functions of the cure of the soul: healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. Clebsch and Jaekle provide various documents taken from various historical periods in Christianity that indicate one or more of these functions.

Certainly, each of these four functions has multiple meanings. Healing is most often associated with curing of the body and the healing miracles of Jesus show that. It also refers to curing the mind, soul, emotions, the unconscious or whatever causes it distress. The Greeks believed that there was the cure of the body and the cure of the soul. Both are intimately connected. The physician of the body is the doctor and the physician of the soul is the philosopher, priest or pastor. The practice of psychotherapy today deals with curing and caring for the mind, emotion, the unconscious, the inner life of the human person. Contemporary psychotherapists do not often use the word “soul.” Most often today, psychotherapy is not done by philosopher, priest or pastor but by another professional. Guiding is also an important function of the cure of the soul. People, who are confused and lost, need guidance. Dante (1978) in *the Divine Comedy* notes in the opening lines of the Inferno that he was lost in a darkened wood, far from the path. Virgil appears and guides him on a long journey which cures Dante’s troubled soul. Sustaining is receiving help for the soul to persevere challenging situations and can involve words of comfort and affirmation and finding hope in the midst of adversity. (Capps, 2005) Some graduate students need sustaining as they continue along the road of scholarship. In Christianity, Jesus urged his followers to take up their crosses every day and follow Him. (Mt. 16: 24-28) Sustaining is the strength and wisdom to take up one’s cross every day, to accept what is unchangeable. Reconciling is the experience of forgiveness. Reconciliation means receiving forgiveness from God for one’s sins, from others for the hurts one has caused and within oneself for our weaknesses and failures. Clients often need some form of reconciliation when they come for psychotherapy. Meakes and O’Connor (2013) also note that underlying each of these four functions is transformation. The cure of the soul transforms the client and often the psychotherapist or priest as well. This is also a process and not an end point. Cure and care of the souls is better described as curing and caring for the soul. (O’Connor & Meakes, 2014) This process does not end.

Most of the world religions agree that the cure of souls is not achieved through human power alone. The Divine is the healer, guide, sustainer and reconciler. In Christianity, Jesus cures the soul. (O’Connor & Meakes, 2014) Jesus is the one who transforms humans. The power for curing and caring is Divine. Most world religions

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات