BRIDGING PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Following the humanistic approach in psychology around 1950, positive psychology rediscovered in 2000 the importance of positive emotions, personal strengths, and virtues for mental health and well-being. As psychology from the pastoral counselor's point of view, pastoral psychology also emphasizes potentials and personal growth and employs the same virtues. Although they have epistemologically different roots, pastoral and positive psychology have many common features, virtues, and aims. These commonalities encourage collaboration between these disciplines. Based on such common virtues, pastoral counselors can benefit from the research findings and theories that positive psychology developed. Positive psychology conversely can benefit from the religious dimension and meaning of these virtues and enrich its practice. This essay presents common features, aims, and virtues such as forgiveness, hope, and love and suggests possibilities for collaboration between pastoral psychology and positive psychology.

Key Words: Pastoral psychology, positive psychology, pastoral care, pastoral counseling

Introduction

Today's scientific understanding indicates an interdisciplinary trend. Scientists make much of incorporating related fields into their research. Since its beginnings in the mid-1900s, pastoral psychology has also been predicated on such an interdisciplinary character. Positive psychology conversely has traces of different schools of thought and considers certain virtues for preserving or achieving mental health that are not foreign to pastoral psychology. These virtues, together with similar foundational thoughts and aims, indicate parallels between positive and pastoral psychology. This essay aims to present the commonalities of these disciplines and proposes approaches for collaboration.

A review of the history of psychology repeatedly surfaces conflicts between religion and this science. Despite this "on again off again relationship like siblings" (Köse 2006), both share proximate interests, namely in explaining how human beings function (mind, body, and soul) and in providing guidelines on how to live. This common interest is well observed among pastoral and psychological counseling. Pastoral work has always been one of the main concerns of Christianity (and of other religions), in which the clergy tries to care for people in distress. Is psychology doing something very different? Psychology has developed its own methods to address crises and conflicts. Thus, it was only a matter of time until adherents of the two would meet somewhere and create their own, new language. Pastoral counseling and the resultant discipline pastoral psychology can thus be considered a meeting point. "In pastoral counseling, psychology came into direct contact with the age-old cure of souls" (Kugelmann 2016, 2). The fundamental commonality of these two professions is the common purpose of the pastor and the counselor to support people in reinforcing and rediscovering their personal, interpersonal, universal, and divine relationships (Rogers 1950, 6).

When pastoral psychology began to be established in the 1950s and 1960s, pastoral counseling was understood as a skilled and trained profession. However, there was emphasis on the differentiation from psychological counseling (Curran 1959, 21, 28). This differentiation marked the special character of pastoral counseling, namely the spiritual/religious dimension it involves. This dimension is also apparent in Hiltner's (1950b) description of the meaning of pastoral psychology: "Pastoral psychology, as we understand it, is psychology

from the pastor's point of view" (p. 7). Following Hiltner, Stollberg (personal communication, 28.04.2011) explains pastoral psychology as "the psychology in the service of the pastoral." Thus, it can be argued that pastoral psychology provides the guidelines and techniques for pastoral care. Rogers (1950, 5) confirms this point in the first issue of *Pastoral Psychology*, in which he states that pastors felt a need for psychological and psychiatric insights and skills, which are of immediate and practical importance for pastoral engagement.

Pastoral psychology occurs at the crossroads between theology and psychology. Nevertheless, it aims to retain its interdisciplinary character and not reduce itself to either of these disciplines. As Stollberg (1978, 72) writes:

> A pastoral counselor has to be a theologian, anthropologist and methodologist, [and] he has to have theory and handle practice. With a little untrained "charisma," nothing is done, and if one of the three factors weakens, an important part for pastoral competence will be missing that is not a substitution but a condition for 'authoritative' pastoral work (Mt 10:1). Pastoral counseling without pastoral psychology is like preaching without exegesis and church lessons without religious education.

The theological part of pastoral counseling certainly comes first because pastoral counseling leans on the religious service pastoral care. However, particularly within the pastoral counseling movement, the qualifications that Stollberg mentioned gained an important weight. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into detail on the pastoral care movement, but with this movement, pastoral work was illuminated by the light of human sciences such as anthropology, psychology, and psychiatry. Psychological approaches such as psychoanalysis, systemic psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy, client-centered therapy, *body*-oriented psychotherapy, communication theories, and non-directive counseling found great acceptance within pastoral psychology. Hiltner (1950a, 6; 1950b, 8) emphasizes this interdisciplinary attitude by admitting that there is much that pastoral care providers can learn from mental health practitioners such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, who provide insights into human functioning. It is this plurality of professional perspectives that Hiltner wants the pastor to benefit from. This readiness and willingness to learn from and to involve other professional disciplines (particularly psychology) in pastoral practice is also observable in the formation of the mentioned journal *Pastoral Psychology*. Many reputed

names from psychology, such as Carl Rogers, Karl Menninger, Karen Horney and others contributed to the Journal. Carl Rogers (1950) wrote the editorial of the first issue and explained "Why Pastoral Psychology" by asserting, "Religion and the minister equipped with the insight and skill of the science of human behavior have a significant and unique contribution to make to this important problem" (p. 6). The problem Rogers mentioned was the growing number of mental health problems within the population.

As the adaptation of Rogers and his client-centered method show, the most favored approaches in pastoral psychology stem from humanistic psychology. However, what about other, more recent approaches, such as positive psychology?

In the same period in which pastoral psychology emerged, some psychologists criticized psychology as a science "without a soul."[1] This critique led to different schools of thought within psychology (e.g., humanistic and transpersonal psychology) that drew attention to that missing part, namely the consideration of concepts such as spirituality, virtues, potentials, and positive features for mental health. In 2000, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi recalled these features and their omission in modern psychology and introduced a new field that they called *positive psychology*. "The exclusive focus on pathology" (p. 5), as the authors criticize, has so dominated the discipline of psychology that positive features and their contributions to a worthwhile and meaningful life have been disregarded (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Fostering positive individual traits such as hope, forgiveness, love, meaning, and spirituality can contribute to preserve and achieve mental health. Thus, awakening "a discipline that deal[s] with the fundamental issues of life" (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, 6) can contribute to the counseling process of both pastoral and psychological counseling.

Before examining how these fundamental issues appear in positive and pastoral psychology, it will be useful to address some commonalities between these disciplines.

I. Common Features

First, it can be argued that both pastoral and positive psychology have the same foundations and are inspired by common theories. The

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[1] For a review of the debate, see Kempe 2007.

humanistic approach that contributed to the idea of positive psychology is also well accepted in pastoral psychology. The positive and holistic view on individuals, as highlighted by Carl Rogers, dominates the pastoral and positive perspectives. The focus on individual strengths and virtues is a common objective.

Next to Rogers', the second widely adopted approach was Howard Clinebell's[2] theory of *growth counseling.* Although Clinebell was not a positive psychologist, his ideas match those of positive psychology. Clinebell (1979, 53) explains that growth counseling should arise from the growth perspective rather than from the pathological perspective. Whereas the pathological perspective focuses on the weak sides of the client, the growth perspective enables a focus on his/her potentials and strengths. Disregarding the author of this passage, one could easily believe that it is from a positive psychologist.

Clinebell and the positive psychology founders all have a three-fold approach that comprises the past, present, and future. Whereas Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, 5) predict a satisfactory past, hopeful future and happy present, Clinebell (1979, 53) considers people's psychological problems in the background of their achievements in the past, their forces in the present, and their potentials in the future.

The weight of personal growth and innate potentials are notable beyond Rogers' and Clinebell's theories that were adopted into pastoral psychology. They also appear in the theories of the precursors of humanistic psychology such as Jung, May, and Maslow, who contributed to the formation of a positive psychology.

One further similarity between positive and pastoral psychology is their preventive function. Modern psychology has refocused from providing a better life and nurturing talent to concentrating on healing and repairing what is sick and damaged (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Positive psychology's side effect is the prevention of mental disease (Faller 2001). It aims to prevent problems such as depression, substance abuse, and mental disorders before they emerge. According to pastoral psychology authors, the pastoral counselor also plays a crucial role in preventive and therapeutic relationships. Hiltner (1950b) writes about the "crucial place" (p. 8)

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[2]   For a deeper insight into the contributions of Rogers and Clinebell to pastoral psychology, see Snodgrass 2007.

and Withlock (1970) about the "unique opportunity" (p. 9) that chaplains have in preventing mental health problems because they have a counseling role similar to that of psychotherapists. Members of the mental health profession and the pastor as counselor share occupational functions, questions, and interests (Haque 2006; Kugelmann 2016; Withlock 1970). However, they have different approaches in addressing these aspects. Whereas pastoral counselors view from a more transcendental and spiritual perspective, psychologists have an intrapsychic, behavioral or cognitive perspective. As a limitation, Withlock (1970, 9-10) emphasizes here the training, expertise, and supervision pastoral counselors lack. With the emergence of the pastoral care movement, the need for training, skills and supervision was met by its special training model *clinical pastoral training* (CPT).

In addition to the preventive intention of positive and pastoral psychology, scholars also suggest common skills to prevent mental illness. According to the founders of positive psychology, this can be accomplished by building competency rather than by correcting weakness (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Because personal growth and the cultivation of full potentials is linked with psychological well-being (Fava and Riuni 2003; Keyes 2003), positive psychologists improve strengths rather than repair what is weak or damaged in clients (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, 8). These authors believe that there are certain human strengths that serve as shields against mental disorders (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, 7) and that these buffers, such as optimism, hope, honesty, and faith, are innate to people. In parallel, Clinebell (1981, 16) must have had the same idea about these buffers when he complained about "undeveloped strengths, assets, and capacities" and that people do not use their physical, mental, spiritual, or relational potentialities effectively.

Similarly to positive psychology, pastoral psychology not only accepts the worst in people but also reminds about and rediscovers their potentials (Sheldon and King 2001; Faller 2001; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Clinebell 1971, 133-153; Klessmann 2010; Wiedemann 2011). Psychology's becoming a science of "victimology" with the primary goal of curing disorders caused it to forget to build positive qualities. However, positive psychology aims to recover the sources of strengths people draw on (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, 6). Like positive psychology, pastoral psychology is against the

"deficit model." Pastoral psychologists refuse to view the counselee as deficient, sick, immature, or insufficient (Luther 1986). Instead, they accept him/her as a fully functioning, conscious, mature individual with a sense of responsibility and the ability to make decisions and choices. Such a view does not allow the counselor to direct or impose on the counselee. This is quite the opposite of modern psychology's image of the individual. In the venue of the positive paradigm, individuals are accepted as decision makers with free preferences and choices (Bandura 1986; Seligman 1992; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Faller 2001). This shift is also observable in pastoral psychology. With the idea of "self-help," the pastoral counselor supports the counselee in emancipation and becoming a person (Stollberg 1969; Winkler 2000, 279) rather than guiding him with authority. Thus, in contrast to a disease or deficit framework, pastoral and positive psychology work is strength-oriented and not only fixes the broken but also nurtures what is good.

Repairing is past-oriented, whereas improving potentials is present and future-oriented. In contrast to psychoanalysis, for instance, positive psychology focuses on the present and future when it wants to nurture the best in people. The awareness and perception of the moment,[3] of personal potentials, of the self and the other, all issues adopted from Gestalt therapy, are valid for both pastoral and positive psychology. When acting with these principles, the pastoral counselor focuses on the "here and now."[4] He/She does not make deep analysis of the past but rather accompanies the counselee in his/her present situation. Similarly, positive psychology views not only the past but also the present and future when considering subjective experiences. Positive psychological principles such as improving positive skills and potentials, growth and prevention can also only be performed in a future-directed manner.

Finally, there is spirituality, which both positive and pastoral psychology consider a valuable source for human functioning and mental health (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Faller 2001). As mentioned previously, the humanistic precursors of these disciplines place weight on concepts such as spirituality, meaning, and religiousness, with degrees of variance. That spirituality and

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[3]   See "flow theory" by Csikszentmihalyi 2011.

[4]   For the importance of the "here and now" in pastoral counseling, see Klessmann 2010, 341.

religiousness is an integral part of pastoral counseling is obvious. It is also coherent with positive psychology's theory, because spirituality and religious affiliation and practices nurture growth and contribute to well-being, happiness, and physical and mental health.[5] In addition to spirituality, pastoral and positive psychology share other values and virtues, such as forgiveness, hope, and love. These values and virtues are addressed in the following.

II. Common Virtues

Today, the effect of spirituality, values, and virtues on well-being, health, and positive functioning is widely accepted in modern psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Koenig 2012; Koenig et al. 2001; Yapıcı 2007; Paloutzian and Park 2005). Although previous schools such as humanistic and transpersonal psychology already highlighted spirituality, virtues, and positive emotions, the advent of the positive paradigm raised the topic once again in psychology. The virtues addressed in positive psychology are, for example, forgiveness, hope, meaning, humility, love, wisdom, responsibility, and gratitude. These concepts recall immediately those advanced by religions. Furthermore, these concepts are also addressed by the pastoral counselor when he/she provides counseling with a religious/spiritual background.

In the following, I will concentrate exemplarily on a few of these virtues, namely forgiveness, hope, and love, as common issues in positive and pastoral psychology. Additionally, I will suggest possibilities for collaboration between these disciplines by means of these virtues.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness, as a "thorny" and "complex issue, both psychologically and spiritually" (Miles, cited in Hamman 2012, 439), a "dilemma" (Mueller 1998) and "a pastoral theological problem" (Hamman 2012), is a frequently studied topic in both pastoral and positive psychology. Many authors accept forgiveness as a multifaceted process that implies emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and relational dimensions, and a growing body of research focuses on these religious and psychological functions (Hill and Mullen 2000, 289; Hamman 2012; Mullet and Azar 2009; Brandsma 1982; Kumar and

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5   For a review on spirituality and health, see Koenig 2012 and Koenig et. al 2001.

Nandal 2005; Pareek and Mathur 2013; Lewis 2005; Kevin 2002; Schnabl Schweitzer 2010; Kara 2009; McCullough and Worthington 1999). Forgiveness has divine and human implications. One either expects to be forgiven by God or is willing to forgive his/her offenders. Whereas pastoral counseling addresses both aspects, psychological counseling is more likely to address the latter. Research indicates that forgiving attitudes and behaviors contribute to better mental health (Maltby and Day 2004). The reason for this contribution might be that forgiveness is a healing act, one that releases the pain induced by anger or fear (cited in Haman 2012, 438). This healing effect certainly does not come immediately. For Hamman (2012, 445), forgiveness is a process in which the individual discovers that his/her previous negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors have disappeared, decreased, or even been replaced by positive ones. However, do individuals manage this replacing process on their own? Hamman (2012, 444) doubts whether only one caregiver can guide a person through this process and suggests a multidisciplinary team when working on forgiveness.

Pastoral psychology and positive psychology appear to fulfill the requirements of the disciplines Hamman requests. Whereas pastoral psychology can contribute by opening the spiritual/religious dimension of forgiving, positive psychology can help to overcome the psychological obstacles in the forgiving process. Thus, both pastoral counselor and positive psychologists can offer a path to forgiveness and become guides on this path. Furthermore, insights into the spiritual/religious dimension of forgiveness, concepts about divine justice, and the like can enrich positive psychology theory and practice, and vice versa; therapeutic findings on the effect of forgiving on mental health, positive psychological training and practicing programs can pilot pastoral counselors.[6] Consequently, the integrity of the psychological and theological aspects of a matter such as forgiveness would be respected, and the topic would not be reduced to one point of view, either psychological or theological. Hence, the theological context and human realities would be considered (Watts 2004). Forgiveness is the first component of the virtue of temperance

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[6] For a *pyramid model of forgiveness*, see Worthington 1998; for a *process model of forgiveness*, see Enright and Coyle 1998; for *forgiveness education*, see Enright and Fitzgibbons 2000; for its application as a *forgiveness program*, see Hui and Ho 2004; and for a review of religious and secular forgiveness interventions, see Rye, 2005.

in positive psychology. A guide for practicing positive psychology (Bannink 2017, 148-149) suggests learning to forgive to reduce negative emotions and notes a story with a spiritual content. The pastoral counselor can propose other spiritual stories and provide knowledge about the religious value of forgiving. Combining this knowledge with the suggested method of positive psychology, the counselee can benefit from forgiving.

Hope

Hope is described as an "integral part" (Webb 2007, 66) of being human, "the most human of all mental feelings" (Bloch 1995, 75), "a condition for the possibility of leading a human life" (McGreer 2004, 102), and a "universally experienced phenomenon" (Parse 1999, 228). However, it had received little attention in social sciences until the mid-20th century. Menninger pointed to the importance of hope in psychiatric work for the first time in 1959. Today, however, there are over 20 hope theories and over 50 definitions on hope and its meaning for therapeutic processes, to which the positive psychology movement contributed greatly. According to Smith (2005), the reason for this negligence is that hope is often associated with religion.

Paradoxically, the subject was neglected not only in psychology but also in pastoral psychology. Not only psychiatrists such as Menninger (1959) but also pastoral psychologist Pruyser (1963) and pastoral theologian Carrigan (1976) complain that the pastoral counseling literature has no references for the theme of hope. Only in the last 40 years has pastoral counseling produced knowledge on hope, its therapeutic effect, and its religious/spiritual dimension (Capps 1995; Clinebell 1979; Kollar 1997; Lester 1995; Stone 1998; Stone and Lester 2001; Worthington 1999; Gerkin 1984; Kwan 2010).

Hope is viewed as a human resource and a means for development (Luthans and Jensen 2002) that empowers one in times of crisis. Here the question arises, from where does this resource gain its power? Not only pastoral counselors but also psychologists refer to faith and religion. Whereas Clinebell (1979, 90) grounds hope on an existential/spiritual basis, Fromm precisely formulates in his "Revolution of Hope" the liaison of hope and faith and asserts that faith could not be maintained without the feeling of hope: "The one and only foundation of hope can only be faith" (p. 13).

Hope plays an important role in pastoral counseling and in

psychotherapy. Both implement hope as a human resource and a goal to achieve (Meissner 1973, 120; Lazarus, 1980, 863; Kunzendorf and Buker 2008, 241). Richardson (2000, 81) writes about the challenge to provide and sustain hope and claims that how pastoral or psychological counselors meet this challenge is a question of life and death. The pastoral approach meets this challenge by foregrounding the pastoral counselors as "agents of hope" (Capps 1995), "advocates of hope" (Van der Geest 1981, 51) or "harbinger of hope" (Synwolt 1971). Likewise, from the positive perspective, Snyder (2002, 238) addresses in his "hope theory" how religion contributes to mental health and emphasizes the effect of religion on hope. Therefore, integrating religious principles into psychological practice will generate a wider understanding of hope. Snyder encourages engaging in this mutual relationship.

In addition to the hope theory, many other studies indicate the crucial role of the implementation of hope in therapeutic interventions (Yohani 2010; Verhaeghe et al. 2007; Husain 2005; Levi et al. 2012, 1673). Pastoral counseling compared with professional therapeutic provision is a "low-threshold service" (Klessmann 2010, 8). However, the pastoral counselor who symbolizes hope (Denton 1964, 33) can help to find, give, inspire and express hope in crises and traumata because hope serves as a "resource … that strengthens one in critical situation[s] and encourages [one] to hold out" (Klessmann 2010, 224).

Hope plays a vital role in pastoral relationships and counseling (Carrigan 1976, 40). However, pastoral psychology, like positive psychology, does not lose its connection to reality and does not deny the gravity of a situation by raising false hope or optimism. Pastoral counseling supports hope if there is hope but raises no hope when there is no hope (Ağılkaya Şahin 2017, 36).

Hope grounds on faith and offers a purpose and sense of meaning in life (Agilkaya-Sahin 2018; Calvin 1953; Carrigan 1976; Denton 1964; Watts et al. 2006; Kasapoğlu 2005). Purpose and meaning in life are positive psychological outcomes that are also relevant for the positive paradigm. Religions function as meaning-making systems and thus as a source for hope. Pastoral and positive psychology can consider this resource because both value spiritual and religious life.

When trying to raise hope, the pastoral counselor as an agent, advocate, or symbol of hope could benefit from the scientific data that psychological research provides en masse. These studies (Kunzendorf

and Buker 2008, 241; Cheavens and Gum 2010; Arnau et al. 2007; Levi et al. 2012, 1673; Bunston et al. 1996; Kinghorn 2013) document the meaning of hope for psychological well-being and highlight the spiritual dimension of the subject. Although until the 1970s there was no theory or psychology of hope, pastoral psychology can employ today's theories of hope that have been developed within positive psychology. For instance, the manual of Bannink (2017) suggests exercises such as "search for hope" (p. 178), "cultivate hope" (p. 178), "ask questions about hope" (p. 179), and "conduct experiments of hope" (p. 181). The pastoral counselor can perform these exercises from his/her religious perspective and apply them in his pastoral work.

Love

Love is another virtue that can be examined theologically and psychologically. In the schools of thought that inspired both pastoral and positive psychology, love is an important aspect in for example the humanistic approach. Tracing back Roger's client-centered therapy and its quintessential constituents – congruence, acceptance, and empathic understanding – one might recognize an underlying deeper attitude toward the individual, namely love. Being genuine to the counselee, showing unconditional positive regard toward him/her without any judgment, sensing his/her feelings that his/her experiences evoke can be an expression of an unconditional love from person to person.

Religions set variously love as a precondition for faith and interpersonal relationships.[7] This principle generated the motivation to care for each other within religious traditions. Particularly for one committed to the care and help for those in need and trouble (whether called pastoral counselors or otherwise), love is the primary motivation. Streets (2014) calls love an "underlying value of pastoral counseling" (p. 4). Accordingly, it is this loving care that makes pastoral counselors help individuals to love themselves and flourish.

As positive psychology research indicates, positive emotions in general are considered fundamental human strengths and contribute

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[7]   According to a ḥadīth of the Prophet Muḥammad: "You will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love each other. Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread peace between yourselves (Muslim, "al-Īmān," 93-94); according to *the New Testament:* "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14).

to human flourishing and well-being (Fredrickson 2000, 2001; Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot 2009; Kahneman 1999). Love in particular has a stimulating function on positive outcomes, both inter- and intra-personally (Fredrickson 2013), because it has the most healing, generative, and creative character among all emotions (Streets 2014, 9). Clinebell (1971, 15-17) writes about authentic love as a profound human need. According to him, the deprivation of authentic love, which he explains as loving and being loved, leads to psychological symptoms and interpersonal conflicts.

Love is ranked among the self-transcendent positive emotions (Haidt 2003). According to van Cappellen et al. (2016), emotions such as awe, gratitude, peacefulness, and love have a special denotation in a religious/spiritual context and promote well-being for religious people, which makes love relevant for pastoral psychology.

Tillich's (1963) notion of love points to the transforming power of love that authors such as Streets (2014) and Davidson (1999) also emphasize. This ability of love to transform—descending to misery to elevate (Tillich 1963, 29)—can be a means by which the intellectual and behavioral change expected in therapeutic and pastoral counseling occurs. Thus, insights into positive and negative emotions, evidence, and theories based upon research findings and studies will teach professionals in helping positions (see Gerdes et al. 2011; Fredrickson 2013).

For collaboration, pastoral psychology can be open to research and theories that are conducted in positive psychology about positive emotions in general and love in particular. Empirical positive psychology (Bannink 2017) suggests exercises such as "feel love (more)" (p. 126), "building loving ties" (p. 134) and many more that the pastoral counselor can incorporate in his counseling process. This practice would not be that difficult, because feeling, learning, nurturing love is the core requisite in helping professions, either secular or religious. The only point that must be considered in combining pastoral and psychological techniques is that attention must be focused on avoiding becoming reductionist in terms of one's scientific or philosophical approach when assessing the experience of love (Street 2014).

III. Common Aims

Recalling the common features of pastoral and positive psychology,

one can extract common aims from those practices. Neither positive psychology nor pastoral psychology denies the negative aspects in life. Although positive psychology has been criticized for doing so, positive psychology authors (Faller 2001; Gable and Haidt 2005) reject these claims by arguing that positive psychology is not "wishful thinking." The pastoral counselor within his/her accepting and positive regard allows negative emotions to be expressed by the counselee (Hiltner 1952b). However, as mentioned in the growth theory, the pastoral counselor not only allows negative emotions and dispositions and calms and consoles but also opens a new perspective through which the counselee is enabled to see positive aspects of his/her situation. Additionally, a new perspective will also enable the counselee to remember forgotten strengths or hidden potentials. Revealing such resources will support coping mechanisms and a positive outlook for the future. Consequently, both positive and pastoral psychology have the common aim to improve human conditions, focus on potentials rather than on weakness, and uncover capacities and motives to increase well-being and prevent mental health problems.

A necessary condition to fulfill this duty is a certain amount of awareness. Positive psychology with its concentration on the positive in man performed this awareness theoretically. Practically, the counselor must establish awareness in the counselee him/herself so that he/she will be able to recognize his/her innate strengths and potentials. Awareness is also needed for the negative aspects. Only when aware of personal faults one can develop a sense of repentance and responsibility for his/her own acts. Furthermore, for acceptance, which is a prerequisite for change, awareness is again necessary. Only what is accepted can be altered, modified, and made fruitful for personal growth or change. By reflecting the emotions that the counselee expresses (verbal or non-verbal) and giving empathic feedback, the pastoral counselor and the psychological counselor guide the counselee through this process and accompany the emotional journey that he/she experiences.

In this journey that neither the pastoral nor the psychological counselor will direct, the counselee will meet questions of meaning. However, the search for meaning, perceptions of one's own esteem and particularly coping with a reality called death will be a journey in which the counselee will need support and accompaniment (Streets 2014, 4).

Because questions of meaning can have an existential or religious dimension, the pastoral counselor is probably the right person to address these problems. However, he/she should consider the psychological background and processes inherent in the search for meaning. Here again, the pastoral counselor can also retrieve findings and theories of positive psychology that emphasize meaning.

One further common aim is encouragement. Encouragement is an Adlerian concept (see Ergün-Başak and Ceylan 2011) that has found acceptance in both positive psychology and pastoral psychology. When encouraging people, the counselor has the objective of evoking the confidence in their potentials that enables them to realize their goals and establish self-esteem (Cheston 2000). The encouraging process comprises belief in self-determination (Meredith and Evans 1990; Beck 1994) and the empowerment of the counselee to employ his/her personal capacities effectively (Beck 1994). Here again, unconditional acceptance and regard, authenticity, empathy, trust, and understanding are attitudes of both pastoral and positive psychology counselors (Watts 2003; Carns and Carns 1998). Thus, the counselor raises hope and motivation for positive change (Pitsounis and Dixon 1988).

Encouragement involves another common aim of pastoral and positive psychology, namely to (re)assume responsibility for one's own life. Responsibility is another human potential (Ağılkaya Şahin 2017, 548; Schmid 1990; Stollberg 1978, 46). The counselor helps and motivates the counselee to assume responsibility for his/her life (Britzman and Henkin 1992; Ergün-Başak and Ceylan 2011). As mentioned previously, the pastoral and positive approaches share the idea that man is not only a suffering but also a responsible subject. Adler's idea of man, which suggests that man is an active, creative, changeable, motivated individual (see Ergün-Başak and Ceylan 2011; Ergüner-Tekinalp 2016), points to the ability of personal change and growth, which is in turn reinforced by the encouragement of the counselor.

Nidetzky (1990) states that one of the aims of the pastoral counselor should be to encourage a more meaningful life. Here, the purpose is to encourage the individual to take responsibility for his/her life to shape and take control of it (Ağılkaya Şahin 2017, 82, 85). This purpose recalls the idea of self-help in pastoral psychology. Ziemer (2000, 114, 266-267, 311) views encouragement necessary for self-help and new directions in life, which are all embedded in the freedom of the

individual. The concept of the free individual who has his own will and choices are again common issues of pastoral and positive psychology.

IV. Cooperation

The starting point of this essay was the interdisciplinary character of pastoral psychology and its commonalities with positive psychology. These commonalities encourage cooperation between these two disciplines.

Since its emergence, pastoral counseling has been nurtured by psychology. This connection is well observed on the homepage of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), www.aapc.org, on which the slogan "Integrating Spirituality & Mental Health" is mentioned. The AAPC (2012) outlines the traditional care of religious communities and their leaders for those in distress by means of religious counseling. However, religious counseling might not be sufficient or accurate for severe mental disorders. In such cases, professional health care and therapy is required for proper healing and treatment. At this point, "pastoral counseling has evolved from religious counseling to pastoral psychotherapy which integrates theology and other faith tradition knowledge, spirituality, the resources of faith communities, the behavioral sciences, and in recent years, systemic theory." (AAPC 2012).

On the same homepage, Snodgrass (n.d.) not only points to a relationship and cooperation with psychology but also calls pastoral counselors "clinical mental health professionals" and describes pastoral counseling as a type of clinical mental health care. Her emphasis is on the pastoral counselor's integration of his/her spiritual beliefs and practices into the therapeutic process. The aim of the pastoral counselor is to foster spiritual and psychological wholeness and growth by means of informative guidance and relationships. In this task, the pastoral counselor seeks to combine scientific knowledge (i.e., from psychology and behavioral sciences) with spiritual and religious wisdom. Pastoral counseling's core is in the improvement of the mental situation of the counselee, enhancement of positive changes that lead to physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being, and finally in the amendment of the relationships that comprise the self, others and the sacred (Snodgrass 2015, 5-6).

Early writers on pastoral counseling and psychology instead viewed their field as not a sub-discipline of psychology but rather a part of

theology. For instance, Hiltner (1952b, 23) demands a broad concept of psychology to integrate it into theology, but he does not neglect religious and pastoral psychology's need for insights into the human psyche. Therefore, the distinction of pastoral psychology and general psychology is not a matter of content but rather a matter of perspective. In compliance with his aforementioned definition of pastoral psychology ("psychology from the pastor's point view"), Hiltner explains the relationship with psychology somewhat differently than Snodgrass does:

> If it is not to become fixed and dogmatic at any particular point, pastoral psychology cannot content itself with examining merely a few facets of psychology in general. It must be committed to examining the whole range of psychological study from its own point of view (Hiltner 1952b, 22).

The debate around the allocation of pastoral psychology is beyond the scope of this essay, but pastoral counselors appear not to have any problems with integrating psychology into their pastoral work. However, on behalf of psychology, there is no such general acceptance (Ziemer 2011; Utsch 2006; Klessmann 2004). The empirical character of psychology distances it from religion, which emphasizes concepts such as faith and the sacred. However, both actually have the same concerns and are not that distinct. For instance, the answers to the big questions in life are addressed similarly in both disciplines. Positive psychology particularly contributed to this commonality with its studies and theories (Joeseph et al. 2006); thus, it can be viewed as a union of religion and psychology (Watts, et al. 2006). Concepts such as forgiveness and gratitude originally denoted a religious and spiritual character. Now that they are subject to scientific research and empirical positive psychology in particular, a better understanding of how these concepts are related and lead to well-being will be possible.

Although a huge body of research exists on the relationships between faith, religiosity, religious practices and mental and physical health (see Koenig et al. 2001; Yapıcı 2007), only few studies investigate the effects of pastoral care and counseling, namely Bay et al. (2008) and Iler et al. (2001). Both randomized controlled studies tested the effect of pastoral care services on hospitalized patients. Iler et al. (2001) indicate lower anxiety at discharge, shorter hospital stays, and increases in patient satisfaction, and Bay et al. (2008) report a decrease in negative religious coping and an increase in positive religious coping with respect to the control group, who received no

chaplain visits. Certainly, with fewer data, no generalization can be made that pastoral counseling contributes to well-being. However, the above-mentioned studies suggest the possible positive effects of pastoral counseling on patients.

Absent scientific evidence, many authors propose or address an integration of theology and psychology in general and pastoral psychology and positive psychology in particular (Ziemann 2006; Söylev 2015; Strunk 1971; Capps 1977; Conn 1987; Joseph et al. 2006; Genia 2000; Helminiak 2001; Plante 2008; Slife and Reber 2012; Ting and Ng 2012; Brunsdon 2014; Withlock 1970). Ziemer (2011) claims an interdisciplinary relationship to fulfill pastoral psychology's main aim, which is to contribute to competent pastoral care: "This involves realistic and appropriate individual handling of themes and problems arising in times of sickness and crisis, conversation methods grounded in psychology and communication theory, and an ability to develop appropriate relationships in the different areas of pastoral activity" (p. 600).

Because positive psychology investigates general human virtues and strengths and pastoral psychology is concerned with recovering potentials and grounds on virtues in the counseling process (Ağılkaya Şahin 2017), a partnership would be beneficial for the practice of both. On behalf of pastoral psychology, Brunsdon (2014, 3) argues that distancing from other helping disciplines would hinder effective pastoral counseling and suggests pastoral collaboration. However, the question of how this collaboration should be realized needs attention. Crabb (1978) points to the risk that one discipline could undermine the other. Brundson (2014, 5) pleads for a theological framework because if the uniqueness of pastoral care is endangered, the risk occurs that the result of the cooperation will be something other than pastoral care. To find the right collaboration partner, Brundson (2014, 5) suggests an examination of the underlying philosophy. As elaborated in the previous section of this essay, the essentials of pastoral and positive psychology appear suitable for mutual contribution. Although Brundson (2014) appears to be correct when he prefers collaboration in terms of strategies and research findings rather than on epistemology, because pastoral work is based on theology, and positive psychology is based on human sciences. Hence, a mechanic rather than organic collaboration between pastoral and positive psychology would deliver useful outcomes for counselors of both disciplines.

Collaboration in this sense would also prevent not only the risk of undermining each other as Crabb warns but also any field overstepping its boundaries and interfering in issues special to the other. This point is true for instance in Seligman's *Authentic Happiness*, in which he engages in theological speculations. Seligman (2002, 257-259) states clearly his naturalistic view by opposing God's role as a supernatural creator and espouses secularism. Due to the suggested positivistic presupposition, pastoral counselors must be cognizant of the potential conflicts with positive psychologists' views on theological issues.

Conversely, pastoral counselors should be aware of their role as caregivers and counselors and avoid claiming to do therapy. Although Snodgrass (n.d.) calls pastoral counselors "clinical mental health professionals" and Helminiak (2001) claims that psychotherapy and spirituality are the same, giving care and doing counseling (from a theological perspective) differs from therapy in professional clinical psychology. The consideration of spirituality in therapy is a necessity, and the claim that every therapy entails spiritual matters (Helminiak 2001; Haque 2006) can be discussed. However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this essay. After all, a relationship and collaboration would be beneficial when both sides respect mutual boundaries and expertise.

Conclusion

Today, scientific research and the implementation of findings have an interdisciplinary character. Many disciplines contribute to one another, benefit from their findings, and enrich their practice. This essay suggested such collaboration between pastoral and positive psychology because both have commonalities in features, aims, and notions on certain virtues. Forgiveness, hope, and love are only some of these virtues that both disciplines integrate in their work. Whereas positive psychology examines these virtues in terms of their contribution to well-being, pastoral psychology employs them from a theological framework. Both disciplines could enrich their theories, approaches, and practice by exchanging their knowledge.

Mostly referred to as psychological knowledge for theologians, pastoral psychology has not developed its own methodology; instead, it borrows its techniques from psychology's therapeutic interventions. Psychology conversely has neglected the spiritual/religious dimension of the human. With emerging approaches and disciplines, psychology

managed to fill in this gap. Positive psychology is one of those disciplines. The integration of positive and pastoral approaches could serve as a holistic means of counseling people in distress not only as addressed in this essay but also as claimed by early authorities such as Jung. Whereas Jung (1932) writes, "It is high time that the pastoral counselor and the doctor of the souls reach out to each other to cope with this enormous task [to fulfill the psychic needs of today]" (p. 12). Frankl (1992) writes, "The salvation of man is through love and in love." (p. 49). Because virtues provide individual and social happiness (Ocak 2011, 81), professionals who care for people in either psychological or pastoral contexts can enhance their counseling purpose by considering these virtues contributing factors for good mental health and well-being. A functional bridge and an instrumental cooperation between pastoral and positive psychology can be such an opportunity. The practice and theory of positive psychology can serve as a useful tool when practicing pastoral psychology. Hence, pastoral psychology does not offer special techniques or methods but rather adopts psychological intervention methods. The similar backgrounds, commonalities in features and aims, and emphasis on virtues and values for a better and happier life in pastoral psychology and positive psychology appear to provide the necessary foundation for a fruitful cooperation in supporting people in distress.

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