

Pastoral Theology as the Art of Paying Attention: Widening the Horizons¹

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Introduction

Promoting the wellbeing – even flourishing – of persons and their communities is one way to understand the orienting purpose and normative vision of pastoral theology. The underlying conviction of pastoral theology is that the Divine intends creation to flourish. Pastoral theology's attention to hurting people and its overriding concern for well-being is grounded in a theological vision of a loving God who wills that all participate in the divine life. This is a reasonable description of the project of pastoral theology: promoting the flourishing of all.²

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- 1 This subtitle is a nod to Charles V. Gerkin, who argued that pastoral theology must concern itself with needs beyond those of individuals. Gerkin suggested that pastorally-inclined theologians have roles as prophet (challenging the status quo when it does not promote flourishing); priest (maintaining the status quo when it achieves God's intention for the world); and pastor (caring and attending). These descriptions of the roles are mine, and I am widening the horizons beyond Gerkin's intentions; however, I understand this project as an extension of his work. See: Gerkin, *Widening the Horizons. Pastoral Responses to a Fragmented Society*, Philadelphia (Westminster/John Knox) 1986.
 - 2 Pastoral theology derives its name from the image of shepherd and can be understood as a "theology of shepherding [or] a pastor's oversight of the people of God." See: J.R. Burck/Rodney J. Hunter, *Pastoral Theology. Protestant*, in: Rodney J. Hunter, ed., *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville (Abingdon) 1990, 867–872. Pastoral theology formulates theories, theologies and practices for ministers (broadly conceived) with the goal of healing. It is "a way of doing theology *pastorally*" (ibid.). This is distinguished from practical theology, which addresses the whole range of responsibilities and activities of the minister. The subject of practical theology, in its ecclesial forms, usually includes attention to preaching, liturgics, church education, and church polity and administration. See: Edward Farley, *Practical Theology. Protestant*, in: Hunter, *The Dictionary*, 934–936. Practical theology can be widened even further into a theory of experience, action and practice, where "practice" can refer to public and world-transforming political activity. See: Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Practical Theology*, in: Dawn Devries/Brian Gerrish, eds., *New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, Louisville (Westminster/John Knox) forthcoming, 8. Practical theology "attends to actual problems that profoundly shape lives ... [and seeks to develop] corollary transformative action that reflects the promise of God" (ibid., 9). *Pastoral* theology is akin to practical theology in

A central pre-occupation of pastoral theology, then, has been the impediments to the full participation in the life of God. In short, pastoral theology seeks to address persons distress and the alienating dimensions of human life; to identify and overcome the challenges to human flourishing. In pastoral theology, attending to hurting persons has been a primary means by which this end is pursued.

This essay first takes up the theme of pastoral attention, reviewing its key foci over the course of Christian history. I contend that shifts in pastoral attention can reveal both the operative theological commitments and the relevant social realities that direct attention. Using this notion of attention as a heuristic, I analyze the current foci of attention in pastoral theology and suggest deeper attention to a dimension of human experience that has been relatively ignored by current practitioners and theologians: organizational life, or the “meso” level of human experience. In conclusion, I propose one model for effective pastoral intervention at the organizational level.

1. Pastoral Theology: The Art of Paying Attention

The term “attention” is not a central concept in pastoral theology. However, it is a word that nicely captures the concerns of pastoral theology and bears further examination. Attending is similar to, but distinct from, some of the more recognizable terms in our field. Listening, holding space, being a non-anxious presence, being with, and developing self-awareness are all venerable terms, as are the theological concepts of prayerfulness, meditation, and discernment. More recently, pastoral theology has borrowed concepts such as “mindfulness” from Buddhist practices.³ But attending is more than listening, and it designates something different or more than holding space or being a non-anxious presence. It is close to the notion of mindfulness, but it specifies something particular about pastoral theology that is missing in all these terms.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, to “attend” means: “to be present, to minister, to await, to listen, to be open. To *pay attention* is to give close and earnest consideration, to concentrate one’s mind on something.”⁴ This definition succinctly captures the multifold dimensions of

these ways, though it focuses on practices of care and seeks well-being. Because this essay focuses on practices explicitly designed to promote the flourishing of human lives, I will be using primarily the term “pastoral theology.”

- 3 The Buddhist teaching on mindfulness is outlined in *Sutta Satipatthana*, where mindfulness is described as “the direct path to the attainment of purity, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the end of pain and grief.” See: *Word of the Buddha*, 16th edition, Kandy, Sri Lanka (Buddhist Publication Society) 1981, 61.
- 4 Catherine Soanes/Argus Stevenson, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd edition, New York (Oxford University Press) 2005, 101; Maurice White, ed., *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus. Of Current English*, New York (Oxford University Press) 2007, 56.

the practice. Like non-anxious presence and mindfulness, it includes the notion of being present. Like listening, it implies leaning in with openness to hearing something new. It recognizes the voice of the other. The *attender* waits to hear the other, concentrating on the other's concerns. Like discernment, listening, and mindfulness, attention is open to new ideas, new realities. But attention also conveys the sense of ministering, consideration, and care. This extension – not only of one's concentration, but also of one's loving concern – is captured in the idea of tending. When one attends, one also tends – lovingly cares for another. One could argue, for example, that commercial farmers raise crops, but avid rose gardeners *tend* their plants.

The term *attention* derives from the Latin “attendre,” which means to heed and to stretch. Attention thus entails an expansive dimension, and its inclusion of care reveals deeply theological resonances. When one attends, it is always with love. The term indicates openness to revelation, openness to the prospect of seeing beauty, truth, wonder, and even the divine – not in a cold light of rationality, but in the warm embrace of a relationship of love. Thus, tenderness is a sibling of attention. As R. Richard Niebuhr expresses it: “to attend is to imagine with patience and deference toward that which shows itself. And conversely, to imagine with genuine respect for what shows itself is to attend.”⁵ When we attend, then, we engage in deeply theological action. If Divine work in the world or in the life of an individual is obvious to us, there is no call for attention; attending is what is required when one is listening for the still small voice of God or the faint echo of the sacred or the glimpse of the divine in the firmament of creation. Given this definition of attention, given this definition of attention I argue that attention is an especially important theological virtue for those who seek to accompany persons in distress, journey with those who suffer, or discern divine purposes where they are most deeply hidden.

My claim that attentiveness is a crucial element of care-giving is grounded in a theological understanding of God as One who attends to us. Both the Christian and Jewish scriptures are replete with narratives in which God attends to God's people. We need only think of the metaphor of God like an eagle gathering up her young (Deuteronomy 32:11), and Jesus who assures us that, as God cares for the lilies of the field and the sparrow, God cares for us (Matthew 6: 25–33),. Jesus tells us over and over that he comes for the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–7), and scripture names many ways he attends to the needs of the least among us.⁶ This value of attending carefully to the details (especially the pain) of human life is articulated in contemporary liberation theology's claim of God's preferential option for the poor. This suggests the theological import of attention. It is a stance, or a dispo-

5 R. Richard Niebuhr, *The Strife of Interpreting. The Moral Burden of Imagination*, *Parabola*, 10(2) 1985, 42.

6 Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, eds., *New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version*, New York (Oxford University Press) 1991.

sition, toward the subject of our attending that is hope-full. It trusts that the Divine will break through. Attending creates temporal space for God, truth, mystery, the sacred, to present itself. It presupposes the possibility of new realities breaking forth.

We should not wonder, then, that monastics and contemplatives have developed such rigorous practices of attention. Indeed, the ability to attend is elemental to religious life. As the historian of religion, Philip Novak, has shown, the effort to cultivate and purify attention is a part of all the world's religions and contemplative traditions.⁷ The training of attention is at once a way to restore our relationship with the transcendent source of being and a method to overcome alienation. Simone Weil believed that cultivating our capacities to attend develops the very substance of prayer and communion with God.⁸ For this reason, a genuine effort of attention is never wasted; it always has its effect on the human spirit and has consequences for the ways we live the life of God in the world. Paying attention is a skill that is basic to effective care as well as a means of healing through grace.

While attention opens a space for God's redemptive action, it is necessarily limited. It is "selective awareness," not universal vision. When we attend to something deeply and carefully, we necessarily neglect other things, other realities, other forces. Attention sheds light, but not everywhere; it keeps much in the dark. It is important to reflect on the focus of pastoral attention and to ask whether our attention has been sufficiently turned to the complexities of human experience so as to support flourishing of God's creation. In other words, it is important to attend to what has been unattended. This will be the focus of the last third of this essay. First, however, I want to note briefly the focus of pastoral attention historically.

2. A Brief History of Attention in Pastoral Theology in the United States

While the practice of attention has been fundamental to religious life, the focus or location of attention has shifted across time. These shifts in pastoral attention signal changes in theological understandings and in social and cultural realities. In early America, for instance, pastoral attention was on the sufferer's relationship to the divine. As I will show, that focus shifted to include increasingly wide horizons of attention and care.

7 Philip Novak, *The World's Wisdom. Sacred Texts of the World's Religions*, San Francisco (HarperSanFrancisco) 1994.

8 Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, New York (G.P. Putnam's Sons) 1951, 115.

2.1 Pastoral Theology: Attending to persons' relationship with the divine

As I note above, ministering to hurting persons has always been an important part of the work of pastoral theologians. Treatises regarding practices of ministry and care (especially the care of the dying, care of a tormented soul, and care of the sick) are found among the earliest writings of the Christian church. Early American theologians defined pastoral theology and its practices of care as a wide range of clerical activities that were directed, in the words of Jonathan Edwards, to the "treating of souls in the great affair of their eternal salvation."⁹ For these caregivers, one's difficulties were the result of a misalignment between the individual and God. Definitions of illness and healing were directly related to the quality of one's relationship with God. When one fell out of proper relationship with God, one became sick. The prescription for healing was a deepened rational awareness of God's presence in one's life and the posture of gratitude and right living that would naturally follow this realization. When one was right with God, all would be well. Pastoral caregivers in 17th century America, then, focused their attention on sin, reason, and correction through confession and liturgical participation as the means of healing understood as salvation.¹⁰ Rituals of preaching, administering the sacraments, and returning the lapsed souls to the fold were practices resulting from attending to one's relationship with the divine.

2.2 Pastoral Theology: Attending to persons' relationship with themselves

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th ushered in the era of modern psychology and an emphasis in pastoral care on attending to persons' relationships with themselves. The publication of Sigmund Freud's groundbreaking book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in 1900 marked the beginning of a century-long interest in the unconscious and the feelings, motivations, and memories that are hidden from a person's awareness. The inner world became the subject of increasing attention. William James pointed to the inner turbulence, chaos, and conflict within the individual self. In *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James differentiated between persons with "healthy souls," who were characterized by cheerfulness and optimistic temperaments, and those with "sick souls," who were pessimistic and highly sensitive to evil and destructive influence.¹¹ With this distinction,

9 James Edwards. *The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls*, 1743, quoted by E. Brooks Holifield, *History of Protestant Pastoral Care (United States)*, in: Hunter (n. 2), 511–515.

10 E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, Nashville (Abingdon Press) 1983.

11 William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 83–151. Quoted in Holifield (n. 9), 201.

inward examination became increasingly important. People began to ask themselves whether they were healthy or sick.¹² Clergy often were consulted to care for the sick soul, and to help those in pursuit of a healthy soul. This increased the turn inward, and practices of introspection and insight gained prominence.

Carl Rogers built on the preoccupations of mid-century pastoral theologians. Rogers believed in the inherent capacity in each individual to grow and develop into a “healthy” self if she did not meet undue impediment to her emotional and psychological development. Rogers was particularly concerned with the “conditions of worth” imposed by society, which alienated one from his or her own “organismic experiencing.”¹³ What was needed, then, for a “congruent self” was, according to Rogers, a non-judgmental relationship with a warm, caring person who offered encouragement and room to grow through the discovery and expression of one’s authentic experience. During much of the twentieth century, pastoral theology increasingly borrowed from the social sciences – especially psychology – to help uncover, name, and eliminate any impediments to personal growth and development. The focus of pastoral attention during this period was largely on the individual psyche. Healing from this perspective is dependent on understanding and resolving particular psychodynamics of the sick soul.

2.3 Pastoral Theology: Attending to persons’ relationship to others

The introduction of psychoanalytic object-relations theory and self-psychology into pastoral care marks a shift in attention once again. Though Freud’s influence is obvious in these theories, the horizon of attention is expanded beyond the individual *per se*. In contrast to Freud’s anthropology, which was predominantly focused on individuals’ intrapsychic life, later object relations theorists emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in human development. In particular, they began to extend Freud’s observations of early childhood, arguing the importance of the mother in the first few years of an infant’s life and emphasizing that this first relationship is the precursor of and gives shape to all of an individual’s later relationships.

D.W. Winnicott and Heinz Kohut de-emphasized Freud’s opinion of the importance of drives, and emphasized instead the relationship between the developing self and her object world.¹⁴ Thus the self is “object seeking,” meaning that we need real, concrete, and healthy relationships with others

12 Holifield (n. 9), 189.

13 Carl Rogers, *Client-centered Therapy. Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory*, Boston (Houghton Mifflin) 1951.

14 Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, New York (International Universities Press) 1977; Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Philadelphia (Brunner Routledge) 1971.

to become whole selves. Psychological birth emerges out of interaction of physical, relational, and mental processes; we are dependent on significant relationships in order to develop.

Kohut and Winnicott shared the Rogerian optimism that, given basic emotional nutrients, the self would learn to be “spontaneous, creative, true to his impulses and feelings. He can develop the capacity to be fluid and expressive, to be alone, to be self-directed, to have a solid sense of self.”¹⁵ If the child is given a “good enough” holding environment, the true self will “come out and be expressed and presented to the world, [will] grow naturally, according to its own timetable and with its own very personal qualities. The true self flows, naturally unfolds, intuitively grows toward the light.”¹⁶ For the object-relations theorists, the unfolding of this true self was the focus of intense scrutiny and careful attention.

2.4 Pastoral Theology: Directing pastoral attention to family and cultural systems

Recent contributions in pastoral theology have demonstrated a significant broadening of pastoral attention. The roots of this shift go back to the generative work of Object Relations, Self-psychology, and Erik Erikson, all of whom opened the perspectives of caregivers to more complex human relationships and to issues of culture. The shift was even more indebted to the work of feminists and of theorists and theologians from non-western perspectives.

At the risk of overstatement, I would argue that, until the 1960 s, the dominant focus in pastoral theology was on the individual in the context of intimate relations in the bourgeois family. For better or worse, pastoral theology in the 20th century remained a child of Freud. However, by the late 1970 s and early 80 s, family systems theory offered an expansion on the dominant psychological paradigm, asking practitioners and theorists to consider the broader systemic frame. Michael Kerr and Murray Bowen wrote, “It is difficult to think of the family as consisting of separate individuals. The emotional functioning of individual members is so interdependent that the family could be more accurately conceptualized as an emotional unit.”¹⁷

Family systems theory directed pastoral attention to the social realities of the communities in which we develop, and asserted that human beings

15 Frank Summers, *The Work of Heinz Kohut*, in: .Frank Summers, ed., *Object Relations Theories and Psychopathology. A Comprehensive Text*, New Jersey (Jason Aronson Press, Inc.) 1994, 254.

16 *Ibid.*, 258.

17 Michael E. Kerr/Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation*, New York (W.W. Norton & Co.) 1988, 7.

are shaped by the larger social systems in which we find themselves. However, feminist theorists were even more insistent in pushing pastoral theologians to think beyond the family system and to situate that system in its broader social and cultural context. Harriet Lerner, for example, argued that Bowen's family systems theory failed to consider dysfunctions in the larger socio-cultural system, reminding her audience of "circular interrelatedness" of patriarchal society and the functioning of particular families.¹⁸ In brief, family systems are themselves expressive of broader cultural systems. For example, systems theory's understanding of the family fails to take adequate account of the relationships between gendered role prescriptions and the differentiation of the self.¹⁹

In addition to the contributions of feminist theorists, the perspectives of people from outside the dominant culture and class structure have contributed to re-directing the attention of contemporary pastoral theology. African American theologians from James Cone to Archie Smith have demonstrated how racism has limited the range of our attentive gaze, and Latina/o, Asian, and African perspectives illumine the cultural particularity of the field's dominant models of care. For example, Ghanaian pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey's work on the indigenization of theological and theoretical resources and practices has challenged pastoral theology to rethink the sources of suffering and grace. By studying disease and alienation as experienced in other cultural and class contexts, pastoral theology is again reminded that an overly individualistic and universalizing model of human

18 Harriott Lerner, *Is Family Systems Theory Really Systemic?* in: *Journal of Psychotherapy & the Family*, 3/4, 1987, 47–63.

19 For example, Christie Neuger brought her feminist lens to bear on the issue of depression, revealing a more culturally complex etiology than the dominant psycho-dynamic interpretation had offered. Intrigued by the fact that more women than men reported severe depression, Neuger was not entirely convinced by the psycho-dynamic explanation of depression as anger turned inward that it was the result of "negative cognitive tapes", or that it was primarily a biochemical imbalance. Neuger argued that this explanation gave no account for the increased prevalence of depression among women. The psycho-dynamic explanation describes depression as originating in childhood anger upon the discovery of parental failure to meet the child's needs completely. This early disappointment generates anger, but since its expression will only elicit rejection by the parent, the child learns to turn the anger towards herself, setting the stage for depression. This etiological narrative, however, neglects to address the link between cultural practices that are oppressive to women, and also are generators of anger and depression. Without attending to these connections, depression is seen as existing in women's psyche alone, and the broader social contributors to depression are missed. In this way, and others, feminist theorists have pushed psychological and pastoral models to look beyond the intrapsychic dynamics and beyond intrafamilial relationships to recognize the role of larger cultural forces – viz., patriarchy – in the etiology of particular distress responses. Christie Cozad Neuger, *Women's Depression. Lives at Risk*, in: Maxine Glaz/Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, eds., *Women in Travail & Transition. A New Pastoral Care*, Minneapolis (Fortress Press) 1991, 146–161.

functioning simply misses many of the sources of distress, its consequences, and its remedies.

These perspectives, with others, have broadened the terrain for pastoral theology and re-directed its attention to what pastoral theologian Larry Graham points to—the “reciprocal relationship” between the brokenness of the world and the brokenness of ourselves.²⁰ Graham insists that “behind every personal problem is a cluster of societal problems.”²¹ He adds that suffering is best understood as a crisis in one or more arenas (including self, God, neighbor, justice, and ecological harmony) and that symptoms reflect unjust power arrangements at multiple levels throughout the system.²² In summary, contemporary pastoral theology has moved from the individual psyche toward the wider, social, and political horizon.

3. Pastoral Theology as Public Theology

This recognition of the cultural and social dynamics of human development and of human suffering has led to a focus on pastoral theology as “public theology.” Indeed, Larry Graham, Homer Ashby, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore have all written important essays entitled, in part, “Pastoral Theology as Public Theology.”²³ The underlying insight is that, in Graham’s words, care of selves entails care of the worlds in which those selves live.

Care of worlds and care of persons go together; in fact, care of selves *requires* care of the worlds in which selves live, including the civic and political worlds – perhaps even especially those worlds. Labor, trade, immigration, and other political policies create and often undermine the conditions necessary for human flourishing. The term public theology is an expansive one, but it indicates an effort to bring theological claims and modes of analysis and interpretation into public discourse. It is a critical and constructive theological reflection on our public life together, and is based on the assumption that theology has something to say about the right ordering of society. This turn to public theology is a salutary one, and one in which

20 Larry K. Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds. A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville (Abingdon) 1992, 75.

21 *Ibid.*, 37.

22 *Ibid.*, 92.

23 Larry K. Graham, *Pastoral Theology as Public Theology in Relation to the Clinic*, *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 10, 2000, 1–17; Homer Ashby, Jr., *Pastoral Theology as Public Theology. Participating in the Healing of Damaged and Damaging Cultures and Institutions*, *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, Summer 10, 2000, 18–27; and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Pastoral Theology as Public Theology. Revolutions in the “Fourth Area,”* in: Nancy J. Ramsay, ed., *Pastoral Care and Counseling. Redefining the Paradigms*, Nashville (Abingdon), 2004, 45–64.

feminist theologians and practical theologians from underrepresented classes and cultures have been particularly active.

From the perspective of pastoral theology, the turn to public theology is motivated by a therapeutic sensibility, broadly conceived. If human beings are to realize the life God intends for them, then it is not enough to address the individual's particular psycho- and spiritual dynamics. A truly pastoral (i.e. *caring*) theology will necessarily engage the political powers that can both create and limit human potential. A focus on public theology is grounded in pastoral theologians' awareness that suffering and the possibilities of human flourishing are not simply matters of individual concern. More broadly, the turn to public theology rejects the compartmentalization of religion as a personal or private concern, as well as the notion that theology should be removed from matters of public welfare. Instead, public theology recognizes the role of theological voices in the conversation about a good society and human flourishing. Pastoral theologians and practitioners are beginning to recognize that, if we want to offer adequate care in the present moment, "we will need to become as knowledgeable about public policies affecting the family and health as we are about the workings of various personality types."²⁴

3.1 Widening the Lens: Organizations as the locus of pastoral attention

The range of pastoral concern has expanded over the past two hundred years from restricted concern for the private self before God to wider cultural and political frames that focus on the structural dimensions of human suffering. Pastoral theologians are aware that it is not enough to attend simply to an atomized self; they must attend to the self in context. I have reviewed quickly some of the contextual areas of contemporary pastoral theology: the family system, the broader (patriarchal) culture, pluralism, and the political domain of public policy. Now, I want to argue for attention to a central dimension of our social lives that has received scant attention in pastoral theology, namely, the organizational context, or what sociologists refer to as the *meso* or middle domain of our lives together.

One of the defining features of modern life has been the emergence of large-scale organizations that increasingly have come to structure our lives. I am particularly interested in the modern organizations of work. In a highly differentiated society like the United States, work is effectively organized apart from other institutional spheres (family, religion, education, leisure, the polity, and so forth). Also, the workplace organization operates by its own rationality, which is essentially the rationality of the mar-

24 Pamela Couture, Rethinking Private and Public Patriarchy, in: A. Carr/M.S. Van Leeuwen, eds., *Religion, Feminism and the Family*, Louisville (Westminster John Knox) 1996, 249–274.

ketplace. Individual selves are viewed as human resources, and we are counseled to sell ourselves to the highest bidder in an open labor market. This dynamic led Karl Marx to lament the alienation of modern life. Yet, we know that workplace organizations are not simply driven by the values of the market, and those who operate within these organizations seek to have work that is meaningful. The notion of vocation has not been eliminated, and most people want to spend their time in work that has a purpose. Much of the best selling literature takes the form of counsel on meaning-making at work, which is understandable. We spend more of our time at work than in any other activity, and much human satisfaction and dissatisfaction derives from experiences on the job. Workplace organizations are therefore elemental to human flourishing, and can easily be the cause of much human suffering. Yet they are in a sphere that pastoral theology almost never addresses.

In light of this discussion, pastoral theologians need to attend to workplace organizations. It is not enough to focus on the political and the personal, since so much of our lives are lived in this meso-domain. If the purpose of pastoral care and theology is to promote the flourishing of God's creation, then we have an obligation to tend to the organizations of work in our society.²⁵ While public policy shapes these organizations, people's lives are most directly structured by the expectations and constraints of organizations that concretize and routinize values that may or may not foster human well-being.

The turn to organizational life is especially critical now, as social organizations are becoming less stable, less dependable, and more fragile. Despite the long economic expansion in the United States, for example, the present generation lives under intense economic pressure, which has affected the poor especially, but also the middle class, who has had to work longer and harder just to keep up.²⁶ Increasingly, people work in unstable jobs, threatened with lay-offs, restructuring, and rising demands for mobility.

25 This argument extends those made previously by other pastoral theologians such as Rodney Hunter, Charles Gerkin, Homer Ashby, and Seward Hiltner, though they were not concerned primarily with the experience and contexts of work, or even organizations beyond the ecclesia. For example, Rodney Hunter proposes that "community formation, institutional participation and loyalty, and individual processes of commitment related constructively to processes of health and healing and can be related positively to clinical pastoral methodology." Rodney J. Hunter, *Religious Caregiving and Pedagogy in a Postmodern Context. Recovering Ecclesia*, *Journal of Pastoral Care* 8, 1998, 15–27. Seward Hiltner argued that one perspective in pastoral theology is that of organizing (where pastoral attention is directed toward the corporate and institutional needs and welfare of the church and the wider community). Hiltner's interest in the "organizing" function is underrepresented in our field; this is a weakness I am seeking to address. Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, Nashville (Abingdon) 1958, 198–215.

26 See Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American. The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, New York (Basic Books) 1993.

Through changes in health insurance and retirement benefit practices, risk has been shifted from the organization to the individual. The Enrons of the world reveal the dysfunction and human costs of this trend and the message is clear: if you hope to flourish in and through work, *you are on your own*. Indeed, our organizations are becoming less stable, and thus less dependable. Sociologist Ann Swidler describes a steady process of decline in the commitment of institutions and organizations in U.S. society. She is concerned that we are “depleting rather than building the endowment of our cultural, institutional and social infrastructure, [and that] the psychological and cultural themes of vitality versus vitiation, nurture versus deprivation, wholeness versus fragmentation, energy versus exhaustion are echoed at every level of our social experience.”²⁷

The realities of the organization of work are compounded by the fact that people increasingly look to work for meaning in their lives as other institutions are also failing them. Arlie Hochschild, for example, notes that one reason people spend so much time at work is that their work is better than home; they use it to avoid the hassles of home.²⁸ When someone yells at you at work, the person can be fired. This is not generally the case at home. The workplace thus is an important locus of meaning and purpose for people, even as organizations increasingly operate on the logic of the market and replace their commitments to employees with attempts to cut costs and maximize profit.

All of this is to say that the organizations of work are occasions for human suffering and, when well run, can be opportunities for human flourishing. As such, they are appropriate sites for pastoral attention. Parishioners and clients bring workplace struggles, anxieties, and ambitions with them into congregations and pastoral offices. We cannot simply interpret this anxiety in terms of psycho-dynamics or political machinations. Neither can we leave responsibility for workplace humanization to Human Resource departments. Pastoral and practical theologians need to equip themselves to engage workplace organizations. The good news is that, since these organizations are made up of people who themselves want to be involved in meaningful work, they may be open to pastoral imagination.²⁹ Fortunately, pastoral theologians have long attended to organizational life in the church and have tools for understanding group dynamics and the role of values in corporate lives. I am simply proposing that we bring

27 Anne Swidler, *Saving the Self. Endowment Versus Depletion in American Institutions*, in: Richard Madsen et.al., eds., *Meaning and Modernity. Religion, Polity and the Self*, Berkeley (University of California Press) 2002, 45 ff.

28 Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Timebind. When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*, New York (Henry Holt Books) 2001.

29 An increasing number of citations are made to work and religion, or work and spirituality, in popular publications. See, for example: Lisa Armstrong, *Have Faith*, in: *Working Mother*, Dec 2007/Jan 2008, 53–56.

our skills and theological orientations to workplace organizations as a way to fulfill our calling to promote the well-being of all, since these organizations so deeply affect individual, familial, and communal lives.

Of course, a pastoral theology directed at organizational transformation in the context of modern organizations faces many of the same challenges that a public theology must also address, including the question of how to engage a pluralistic world with the language and practices of a particular tradition. The issue is too complex to resolve here, but it is worth making three points. First, pastoral theology *does* need to be sensitive to the values and commitments of persons from diverse religious traditions and those who claim no religion at all. Second, organizations are never naked squares, devoid of quasi-theological values (see Harvey Cox's "The Market As God" for a compelling account of the operative theology of the marketplace).³⁰ Instead, the values and commitments that underwrite our organizations are embedded in understandings of human life and purposes. The failure to engage modern organizations with our full theological imaginations simply yields the field to another religious-like set of assumptions—assumptions that are, in my view, generally de-humanizing and counter to human flourishing. Third, given more time and space, I would argue for pastoral theology broadly conceived, rather than sectarian or even expressly Christian in its articulation. It is this kind of generous theological imagination that is called for here. I see this kind of theological reflection in the work of Paul Tillich, the feminist theologian Rebecca Chopp, and in the orientation recommended by pastoral theologian Rodney Hunter.³¹

My own professional experience for the last six years as an organizational and leadership consultant has given me some insight into the need for thoughtful theological reflection on the role and meaning of organizations in which our clients (and probably we) work. Pastoral theologians can be effective contributors to conversations about the aims and purposes of organizations. I have had many opportunities to hear from employees at different levels of organizations talk about their experiences of the institutions in which they work. From these interviews, I know that issues of gender and racial equality, wage discrimination, sexual harassment, work/life balance, environmentally degrading policies, and the effects of hard-driving bottom-line business practices take a significant toll on individual people. The individuals I engaged were members of churches; they were clients in counseling centers; they were partners in marriages that the church had

30 Harvey Cox, *The Market as God*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1999, 18–24.

31 Rodney Hunter argues that pastoral theology is concerned with developing practices of care for a variety of contexts that, while funded by religious traditions, express and enliven meaning in its broadest dimensions and avoid "narrow pictisms." Rodney J. Hunter, *The Future of Pastoral Theology*, *Pastoral Psychology* 29(1), Fall 1980, 69.

sanctified. Often the greatest impediments to their flourishing came from the organizations within which they spent most of their day.³²

In my consultative role, I have been able to engage in conversations about the moral implications of an organization's official and unofficial policies, and to think with the company's leadership about its purposes and ends. While many professionals are called upon to do this kind of organizational development (organizational psychologists, leadership consultants, management coaches, human resource officers, for example), most of these are not trained to reflect deeply, critically, or theologically about the nature of the good that the organization seeks to promote. Pastoral theologians have deep commitments to caring for others in their "concrete contingencies and problems so as to stimulate or enable their life of faith and practical knowledge of God ... [operating] in very broad contingencies of the meaning of these ideas ... rather than indulging in [narrow theory or] pietisms."³³

This is a place pastoral theologians could contribute: we could attend to organizational values and the development of those that contribute to a good society. Pastoral theologians have made significant contributions to human flourishing, and we can continue to do so even as the focus of our attention widens. We ought to be voices advocating that our organizations be more mindful of access to basic goods, such as health care, quality family life, and meaningful work. We have much to offer in terms of redeeming and transforming organizational culture, and attending to organizations will help the individuals and families for whom we already care. Rodney Hunter has argued that pastoral theologians would do well to deepen their understanding of human flourishing and complexify their practices of care. He writes, "An approach to these practical concerns undertaken with religious seriousness and theological perspective may be precisely what is needed for helping our civilization develop more humanly rich and fulfilling traditions of the art of life, beyond the very superficial moral and religious methodologies that presently prevail."³⁴ The question remains, then, how might pastoral theologians contribute to the transformation of organizations?

32 Pastoral theologians also seek flourishing and meaning in *our* work contexts, whether the academy, clinic, or hospital. Rodney Hunter points to the possibility of finding meaning and flourishing as an academic, while Homer Ashby, Jr., reflects on the burnout of pastoral theologians. See: Hunter, *Work as Quest. Confessions of a Romantic Academic*, in: William Cleary, ed., *Serving. Linking Work to Spirituality*, Wisconsin (Marquette University Press) 2000, 23–31; Ashby, *Pastoral Theology as Public Theology. Participating in the Healing of Damaged and Damaging Cultures and Institutions*, *Journal for Pastoral Theology* 10, Summer 2000, 18–27.

33 Rodney J. Hunter, *The Future of Pastoral Theology*, *Pastoral Psychology* 29(1), Fall 1980, 69.

34 *Ibid.*, 69.

3.2 Operationalizing Pastoral Attention to the Meso Sphere: Values shift³⁵

One way to effect change at the organizational level is to shift the values that are being expressed by policies, business strategies, and corporate cultures. Mission statements have become a popular way to focus and change corporate culture. However, while valuable for their aspirational quality, these mission statements are rarely embodied by organizational leaders. Further, where the vision claims are ignored, a gap is created in which cynicism and despair arise about an organization, its leadership, and one's meaningful participation in it. One key ingredient in personal and organizational change is a values shift.³⁶

Values are the ideals and commitments that give meaning and significance to our lives. Our values are reflected in the priorities we hold and embody in our behavior. Roman Catholic pastoral theologian Brian Hall and his research partner, sociologist Benjamin Tonna, integrate cognitive, mental, moral, and emotional development to identify values, their function, and maturation in both individuals and organizational life. Like other developmental theorists, Hall and Tonna see progression and development – in this case of values – from the simplistic, self-interested values in Stage One such as Self Preservation, through midlevel values at Stage Five such as Self-actualization, to high-order, more complex and globally oriented values at Stage Eight such as Global Harmony and Construction/New Order.³⁷ A study of the development of organizational values makes three key contributions to understanding the reciprocal relationships between personal and organizational values and the flourishing of all as well as the benefits of shifting individual and corporate values from the basic to those more complex.

First, both individuals and organizations develop more complex perspectives and understandings as they mature, and these perspectives help determine what is important and thus attended to in their lives. For example, a child whose highest priority value is safety and security might actu-

35 This discussion is preliminary and will be developed further in my next research project.

36 Brian Hall, *Values Shift. A Guide to Personal and Organizational Transformation*, Rockport, MA (Twin Lights Publishers) 1995, 21.

37 Self-preservation is “doing what is necessary to protect oneself from physical harm or destruction in an alien world” (Hall (n. 36), 233). Self-actualization is “the inner drive toward experiencing and expressing the totality of one's being through spiritual, psychological, physical, and mental exercises that enhance the development of one's maximum potential” (ibid.). Global harmony is defined as “knowing the practical relationship between human oppression, freedom, and creative ecological balance so that one can influence changes that promote great human equality” (229). Construction/new order is “the ability to develop and initiate a new institution for the purpose of creatively enhancing society. This assumes technological, interpersonal and management skills” (227).

alize family/belonging over self-worth and hide the secret of abuse to preserve a relationship with the family member who is hurting her.³⁸

Second, values can change and develop from the self-interested to other- and globally-interested emphases as people mature. Paragons of generativity such as Nelson Mandela will forego their personal safety and comfort for a higher cause, a characteristic that is interpreted by Hall and Tonna as wisdom and generative maturity.

Third, each person is motivated by values at three levels: those that provide the basis of security (called "foundation values"), those that are actively being integrated in the day to day, that "describe our present world view, our criteria for decision making...and the focus of most of our energy" at one's current state of development ("focus values"), and "vision values" that are aspirational and part of who we want to be.³⁹ Though our values are mostly unconscious, they deeply shape our priorities and consistently influence our actions and commitments. Identifying one's operative values accelerates one's development and the likelihood that one's higher-order values will be acted upon more consistently. Helping individuals and organizations clarify and more intentionally live out their highest-order values can be a key contribution of pastoral theologians and caregivers.

Hall and Tonna contend that not only do particular values take precedence at certain stages of maturity, but change at the individual level is "intricately connected to organizational transformation." This is true because "people are able to change when they get positive reinforcement from the institutions in their lives—their families, their schools and their work environments," and also because individuals and organizations are mutually constitutive.⁴⁰ Individual change requires organizational/systemic change.⁴¹ Individuals develop when the organizations of which they are a part embody high-order values toward which they can aspire and grow — values that raise their consciousness and enliven their moral imaginations. This raised consciousness then lures people further into the ongoing process of maturation.

Persons in the western, modern world are highly dependent on and cannot develop outside of formal, social organizations, and organizations cannot develop without the direction of their members, and especially their

38 Family/belonging is "valuing the people to whom one feels primary bonds of relationship and acceptance; attachment to the place where one's parents live" (Hall (n. 36), 229). Self worth is "the knowledge that when those one respects and esteems really know him/her, they will affirm that he/she is worthy of that respect" (233).

39 Ibid., 84.

40 Ibid., 21.

41 Ibid., 21.

leadership.⁴² Values are embodied in organizational structures, expressed by organizational leaders, and captured in the cultures and policies of organization. They shape the commitments and goals and help determine the behavior of their members through socialization. Organizations embodying high-level values contribute to a better world where justice, equality, creativity, health, balance, and ecological sustainability are built into the organizational life. These have enormous impact, not just on their employees and the persons those employees interact with: they affect in enormous ways their local and global communities as well. However, as Hall notes, nothing in the organization can change “until the leaders’ values and consequent assumptions about leadership and the organization become a shared reality of the management group and the employees themselves”.⁴³ What is required is a “values shift” at both the personal and the organizational level. For values that are directed toward personal and social flourishing, as those at the higher developmental stages do, will increase the wellbeing of all.

I have argued that holding and acting on values that are complex enough to enliven our transformation at the social level requires a certain developmental achievement—at both the individual and the organizational level. Pastoral theologians employ many means to encourage flourishing – conscientization, speaking prophetically, guiding, helping people grow beyond distraction with themselves. These tend to express values toward mid level values in the Hall/Tonna schema such as Self-actualization and Law/guide. However, higher values such as the commitment to Global Justice and Human Dignity are also implicit, though we might imagine ways to bring these in more often and more explicitly.⁴⁴ In other words, much of our work with individual clients, their families, and small groups is implicitly about identifying, clarifying, developing, and living out values, both as they are and imagining what they might be as clients continue to mature. We can and need to do a better job of caring for, accompanying, and helping

42 Ali Farazmand, Introduction. The Multifaceted Nature of Modern Organizations, in: Ali Farazmand, ed., *Modern Organizations. Theory and Practice*, Westport, CT (Praeger) 2002, xv-xxix.

43 Ibid., 17.

44 Self actualization is “the inner drive toward experiencing and expressing the totality of one’s being through spiritual, psychological physical and mental exercises that enhance the development of one’s maximum potential.” (Hall (n. 36), 233). Law/guide is “seeing authoritative principles and regulations as a means for creating personal criteria and moral conscience, and questioning those rules until they are clear and meaningful.” (230). Global justice is “commitment to a world order in which all persons have equal value but different gifts and abilities to contribute to society, combined with the ability to elicit interinstitutional and governmental collaboration to provide the basic rights and life necessities for the poor in the world” (229). Human dignity is “consciousness of the basic right of all human beings to have respect and to have their basic needs met to that each person has the opportunity to develop to full potential” (230).

people develop their own values as well as those of the organizations within which they seek to flourish.

3.3 Impact of a Values Shift: Two cases

The kind of pastoral attention I am proposing (i. e. helping change organizations and their leadership through values work so that people within them can flourish) is already underway in some western business organizations. A review of recent trends in the for-profit world will uncover such phrases as “Corporate social responsibility,” “Eco-economy,” and “Caring capitalism.” A cursory exploration of business publications will reveal titles that articulate the values implicit in these movements. For example, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development*; *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*; and *Beyond the Bottom Line: Putting Social Responsibility to Work for Your Business and the World* reveal a trend toward social responsibility in the business world. As a way to illustrate the positive potential of this work, I identify two organizational leaders whose higher-order values have had enormous positive influence on their employees, communities, products, and even markets and competition.

Ray Anderson, founder and CEO of Interface Corporation, is a pioneer in the industrial carpet-manufacturing industry, historically one of the “dirtiest” industries and contributing much to environment degradation. Interface Corp. is the world’s leading producer of soft-surfaced modular floor coverings, yet Anderson eschews the environmentally costly “take-make-waste” system of manufacturing and is striving to create a company

that addresses the needs of society and the environment by developing a system of industrial production that decreases our costs and dramatically reduces the burdens placed upon living systems. This also makes precious resources available for billions of people who need more. What we call the next industrial revolution is a momentous shift in how we see the world, how we operate within it, what systems will prevail and which will not.⁴⁵

Anderson’s *values shift* (or, in his words, his conversion) was learning that Interface used 1.2 billion pounds of non-renewable natural resources a year in its manufacturing processes, creating byproducts that contribute heavily to global climate change.⁴⁶ Though Anderson feels responsible for the seven thousand people he employs, he wants to avoid the “intergenerational tyranny” of passing the costs (“not just the price”) of manufacturing on to future generations. He set a deadline of 2020 for Interface to become a “re-

45 Interface website, www.interfaceinc.com, December, 2007.

46 Ray Anderson, Midcourse Correction. *Toward a Sustainable Enterprise—The Interface Model*, Atlanta (Peregrinzilla) 1999.

storative enterprise, a sustainable operation that takes nothing out of the earth that cannot be recycled or quickly regenerated and that does no harm to the biosphere.”⁴⁷ Thus, Anderson’s Interface Corp. hopes to change the entire business of manufacturing by being a model for a new way. The Corporation’s statement of goals says they want to be “the first company that, by its deeds, shows the entire industrial world what sustainability is in all its dimensions: People, process, product, place and profits – by 2020 – and in doing so we will become restorative through the power of influence.”⁴⁸

Clif Bar Inc. is another morally mature company. Clif Bar Inc. is one of the largest companies in the natural and organic sports foods industry. Clif Bar says that its “reason for being” is sustaining its brand, company, people, communities, and planet.⁴⁹ These elements comprise the interconnected web of what owner and president, Gary Erikson, refers to as the “Clif Bar ecosystem.” In his recent book, *Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business*, Erikson outlines a complex business model that has as one of its key goals to create a business that has as little negative impact and as much positive impact as possible. This means, among other things, buying high quality organic ingredients that are minimally processed so that the environmental impact “from the field to the final product” is minimized.⁵⁰ It means responsible marketing, i.e., not creating unnatural demand for products, but meeting the authentic needs of consumers. It means taking care of Clif Bar employees by providing fair compensation, quality health-care and wellness programs, emphasis on work/life balance, and being sensitive and responsible corporate neighbors who give back in sustained and meaningful ways to the local community. In other words, the company seeks to provide meaningful work in an environment that has a conscience.⁵¹ Erikson says, “We take great care with each part of the Clif ecosystem. [For example,] sustaining our people, one of the aspirations, is not a means to an end (profit or maximizing shareholder value), but a value in and of itself.”⁵² Erikson admits that Clif Bar Inc. could survive, in a traditional sense, without building a corporate culture based on these values, but “doing so would take some of Clif Bar’s soul away.”⁵³ “We exist to thrive, not merely survive,” Erikson argues. His commitment to the “soul” of the business and its people is demonstrated by his refusal to sell the company to a large corporate conglomerate. Though he could have made tens of mil-

47 Ibid., 1.

48 Interface website, www.interfaceinc.com, December, 2007.

49 Gary Erikson, *Raising the Bar. Integrity and Passion in Life and Business*, San Francisco (John Wiley & Sons) 2004, 125.

50 Ibid., 286.

51 Ibid., 274.

52 Ibid., 174.

53 Ibid., 280.

lions of dollars, Erikson retained sole ownership to ensure that the values of the Clif Bar ecosystem continue to be expressed in and by the organization.

Critics might argue that these caring and responsible models of business engage in socially desirable practices only to increase their corporate profit by mollifying their employees and appealing to a liberal upper middle class consumer base that is socially aware, conscientious, and highly educated. Certainly, there is truth in this charge. Another view, however, is that business success is sometimes a welcome by-product of living out more socially responsible values. Companies can "do well by doing good,"⁵⁴ though this assumes technological, interpersonal, and management skills that serve the common good. These two cases illustrate, however, that some organizations are simply more morally mature. They employ vocabularies of value and purpose that have been enlivened by considerations beyond mere "economic growth," considerations that emphasize the humanizing possibilities of organizational life.

As I have tried to show, a small but growing group of business leaders seek to create organizations that offer good jobs at good wages, while attending to commitments beyond economic profit. Other companies desire to do this as well. The challenge is for organizations and their leadership to find practical ways to make this values-shift while keeping their companies profitable. Because pastoral theologians are trained to think about the good in more explicit, informed, and sophisticated ways than most business leaders or corporate consultants, and are equipped with skills to bring about that good, they are uniquely positioned to do such work.⁵⁵ The realization of higher-order values implicit in our definition of the good society depends not just on financial success or on personal, individual transformation; it requires organizational development and maturation as well. Because the values of an organization are typically embodied in and expressed by its leaders, the move toward changing organizations and influencing organizational policies and culture includes encouragement and support for the personal maturation of the leaders.

54 Anderson, 155. This work has been done in both privately owned and publicly-traded companies. The wide-spread influence of organizations such as the Great Place to Work Institute, which rates companies on their ability to create corporate cultures that embody values that would rate as mid- to high-level on the Hall/Tonna scale such as respect, dignity, camaraderie, and pride (and features them annually in a highly coveted list in *Forbes* magazine) points to the high profile nature of these values in U.S. business.

55 Hall and Tonna have developed an assessment that measures individuals' and organizations' values and a coaching/consulting protocol to support such work to enable clients to live out of their higher-order values more consistently. Surely other tools could be developed using the insights of pastoral theology, clinical counseling, and organizational analysis.

4. Summary

I have argued that *attention* is a core theological principle that guides our work. I have tried to show some of the ways attention has been focused historically, and have argued that the horizons of our pastoral attention are continuing to widen. Finally, I suggest that one focus of pastoral attention is organizational life, helping identify, clarify, understand, and shift the values of organizations and their leadership. Working with an organization's leaders, especially helping them identify and embody their higher-order values, is one way that pastoral theologians can offer a robust, theologically informed definition of the Good beyond the horizon of the individual, as well as practices to move toward that Good. We currently attend well to the micro (individual) level of human lives, and we are beginning to look at the macro level of public policies. The next step is to attend well to the meso (organizational) level in our efforts to contribute to the well-being – indeed, flourishing – of all.

Abstract

Promoting the flourishing of persons and their communities is the central task and normative vision of pastoral theology. In different historical moments, pastoral theologians have placed attention on different aspects of human experience. However, effective caregiving requires attending to the full range of factors contributing to human flourishing. The purposes of this essay are two-fold. *First*, by highlighting attention as a primary discipline of pastoral theology, I examine four different foci of attention in the history of pastoral theology in the United States: 1) attention to one's relationship with the divine; 2) attention to a person's relationship with oneself; 3) attention to a person's relationship with other persons; and, 4) attention to a person's relationship with systems. *Second*, this essay recommends focusing attention on a fifth area that has not received enough attention from pastoral theologians to date: viz., persons' relationships with organizations. Organizations are the immediate contexts framing our lives, and are the places where impediments to human flourishing often are most acutely experienced. This essay argues that, since our lives are deeply structured by the values and expectations of the organizations in which we work, attention to organizational life is essential work for pastoral theologians. By this attention – especially by attending to organizations' and leaders' values – pastoral theologians can contribute to the public discussion of organizational purposes and help develop organizations that more effectively contribute to human flourishing.

Zusammenfassung

Die positive Entwicklung von Personen und ihren Gemeinschaften zu fördern ist die wesentliche Aufgabe und normative Zielsetzung der Pastoraltheologie. Zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten in der Geschichte haben Pastoraltheologen ihre Aufmerksamkeit dazu auf verschiedene Aspekte der menschlichen Erfahrung gerichtet. Wie auch immer diese konfiguriert waren, eine effiziente Hilfe erfordert es, die volle Breite von Faktoren in den

Blick zu nehmen, die die menschliche Entwicklung fördern. Dieser Aufsatz verfolgt zweierlei: Zuerst wird der Aufmerksamkeit die Rolle einer für die Pastoraltheologie wesentlichen Kategorie zugeschrieben, indem vier verschiedene Schwerpunkte der Aufmerksamkeit in der Geschichte der Pastoraltheologie in den USA untersucht werden: 1) Aufmerksamkeit für die Beziehung mit dem Göttlichen; 2) Aufmerksamkeit für die Beziehung einer Person zu sich selbst; 3) Aufmerksamkeit für die Beziehungen einer Person zu anderen Personen; und 4) Aufmerksamkeit für die Beziehungen einer Person zu Systemen. Zweitens empfiehlt dieser Beitrag, die Aufmerksamkeit auf einen fünften Bereich zu lenken, der bis heute wenig Beachtung in der Pastoraltheologie gefunden hat: die Beziehungen von Personen zu Organisationen. Organisationen sind die direkten Kontexte, die unser Leben rahmen. Sie sind die Orte, an denen häufig Hindernisse der menschlichen Entwicklung besonders akut erfahren werden. In diesem Aufsatz wird argumentiert, dass Aufmerksamkeit für das Leben in Organisationen eine wesentliche Aufgabe für Pastoraltheologinnen und Pastoraltheologen ist, da unser Leben tief geprägt ist durch Werte und Erwartungen von Seiten derjenigen Organisationen, in denen wir arbeiten. Durch diese Aufmerksamkeit – besonders gegenüber den Werten, die von Organisationen und ihren Führungskräften vertreten werden – können Pastoraltheologinnen und Pastoraltheologen zu der öffentlichen Diskussion über die Ziele von Organisationen ihren Beitrag leisten. Sie können zur Formung von Organisationen beitragen, die effektiver die menschliche Entwicklung fördern.