



## Christian Ethics and Pastoral Counseling

In pastoral counseling it may occur that church members confront the office-bearers with ethical questions. There are a variety of typical areas in which these questions arise:

- \*husband - wife relationship
- \*parents - children relationship
- \*starting or breaking forbidden relationships
- \*personal sexual problems
- \*problems in the family
- \*problems in relationship to other members of the congregation or to the congregation as a whole
- \*questions with reference to abortion, euthanasia, suicide, possibly occasioned by situations in one's own life or of loved ones, friends or neighbours
- \*employment or unemployment
- \*changing jobs
- \*questions with reference to the environment, not merely in general, but concerning what can we or what must we do to counter further pollution of the environment: live more soberly, not purchase certain products, make less use of the automobile and make more use of the public transit system?
- \*how ought we to manage our income--how much may one spend for oneself and what is to be shared with others?
- \*reporting tax and filling in tax forms
- \*which school or education ought we to choose for the children?

### **First Phase: Listen**

What are we to do and what are we not to do? The first thing is to listen. Try to enter into his/her situation. Try to gauge what personal questions may be hidden behind the 'problem'. Feel free to ask questions at various points in order to get a clearer picture (although you need to be careful not to interrupt all the time and get him/her off-track). Show that you are interested and that you are trying to place yourself in his/her 'shoes'.

May you ask extremely personal questions that are of a very confidential and private nature? It depends on your motive. If it is because you are simply curious, it is not appropriate. If you feel you need to have more confidential information in order to be able to come to an informed opinion, you may ask if it is appropriate for you to raise such a question. Do indicate to the person that you are aware that this may be too sensitive an issue and give him/her the opportunity to decline to answer. If he/she refuses to do so or says they cannot do so, you may feel you cannot be of further help. Say so honestly, without using this situation to put pressure on him/her. It is also possible to indicate that in view of insufficient information your advice can only be provisional.

At any rate, the first phase of counselling is asking the person to clearly define the problem and by raising various pertinent questions to try to obtain some additional information. It will be helpful to summarize the information to see if he/she agrees. Ask: "Do I understand this correctly, or are there more angles, which I have missed?" Such a summary can be quite helpful for the person you are conversing with because it puts the problem into focus. Do not exclude the details that substantially qualify the problem. This should lead to a question, which can be introduced as

follows: "Do I understand you correctly if I formulate your question in this way? Is this the difficulty you are facing?"

At this point you should not yet suggest an answer. Neither may you over-emphasize merely one aspect or under-emphasize an aspect. You are to formulate the problem honestly, as you hear it and as has been clarified by the questions you have raised.

## **Second Phase: Listen to the Word and Apply the Word**

What is your task in the second phase?

1. You need to ask, what does God say in His Word? To give advice it is indispensable to listen carefully to the Word of God.
2. You need to apply the Word to the specific case. The important thing here is to take a decision before the face of God.

Such counsel had a place in Reformed pastoral care. When presbyters were ordained in the early centuries A.D., the church prayed for the gift of the Spirit. It asked for the Spirit of "grace and counsel," referring to the seventy elders of Israel in Numbers 11. The Form for the Ordination of Elders and deacons spells out as third duty of the elders that they are "to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice." The elders give this "counsel" at consistory meetings as well as in personal conversations with the members.

Voetius mentions giving advice, exhortations, corrections and answers to questions put to the pastors. He distinguishes between public and private preaching and application of the Word. From this we may conclude that Voetius regarded it as part of the pastor's task to provide counsel and considered that task to be a special form of preaching and application of the Word.

Note that personal insights are not to enter into the difficult situation of life. Your life experiences and wisdom are not decisive. Rather, you must let God's Word speak. It is your task to apply the Word of God to the concrete situation in the form of counsel. This task distinguishes the elder's counsel from every other form of counsel involved in psychotherapy, psychology or psychiatry.

## **Counsel**

Your counsel should let the Word of God speak. Counsel also contains an aspect of discipline, but it should be discipline in love. We clearly encounter this in the book of Proverbs. "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter end" (Prov.9: 20, cf.1: 25, 30 and 15:33). Discipline is implied in counsel because such counsel proceeds from the Word of God. The Word of God draws in discipline. The German word for discipline is related to the word "to draw" (ziehen). The Word of God draws or seeks to draw man to the LORD. Your task in the second phase of the visit consists of giving counsel as application of the Word of God in the life of the member of the congregation.

What is that counsel like? Be sure that you do not take the responsibility for taking the decision out of the hands of the member of the congregation. If you do so, you will no longer be a counsellor. In your own personal life you make personal decisions for yourself. It is important to recognize the appropriate boundaries here. The member of the congregation continues to be responsible for his/her decision. As office bearer you need to underline this responsibility.

It may be that there is another boundary for the member of the congregation. As office bearer you sometimes can say more clearly how it is not to be than how it is to be. In the epistles we find that the apostles forbid and warn against certain sins. We also know that eight of the Ten Commandments are formulated negatively and clearly forbid certain sins. That does not mean that

the Bible is more negative than positive. It is best to learn to say things both positively and negatively.

### Three Extremely Important Factors for Counselling

1. What motivates the person who is asking for counsel? Is it love to God and the neighbour and then also self? [consider the sequence!]
2. What do you, the counsellor, have in mind? What are you after? Do you wish to serve the other person in love and deny yourself? Or do you desire control and success?
3. By what means do you wish to attain help? Do you also place the means under the authority of the Word?

### Prayer

Prayer is to have a central place in all counseling. The member her/himself needs to pray as well as the office bearer who should pray with the member of the congregation. We must pray for his love to abound more and more in insight and wisdom in order to be able to discern and approve the "things that are excellent." We must pray that we might "be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11).

What is it that the Lord will have me to do? We must ask the Lord for insight and wisdom to make the right decision and to select the right means. Love seeks the fruit of righteousness and the honour of God.

In conclusion, the ethics of pastoral counseling emphasize dependence upon God and His Word. Listening to the Word is as important as listening to the person who needs counsel. Together we must express our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures, to open our heart to the Scriptures, and to give us insight.

### Marital Tensions

Let us take an example. There is a tense situation between a husband and wife because of the relationship of the husband with his mother. The mother refuses to let go of her son. The wife is not only offended by the attitude of her mother-in-law, but she also feels frustrated by the attitude of her husband. Her husband sincerely loves his wife, but he does not sufficiently understand what troubles his wife. He thinks that his wife wrongly criticizes the combination of love he has for his wife and the respect for his mother. If his wife would only show more respect for his mother, she would feel less neglected, he thinks.

Here are a husband and a wife who have each other's welfare at heart, but nevertheless have a problem with their relationship. The husband's mother stands between them. To be sure, she does not wish to take them away from each other, but she does detract from their marriage happiness.

Right from the start of their relationship, the wife had harboured a suspicion against the position of her mother-in-law in her husband's life. She talked about it with him many times. He tried to calm her anxiety and irritation by affirming that he was there for her all the way. She took his word for it and expected that things would improve once they were married.

The mother-in-law did not play an outright cruel game, but she did refuse to step back. She did accept the fact that they were married and therefore ought to go their own way, but she did not let go of her son. By subtle interference she kept strings attached to her son. He wants to cover up the matter and maintain his relationship to both women. He seeks a solution of tolerance or integration. But his wife is headed on a course of collision and direct contradiction as the only remedy for a happy marriage. She seeks all or nothing and even risks an inward rift with her husband.

He wants to hold on to both. He is conscious of the fact that his wife is heading for a rift. That makes him critical of her. He calls her attitude one of unchristian intolerance, which troubles him even more than his wife's insistence that he break off the wrong relationship with his mother. Unconsciously, he criticizes his wife for this in order to continue to have the relationship with his mother.

### **Analyzing the Situation**

What are you to do as pastor or elder? You have been called in at a point where things are not yet hopeless, even though considerable damage has been inflicted. The husband and wife are in opposition to each other, whereas they started out by being in harmony with each other and had mutually devoted feelings for each other. However, a distance has come between them, and the harmony is disappearing.

The first phase for a solution is to listen. Allow both husband and wife to express their points of view, experiences and feelings. Soon you will realize that the heart of the problem is not that they do not love each other or that they are not willing to work at their problem. Yet, both experience a hopeless obstacle. She finds that she cannot go on because her mother-in-law stands between them. She experiences his love as a love that she always has to share with her mother-in-law. He considers the choice between his wife and his mother to be an unreasonable choice. In his mind, both women can keep their place in his life, each in their own way.

You keep on asking questions and you come to the conclusion that the husband never truly let go of his mother. He did leave his parental home, and he does cleave to his wife, even sexually, but inwardly he has not left his mother. She retained her place as mother, the same way she held that place in the years prior to his marriage.

You need to realize that at this point you have to speak quite concretely and specifically about love. After all, the husband says that he sincerely loves his wife, but for the wife that means there is a relationship with a third party. She wants him to meet her condition of exclusive choice for her only.

### **Counselling**

You have properly gauged the relationship between them. You can now build a great deal on what is right in their relationship. However, one thing needs to be done. That is, the husband has to choose for his wife while (for the time being) he has to let go of his mother. As pastor or elder you need to expound and apply the three basic verbs in Genesis 2:24: "leave," "cleave," and "be one flesh." The conclusion becomes clear: the mother-in-law has occupied too big a place in her son's life.

The son begins to see that, but he does not yet know how to go about it. Your task with regard to his wife is to keep her from triumphantly celebrating that she has been right along. She may think, "See? I told you all along. I have been wronged. You have given your mother too significant a place." It may be that you as pastor or elder agrees with this conclusion, but you need to prevent her from triumphing over him. She, together with you, needs to show her husband that the claim the mother-in-law makes on her son is wrong.

The husband believes that he needs to keep honouring his mother. This concern covers up his need for inward dependence on his mother.

As pastor or elder you need to reject this illegitimate claim in three steps. You need to show that the fifth commandment functions differently in the life of a married son than in the life of an adolescent son. You need to try to lead the husband to the insight that he has continued to be dependent on his mother. Furthermore, you still need to point out the relationship between a wrong dependence on his mother and a wrong understanding of the fifth commandment.

A great deal depends on how the wife conducts herself. If she triumphs in being right, she may end up wrong. If she uses it as a weapon against her husband, he will be further alienated. She must resist this temptation and learn to assist her husband to become independent of his mother.

Patience is necessary. The mother will not easily give up her place. She may use the fifth commandment as a “counteroffensive.” You will need quite a few conversations. You need to be firm as well. You will need to explain how you look at their relationship. You may not bypass the husband’s dependence on his mother. Show what the task of each is and their task together. The first visit may be rather stormy, but you need to let the light of the Word shine clearly on the relationship.

The first visit may be painful, but it is the only way things will work. The wife must be ready to forgive and to work on renewing the relationship. The husband must begin to see the necessity of a change in relating to his wife and to his mother.

You have a distinct message for both of them. To the husband the message is: your wife has a right to your whole heart. You may not divide that between your mother and your wife! If you must (for the time being) lose one of the two, then you need to lose your mother, in order to hold on to your wife. You can only have both, if you have given your wife your unconditional allegiance. The message for the wife is: you need to be ready to forgive and ready to help. Do not demand that you receive double for what was kept from you for so long.

This approach, normally, should bear fruit. It is painful and hard work. You have the privilege of pointing to the attitude of Christ and so minister to these persons. Hopefully, the mother-in-law will begin to see that her children’s marriage happiness is more important than the devotion of her son to her. To be sure, that is still a negative motivation on her part--their marriage may not break down. Hopefully, this negative motivation will be changed into a positive one. You should pray that this change might come. The change in the attitude for the couple can also bring about that they discover other areas in which they kept their devotion from each other. This self-examination can lead to a spiritual break-through that goes beyond the relationship between husband and wife.

Generally we are so used to the biblical accounts of the grace of God in the lives of sinners that we fail to see the power and offense of the gospel. We laud God’s grace shown to the woman with five husbands and a sixth who is not her husband. We nod our heads in pious recognition of the words of Christ to the woman caught in adultery. We rejoice at the salvation of the criminal on the cross next to Jesus. The prodigal’s repentance produces a holy jealousy in us. Yet, how do we react when the equivalent happens in modern times, bears modern names, and modern manifestations of sin? Particularly, how do office-bearers deal with those “caught in the very act”?

### **A Woman Caught With Thoughts of Murder**

Consider the following scenario. A 40 year-old woman becomes pregnant. She already has four children; the youngest is 8. In her own mind, her family had been completed at the birth of the fourth child. She had begun to work outside the home and hoped to continue to do so. Her husband was not happy with the fact that his wife is pregnant, but he is opposed to abortion. Her gynecologist recommended an abortion because of her age and the associated risks. The woman had difficulty with an abortion, but had greater difficulty with the thought of having another child. How could this child ever fit into their family? Her oldest is an adolescent girl who is already dating. Her professional ambitions will have to be put on hold. The medical and social arguments of her gynecologist inclined her to accept his position. Her husband was not strong enough to oppose her. They decided to have an abortion, but before they could carry out their intention, she had spontaneously miscarried. That had been very convenient for them.

They had not consulted their pastor. Only much later does he hear that something has “gone wrong.” One of the elders mentions that the woman has developed psychological and spiritual problems. She has become listless, depressed, fatigued, and feels no need to pray or go to church. When he visits, the pastor finds her unwilling to speak about the recent past. He knows of

her recent miscarriage but nothing else. When the conversation dead-ends, he hints at the fact that there seems to be a block. She hesitates to disclose what has occurred. Neither does her husband volunteer anything. Does he even know what is troubling his wife? Does shame hold him back?

The woman realizes that the pastoral contact will not progress any further if she keeps silent. Reluctantly, she shares the difficulty of her recent pregnancy. She does not share the whole truth, but it is enough for the pastor to think through the event with her. She shares how she had felt that their family had been completed and how the pregnancy had made her question her plans. This is all she shares. She feels she has said enough.

Her pastor asks her if she feels guilty for her negative attitude. She gives no straight answer but covers up by using a multitude of words that really say nothing. The pastor is faced with a difficult decision. He realizes her tenseness and that more is going on. But one word too much on his part might end the whole relationship. He is aware that her consciousness of guilt is very acute, although he does not say this.

After a time of intense prayer, the pastor feels one more question needs to be asked. Has she ever considered an abortion? As if stung by a wasp, she says all kinds of things, but she answers neither affirmatively or negatively. The pastor still does not know whether she had intended to have an abortion. It is evident to him that she has considered the idea. He speaks with understanding as he describes to her what can transpire in the human heart in cases such as hers.

It does not take long for her to share the whole truth. She is almost glad with the opportunity to confess her guilt. She is not very emotional, but toneless and spiritually empty. This is the consequence of not having resolved her sense of guilt. Regardless of how strange it may sound, when the child had been taken from her, she had begun to see her self-centredness. Her decision to have an abortion had complicated her feelings of guilt. Her heart had become hardened and it was as if a wall closed her in.

The pastor understands that the heart of the problem was the intended murder of the child. He does not focus on her decision to have an abortion. Instead, he focuses on why she did not want this child. It did not suit her. It ruined her plans. This development in her life had been difficult for her to accept. It brought shame and unwillingness on her part. She felt thwarted in her plans and did not want to accept the "burden."

These facts are part of the jigsaw puzzle. Her pastor wisely let her place all the pieces together herself. He had only one goal in view, which may be described by only two phrases: confession of guilt and forgiveness! The woman was not immediately ready for either of the two, even though her heart longed for deliverance from her walled prison.

The pastor let her do the talking, and in that way she drew up her own indictment. He did not need to say much. The pieces fit together and formed a picture that was much more eloquent than any accusation the pastor could have formulated. The Spirit used him to have her look in the mirror of a face that only listened and that did not condemn. That was effective. Inside the walled prison a mother's heart was hiding! That heart was broken when she saw that she had wanted to break her child's heart.

This was the place and the time to talk about forgiveness. Without excusing her, the pastor pointed to the significance of baptism. She had wanted to keep baptism from her child by not wanting it to be born. Essentially, she had wanted to deprive grace from her child by not permitting it to see the day of grace.

This was the decisive moment. Her heart was softened. All her hard feelings melted. Her heart spoke, though not with words. She confessed her guilt and received forgiveness with her head bowed down and her soul praying. Christ washed away all sins, even those which a pregnant mother had committed against the sixth commandment prior to her miscarriage.

The pastor's work was not finished yet. Prior to the next celebration of the Lord's Supper he visited her again! She was having a difficult time. The devil was making things hard for her! How the pastor's eyes lit up, when he saw her come forward to the Lord's table! He will never forget it: a person bowed down in humility and lifted up by faith in the forgiveness of sin! He thought to himself: that is how every partaker of the Lord's Supper should really come to the table of the LORD.

## **The Case of Incest**

The scenario is as follows. A prominent member in the church had three daughters, around twenty years of age. The eldest daughter is courting a young man. One day his pastor inquired whether the relationship was going well. The young man answered that there were some difficulties in their relationship, although they did love each other. Half a year later he was able to tell his pastor the reason for the difficulties in their relationship. Her father had sexually abused his daughter. She had reluctantly told him. That fact impeded an open and spontaneous relationship.

When she inquired of her younger sister, it turned out that she too had been abused by their father. Together they approached their youngest sister, who, it appeared, also had been abused. The mother knew nothing of it, at least, that remained a question.

They consulted their pastor. He spoke with all three of them, after the eldest daughter and her friend first had come to talk with him. What was he to do? Take up the matter with the district elder, the whole consistory, law enforcement officers, the man's wife, or first with the man himself?

Since the daughters themselves did not dare to take up the matter with their father, the pastor had to do it. It took place in his study, after the daughters had given him some more details. That was the first move the pastor made, although in a sense it was not the first step. His first step was to pray with the daughters and in private for himself, before the visit with the father.

The father attempted to excuse his abuse with extenuating circumstances. The pastor gave him some days to come to his senses and to think about what he had done. He asked him not to talk to his daughters without his presence, but left it up to him to talk about it with his wife. The man chose not to talk to his wife. When he returned for a visit with his pastor, he did admit the facts but he was not under conviction of guilt. A strange coldness characterized him. Was there more fear of the consequences than sorrow for the abuse inflicted upon his daughters and his guilt before God? The pastor did not know.

What were the next steps to take? As long as it was not urgently necessary, he did not want to involve anyone except the district elder. He informed that elder, a wise man, who could keep things confidential. He informed the father that for the time being he would inform only the district elder.

What was the pastor aiming for? For a Christian solution, which would comprise three things: a sincere confession of sin on the part of the father, loving help for the daughters, and restoration of the relationships, to the extent that might be possible. The pastor asked the man to inform his wife himself, in order soon afterwards to have a meeting with both of them and their three daughters in the presence of the district elder. That took place. It turned out that the wife had not known anything of the abuse, although she admitted she had intuitively sensed it. She was devastated and was concerned for her husband and their daughters. She was especially concerned how the daughters would react to their father.

Then came the most difficult meeting: the daughters together with the father and mother in the presence of the pastor and district elder. The pastor chaired the meeting. He had hesitated as to who should be the first one to speak. Should it be the father who knew that everyone had been informed about everything? Or should the daughters be the first to speak? There was something to be said for either. A confession of guilt would clear the air to some extent. Yet the pastor chose for the daughters to be the first ones to speak. There had not yet been an encounter between father and daughters. The father should hear it from their own lips. The eldest daughter's boyfriend was present but had agreed to keep himself completely in the background. The eldest daughter was the

first to speak; with trembling voice and at times stumbling over her words, she brought up what she had wanted to say to her father for a long time. She did it differently than had been expected. She emphasized three things: (i) the humiliation inflicted upon her by her father; (ii) the grievous abuse of his position of authority--his superior power over against her powerlessness; (iii) his sexual abuse of her two sisters as well. Was one abuse not enough already? Had he not noticed her revulsion? Was she only an object of lust to him, after which he also abused her two younger sisters? While speaking, she was able to keep herself reasonably in check, but she did castigate her father, who bowed his head. The reproaches she was making went to the core of the crime, so that the father could not say anything back or challenge the accusation. Finally, she mentioned her damaged feelings, the bitter consequences of having been sexually abused for years, which affected her contact with the opposite sex. Everything was right to the point and sharp and that is where she left it.

The second daughter spoke along similar lines, although in her own way. They had talked to each other about it before the meeting, but they had not agreed to what each would say. But it came down to the same thing. The youngest daughter did it typically as the youngest daughter, less deliberately, more emotionally, more fiercely, unloading her recent violation.

Next the mother spoke. No one knew what discussion there had been between her husband and her. She bowed her head and placed herself alongside her daughters. She entered into the feelings of her daughters. She did not excuse her husband's actions. She let them all feel that she tried to place herself in her daughters' situation. She spoke soberly and sharply. She did not excuse herself for not having noticed what had happened in her own home.

Next the father spoke—a highly respected man in the congregation, whom everyone considered a Christian, an elder, counselor and leader in many areas. What would he say at this point? It came as a complete surprise to the pastor. Would he speak as a broken man or as someone who would still excuse himself or pity himself, hoping for some sympathy?

He managed to do something of all three, which seriously troubled the pastor. He did not openly confess his guilt. Indeed, he admitted to what he had done. Nevertheless, he excused himself with a reference to his high spiritual status, which somehow compensated for his strong sex drive. Thirdly, he did express the desire to mutually resolve this problem as well as possible.

This was not what the pastor had in mind and expected. A glance of mutual understanding with the district elder confirmed that he too was disappointed. The eldest daughter's boyfriend could hardly restrain himself because of the artificial piety.

At this point the pastor stepped in. He briefly summarized what the daughters and the mother had said: "(i) you violated trust; (ii) you continued the abuse; (iii) you did not limit your abuse to one daughter. He added: (iv) look at the bitterness of deceiving your wife and now your cold attitude which does not express any sorrow but rather self-pity over the brokenness that you have brought about. You realize that you hurt and damaged you daughters and also your wife, but you did not even ask for forgiveness."

At this point everything fell apart. If there had been a silent hope for some form of restoration and some willingness to come together, even though everyone feared the ongoing grief of scars--the present attitude made this impossible. The pastor pointed out to the man the bitterness of his self-pity, the absence of genuine concern for his children and the lack of humbling himself before God. How can someone inwardly so harden himself, while the facts speak clearly?

That was the main question of the pastor and the district elder, but no less for the wife and daughters. It was as a chasm which was widening more and more, and which they could not bridge!

The pastor faced a dilemma. He could try to solve the matter within the privacy of the persons involved or he could make it a public matter in view of the fact that the father was hardening



himself. To threaten the father with the latter might force a surrogate confession of guilt. But what would be gained by that?

The solution did not need to be pursued any further. It soon became apparent that the daughters needed help. In order to prevent permanent damage to each of them, professionals needed to be involved. Since the father refused to admit to the crime, this was an unavoidable step. Others had to be involved, including law enforcement agencies. The pastor's aim was not to force a confession of guilt. He might have produced it by threatening to go to the police. But he regarded that this would not have any lasting value for the father himself or for restoring relationships. So he let things have their course, as often happens in such situations.

The father's wounded pride and self-righteousness brought him to the court. The result was that at her boyfriends' suggestion, the eldest daughter live common-law with him. He argued that her parents no longer had any right to oppose such a life-style after all that she and her sisters had gone through. The two younger sisters were welcome at their home; they in turn wandered more outside than inside the home. Their mother wanted to hold on to her husband, but she could not bear to lose her daughters. For that reason she broke the relationship with him. The mutual relationship became a complete chaos. Initially, they felt that they needed one another, but in the end they were driven apart.

This is an illustration of a case where the pastor tried his best. He met face to face with the obduracy of self-justification. Consequently, all the relationships suffered shipwreck. The man turned away from the church. The woman stayed with the congregation, but she felt both bitter and inadequate. The children went their own way. How grievous when sins are not confessed! They put up impassable obstacles and lead to estrangement.

## **Conclusion**

In this series of articles we have traced three illustrations of the helping hand of a pastor (and elder) in difficulties related to ethical problems. The cases were different and the counsel rendered was different as well. In the first two cases the counsel led to the restoration of tenuous relationships; in the latter case there was no positive result. That is the reality of pastoral work in the church.

A scenario like the last one can lead to a sense of failure and even depression among pastors and office-bearers. Which pastor or elder does not encounter such temptations? The important thing is not to let endurance depend on success, but rather on the commission given by the Lord. The Word of God is our only anchor. It points out the way we must go. That also requires the love of Christ, which is to constrain the pastor (and elder). Without this love and without confidence in the Word, the pastoral ministry is a thankless task! One can only endure the pastoral ministry with all its ethical problems by placing confidence in the Word and being constrained by a love for the sheep entrusted to our pastoral care. That is the only way!

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## **Endnotes:**

1. With the approval of Prof. Dr. W.H. Velema, Pastor L.W. Bilkes translated the first part of chapter 7 of *Ethische vragen in prediking en pastoraat (Reformatie Reeks)* (Kampen: Kok, 1989), entitled, "Ethische Vragen in het Pastorale Gesprek" (pp.89-94). This is presented in an abridged form, somewhat adapted for elders.

2. W.H. Velema draws on C. Trimp in *Media Vita. De betekenis van de gereformeerde ambtsleer voor the "humaniteit" in de kerkelijke zielszorg* (Groningen 1981).