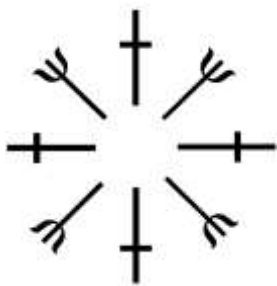


Forming the Whole Person: The Importance of the Psychological and Social Aspects in Spiritual Formation

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body mind spirit

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Criteria for Ministry Success

(Malony, 2000)

- How do we define success in ministry?
 - Longevity?
 - Prestige?
 - Salary?
 - Achievement?
- Criteria for success as ministers are based on service to people rather than worldly acclaim (Malony, 1984; Nauss, 1983).

Paying Attention to the Whole Person

- A balanced approach to formation attends to:
 - Intellectual
 - Spiritual
 - Psychological
 - Social
 - Physical
- Individuals in ministry need both knowledge and skill
 - Among the skills needed are pastoral & interpersonal skills
- But, more than simply possessing knowledge and skill, ministers must be whole persons whose lives reflect what they believe and value.

Criteria for Ministry Success

(Malony, 2000)

- Should the candidate developmental assessments be more geared toward ministerial “effectiveness” rather than ministerial “success”?
 - Effectiveness defined as the ability to effect changes in behavior within individuals and congregations.

Criteria for Ministry Success

(Malony, 2000)

- Effective ministry has been characterized by several dominate factors of the individual (Schuller, Strommen, & Brekke, 1975).
 - Being a theologian in mind & thought
 - Practicing a personal faith
 - Being a congregational leader
 - Ministering to persons in crisis
 - Being involved in community life
 - Having few, if any, disqualifying characteristics
- Ascertaining the presence of these criteria in candidates can be accomplished only partially by psychological evaluations.

Criteria for Ministry Success

(Malony, 2000)

- Psychologist can assess candidates similarity of interests and personality traits to those who have served long and well in ministry, but psychologists should leave the question of divine calling to others.
- Apart from the issue of calling, there are two criteria psychologist can use in predicting effectiveness in ministry.
 - Interest and personality traits considered compatible with human service occupations
 - The absence of overt psychopathology.

Using an Evaluation to Distinguish Red Flags and Road Signs

(Rowan, 2004)

- **The candidate assessment:**
 - Diagnostic techniques are used to rule out serious liabilities (red flags)
 - Personality assessment is used to map strengths to be developed & weaknesses to be corrected or balanced (road signs)

Paying Attention to the Whole Person

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- Lay students may not see the relevance of the scrutiny involved in a psychological assessment.
 - They may not see the process of such in-dept self understanding and formation as relevant.
 - The invasiveness of the assessment, and recommended interventions, may seem to the student inappropriate in an “academic” setting.
- The school and faculty’s emphasis and attitude toward the psycho-social aspects of formation will influences the student’s attitude.

Paying Attention to the Whole Person

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- Schools of theology are increasingly understanding the obligation to certify more than the intellectual acumen of candidates for lay ministry.
 - Difficult to balance: Academics & Formation
 - What about the straight “A” student with poor social skills and strong resistance to seeking help?
- Psychological assessment is a way of becoming more aware of one’s personal dynamics.
 - Increasing awareness increases the probability of thinking about things consciously verses acting on them unconsciously
- After assessment, the candidate & the school of theology (formation director, faculty, administration) can partner together to complete the formation process (or pursue another path).

Conceptualizing the Evaluation

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- Framing the experience for the candidate and faculty.
 - Session where director of formation and consulting psychologist meet with students as a group.
 - Responding to student's questions
 - Offer the rationale for the assessment; lay out the process; clarify it's place in the formation process

Conceptualizing the Evaluation

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- Two critical dimensions
 - Red Flags -- Ruling out psychiatric disease
 - Road Signs -- Identifying both strengths and areas for growth.
- The evaluation cannot hope to do justice to the dynamic, holistic being that is the candidate.
 - It provides a static frame of a moving picture
 - What will be depends on the students openness and cooperation.

Integrating Results in Formation

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner, & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- Human (or psychosocial) development plan, or a less formal statement of formation goals.
 - Writing out goals makes clear that psychological and social development are critical parts of formation.
 - At the same time, the psychological and social goals are only 2 parts of a broader formation plan.

Integrating Results in Formation

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner, & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- **Developing the formation goals**
 - Best done through a systematic and mutual process.
 - Agreement of student and school on specific experiences to remove obstacles and build on strengths identified in the assessment.
 - Common areas addressed:
 - Awareness & expression of emotions
 - Development of social relationships
 - Appreciation and integration of sexuality
 - Respect for personal and professional boundaries
 - Addressed individually or in groups, alone or with assistance of professionals.
 - A team approach (formation director, outside professionals, faculty, etc.) provides complementary perspectives.

Integrating Results in Formation

(Duckro, McLaughlin, Milner, & Firgon-Milner, 2001)

- **Reviewing the plan and progress is essential.**
 - Conference to review progress (Who to include?)
 - Review of goals may be done in a group setting to provide accountability (however, risk of confidentiality)
 - Without periodic reviews, there is the risk of neglect
 - With reviews, there is opportunity for encouragement and challenge.
 - The developmental goals must be integrated with-in the larger framework of theological education and formation.
 - Faculty can serve a role in accountability for the candidate.
 - Is how the student behaves and functions in the classroom an accurate reflection of how they will function in ministry?

Red Flags and Road Signs

(Rowan, 2004)

- **Red Flags:**
 - There are some candidates with mental disorders, acute and/or chronic, who will need immediate attention.
 - Disorders must be properly diagnosed and treated to alleviate suffering & avoid further damage.

Examples of Red Flags

- Serious Mood Disorders
 - Major Depression
 - Bi-polar Depression
- Acute & Chronic Anxiety States
 - PTSD
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - OCD
 - Panic Disorder
 - Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder)

Examples of Red Flags

- Substance Abuse or Dependence
- Eating Disorders
- Sexual Paraphilias (& Addictions)
- Addictive Behavioral Patterns (Gambling)

Examples of Red Flags

- Personality Disorders
 - Avoidant Personality Disorder
 - Social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation
 - Dependent Personality Disorder
 - Excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation.
 - Narcissistic Personality Disorder
 - Grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy
 - Borderline Personality Disorder
 - Instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects; and marked impulsivity.
 - Histrionic Personality Disorder
 - Excessive emotionality and attention seeking

Red Flags and Road Signs

(Rowan, 2004)

- **Road Signs**
 - Less precise, no candidate for formation presents as a whole person.
 - 1st goal: Become aware of shortcomings and humbly ask for growth.
 - 2nd goal: Name gifts, give thanks, and allow them to contribute to healing of self and others

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- **Low Self-esteem**
 - **May be manifested in:**
 - **Inordinate competitiveness**
 - **Devaluing others**
 - **Parochialism**
 - (concern with one's group; little concern for those not in the group)
 - **Perfectionism**

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Jones, 2000)

- **Arrogance & Self-Righteousness**
 - **May be manifested in:**
 - **Attitude of superiority**
 - **No interest in collaboration**
 - **May function as a defense against feelings of inferiority and insecurity (a reaction formation)**

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- **Burnout**
 - *May be manifested in:*
 - Lack of energy and interest
 - Cynicism
 - *Predictable pattern leading to burnout:*
 - Obsession with ministry
 - Exhaustion, Questioning
 - Disappointment, Withdrawal
 - Cynicism

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- **Hostility**
 - *May be manifested in:*
 - Lack of ability to deal with:
 - Feelings of anger
 - Disappointments
 - Blows to self-esteem.
 - Hostility is an “acting-out” defense

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- Failure to Deal with Conflict
 - May be manifested in:
 - Apathy
 - Tension

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- **Lack of Knowledge of Gifts**
 - There is a need to take the time to identify one's gifts
 - **Failure to Share Faith**
 - A fear and/or resistance to shared prayer because the trust and intimacy is too threatening
 - Two necessary conditions for fostering sharing:
 - Assurance of safety
 - Expectation that sharing will take place
- (These are key ingredients along the whole process)

Common Road Signs

(Sofield & Juliano, 2000)

- **Lack of an Integrated Sexuality**
 - Two indicators of a lack of sexual integration:
 - Fear
 - Fear of working with anyone toward whom they might have a sexual attraction
 - Suppressing and/or repressing normal feelings
 - Difficulty with relationships and honest self-revealing
 - Obsession
 - Obsessed worry with sexual feelings that emerge
 - People working in close relationships should not be surprised to feel strong emotions
 - Acknowledge, accept, and when appropriate discuss.

Provide an Invitation

- Preparation & Reflection
 - The axiom that no person comes to formation already whole is hopefully understood as an invitation to look at weaknesses & strengths.

Provide an Invitation

- It is possible to grow & learn personally as we serve others.
 - Requires openness to being touched and shaped by the experience of being with others in intimate moments of ministry
 - Without such openness, the protective shell that limits vulnerability prevents growth.

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