

## BOOK REVIEW

Allender, Dan B.

*THE WOUNDED HEART:**Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse.*

Colorado Springs, Colorado: NAVPRESS, 1992.

Don't be fooled by the bright, young faces on your campuses. Many of these apparently innocent people hide painful memories of crimes against God and against their own souls which block their ability "to just trust God". Countless women and many men -- the victims of sexual abuse need a friend, someone who really understands their pain and is able to care with compassion, wisdom, and strength. This insightful and informative text gives a victim and those who work with them a solid psychological as well as biblical understanding of this issue.

*THE WOUNDED HEART* provides the reader with a thorough analysis of the dynamics of sexual abuse, an explanation of the damage it causes within the victim, and then provides a path for growth and healing.

In analyzing the dynamics of sexual abuse, Allender likens the reluctance in admitting the abuse to that of facing battle in a war. He elaborates the different levels and types of sexual abuse and outlines the characteristics of the typical abuser. Based on his years of counseling victims, he has developed a profile of the abuser which is helpful to both the victim and the counselor. Sin and shame as interwoven issues are discussed within a biblical perspective which explain how man is made, why this abuse is so devastating to the human soul, and how the victim can deal with ugliness and pain.

The resultant contempt experienced by the victim is examined in terms of its possible variations and the functions it serves to protect the victim from damaging others or replicating the past abuse. It is in facing and dealing with the sin, shame, and contempt that the victim finds his way to the possibility of healing and real sorrow for the wrongs that has been committed.

With delicacy, again using examples from his counseling experience, Allender clearly describes the progressive stages of abuse. His approach is thorough and clinical, but effectively communicates the pain of this heinous crime.

In examining the "Damage of the Abuse", the issues of powerlessness, betrayal, and ambivalence are discussed in detail as well as the secondary symptoms and the damage it inflicts on the victim's style of relating to others. Sexual abuse does not just affect the physical dimension of the victim but pervades his/her entire being -- psychologically, morally, spiritually, socially, ethically.

The remainder of the book is devoted to sketching what is required for change, growth, and healing. The difficulty of this process is honestly addressed, and the

reader is guided through the biblical route to real life through death and suffering and to the possible joy that reveals itself only in 1) enjoyment in being soft and tender; 2) a deepened capacity to respond to others from the soul; and 3) the freedom to make difficult and unpopular choices.

Also available is a Companion Workbook for Personal or Group Use. The workbook parallels the format of the book and gives the victim the opportunity to interact with the material and begin the journey to healing.

The title of the book, which Allender found in the psalms: "My sacrifice O God, is a broken spirit; a wounded heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psalm 51:17), beautifully captures the essence of this crime. As Allender says, "Most of us are so used to hiding our hurts and healing our own hearts that we can not imagine that our God speaks most tenderly as we lay before Him our wounded heart. There is weeping for the night, but joy is promised in the dawn."

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BOOK REVIEW OF  
*THE GOSPEL IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY,*

Lesslie Newbigin, Eerdmans  
Publ. Co.: Grand Rapids 1989.

Lesslie Newbigin was an Anglican missionary in India for almost forty years. He has been involved in spreading the gospel among people of other faiths as well as being involved with the World Council of Churches in their interfaith endeavors. This book was originally a series of lectures at Glasgow (Scotland) University in 1988.

The book is of relevance to campus ministers because as we all **know, there are** a variety of world religions and faiths that we encounter on a weekly basis. In the midst of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and many other faiths, how do we continue to believe and preach that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life?" Is it credible among "thinking people" to continue to believe this and teach this? Newbigin believes it is, and lends his voice to those who believe that the religious pluralism of our age is a problem that must be confronted.

Using an idea from sociologist Peter Berger,<sup>1</sup> Newbigin discusses the reigning plausibility structure for our world today. Plausibility structure is a filter through which people see our world, their experiences, and any information that comes to them. Newbigin states that "in every human society there is . . . a structure of assumptions and practices which determine what beliefs are plausible and what are not."<sup>2</sup> Newbigin discusses the fact that up until the age of science, the reigning plausibility structure for our world was the Bible and church tradition. Since the age of science, reason and scientific method have become the reigning plausibility structure of our world, and with this has come a belief that if something can't be proven scientifically, it is just a matter of personal preference. Newbigin attempts to counter that argument with the fact that belief in the scientific method is just as much a matter of faith as is faith in God and in the Bible. Since scientific theories are regularly disproven or refined, and yet are believed to be true until that point, is there not an element of faith in believing them? If this is true, Newbigin believes, why is it any less credible to look at the world through the filters of the Bible and Christian faith than it is through science. Science thus is just one more "faith endeavor" or world religion competing for its place in the pluralistic world in which we live.

Newbigin gives us meat to chew on in terms of contextualizing the gospel and the logic of doing missions, while at the same time doing battle with those who have intellectual problems with Christ being "the way, the truth, the life."<sup>3</sup> He also discusses the present urging toward religious dialogue between world religions and the myth of our society being truly secular, which impinges on the issue of church and state that Baptists have traditionally cherished.

In a world seeking to make us believe that each religion is a true road to God and the great beyond, Newbigin attempts to give encouragement that Christ is unique, and that it is credible to believe this without committing intellectual suicide. The book provides thoughtful discussions to help us minister to our students who are taking religious studies courses. Many have faith problems when religious studies professors teach that Christianity is only one of many faiths, and that one is just as good as another. While we should respect and love those of other religions who are truly seeking God, there is still the matter of Jesus being unique (John 14:6 and Acts 4:12).

Are you a pluralist, an inclusivist, or an exclusivist? Newbigin's book helps us understand more about the exclusivist position and feel better if we fit into that camp. Maybe it can be one tool to help you with your struggles about where you best fit. Newbigin doesn't have the final or definitive answer, but he is one willing to lend his voice to the discussion.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, (New York: Anchor Press, 1979).

<sup>2</sup>Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1989), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>See Paul Knitter, *No Other Name?* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985, and Paul Knitter and John Hick, eds., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987. See also *The International Review of Mission*, July 1988.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Pastoral Ethics: Professional Responsibilities of the Clergy,*

by Gaylord Noyce. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988. 220 pp.

Conversations about "ethical issues" on college campuses often yield more heat than light. Earnest debates about ethics - or the lack of ethics - in higher education now also ferment in the public arena.

Beyond trying to facilitate meaningful ethical discussion among persons of faith, campus ministers need to examine themselves and their vocation in the light of ethical reflection. Gaylord Noyce's book provides a valuable resource for this challenging task.

Noyce offers a rationale for this work in his opening declaration that, "There is a special warrant these days for examining our ministry through the lens of professional ethics" (p. 11). Given the scandals that have plagued public Christian ministries in the United States in recent years, Noyce's assertion must be seen as a masterpiece of understatement! Our contemporary context is crying out for the articulation and enforcement of standards reflecting professional integrity in the practice of vocational Christian ministry.

Noyce argues that pastoral ethics has a significant role to play in the formation and clarification of ministerial identity. He proposes a "framework" for pastoral ethics based upon the promise-making norms inherent in professional commitment. Within this professional framework, Noyce utilizes a functional approach. He begins by describing an ethics of leadership which focuses upon "style rather than rules" and attempts to hold together both faithful integrity and collaborative management. Noyce maintains that the community's welfare, rather than the minister's professional career, should take priority in decision-making.

Noyce next examines the ethics of preaching and teaching. Recognizing the complex aesthetic aspects of the preaching event, he discusses faithfulness to the goal of preaching, scriptural accountability, honesty in the use of sources, respect for the congregation, and "cautions" for dealing with social issues in the pulpit.

The following two chapters are devoted to the complex ethical issues encountered in the minister's pastoral care responsibilities. After examining the minister's role as "moral counselor" (taken from the work of James Gustafson), Noyce explores various applications of this perspective to issues such as confidentiality, telling the truth with dying patients, and cross-sexual issues.

Noyce then briefly surveys a variety of important special topics for pastoral ethics. The ambiguities of financing ministry, the tangle of relationships with other clergy, and the dilemmas of community outreach and social action each receive a perceptive overview. In addition, he includes a chapter of ethical guidelines for the

controversial areas of public relations, evangelism, and church growth.

Noyce wisely devotes his final chapter to the personal life of the minister. Both the mental and spiritual health of the self are the focus of concern. In a concluding postscript he tackles the thorny question of whether the ministry is best described as a "profession." Noyce argues for a "more positive" definition of "professional," which focuses upon commitment and competence.

One of the dangers inherent in any approach to defining pastoral ethics is accommodating the minister's role to cultural norms to such a degree that the transcendent perspective of Christianity is no longer free to speak against the culture. Kierkegaard reminds us that the authentic journey of faith will at times require "the teleological suspension of the ethical" (*Fear and Trembling*).

Noyce is aware of this danger and responds by arguing for an "interim ethic," which provides "realistic, normative perspectives that are plausible" (pp. 26-27, cf. also p. 94). Nevertheless, when one observes that in Noyce's comparative grid of professional relationships, the "ultimate value" served by the profession of ministry is "faith" rather than God, one wonders whether too much accommodation has occurred. A Christocentric approach in which Christ dialectically transforms culture (H.R. Niebuhr) would perhaps offer a more biblically-grounded missional understanding of the minister's role.

Another danger inherent in the process of writing about pastoral ethics is the temptation to use dramatic and a sensational examples to illustrate and thus inadvertently oversimplify complex issues. Although Noyce is certainly aware of the moral complexity of the minister's role, he occasionally succumbs to the temptation to use homiletically dramatic, life-and-death incidents (e.g., teenage suicidal death pacts to illustrate problems of confidentiality – p. 89). Examples that reveal the "gray areas" typical of daily life in ministry would be more instructive.

Despite these dangers, Noyce is to be highly commended for his balanced and thoughtful discussion of the contemporary ethical perplexities of professional ministers. This work should assist campus ministers in taking that long-needed first step away from rhetorical lamentation and towards constructive commitment to professional responsibility.

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