

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Sacrament of Confession and the Service of Counselling

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على مدى سنوات عديدة، كانت المعتقدات والممارسات الدينية منفصلة عن العلاج النفسي المهني. فقد كان العلاج النفسي والإرشاد يركزان حصريًا على شفاء النفس من خلال جلسات العلاج والحوار العقلي، والتي فيهما استخدمت العلاقة الإنسانية كأداة علاج.

وفي وسط موجة من الرغبة الذاتية غير المنضبطة والتي هبمنت على الكثير من تسعينيات القرن الماضي، تدعو الآن العديد من الأصوات التقدمية إلى التحول بعيدًا عن هذا المنظور. يجب على المرشدين (أخصائي العلاج النفسي) الاعتراف بأن نسبة كبيرة من طالبي إرشادهم قد يمتلكون معتقدات ومواقف وممارسات دينية وروحية قد تؤثر على تقدمهم ونموهم الشخصي وقدراتهم على حل المشكلات ويحدث حاليًا تقارب ضروري بين مجالي الروحانية والعلاج النفسي، حيث يُنظر إليهما الآن على أنهما مكملان لبعضهما البعض.

ولقد بدأ المرشدون (أخصائي العلاج النفسي) ذو التوجه النظامي في تصور الفرد على أنه كائن بيولوجي-نفسى-اجتماعي-روحي. ويُعتقد الآن أن تجاهل الروحانية في مجال الإرشاد يحد من قدرة المعالج على فهم الشخص ككل.

في هذا المقال سناقش سر التوبة والاعتراف في الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية وأهميته في شفاء الروح

Dutch: Religieuze overtuigingen en handelingen zijn jarenlang gesegregeerd geweest van professionele psychotherapie. Professionele psychotherapie en begeleiding waren enkel gericht op de genezing van de ziel door middel van communicatieve en mentale werkwijzen met behulp van de menselijke relatie als middel.

Te midden van het ongecontroleerde eigenbelang, die de jaren negentig grotendeels domineerde, beginnen vele stemmen een verandering in deze denkwijze aan te sporen. Begeleiders moeten erkennen dat een groot deel van hun cliënten mogelijk religieuze en spirituele overtuigingen, gedragingen en handelingen hebben die hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling en probleemoplossende vaardigheden potentieel beïnvloeden.

Een noodzakelijke fusie neemt tegenwoordig plaats tussen de gebieden van spiritualiteit en psychotherapie. Beiden worden nu gezien als complementair. Systeemgeoriënteerde begeleiders starten met het conceptualiseren van het individu als een bio-psycho-sociaal-spiritueel wezen. Men veronderstelt dat het achterlaten van spiritualiteit in de begeleiding de begeleider beperkt in diens begrip van het holistisch persoon.

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In dit artikel bespreken wij het Sacrament van berouw en de biecht in de Orthodoxe kerk en voordelen daarvan in de genezing van de ziel.

English: For many years, religious beliefs and practices were segregated from professional psychotherapy. Professional psychotherapy and counseling were solely concerned with the healing of one's soul through conversational and mental processes using the human relationship as a tool.

Amid the unchecked self-interest that dominated much of the 1990s, many progressive voices are now urging a shift away from this mindset. Counselors must acknowledge that a substantial proportion of their clients may have religious and spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and practices that potentially affect their personal development and problem-solving skills.

A much-needed convergence is presently occurring between the two fields of spirituality and psychotherapy. Both are now being viewed as mutually complementary. Systems-oriented counselors are beginning to conceptualize the individual as a bio-psycho-social-spiritual being. Disregarding spirituality in the counseling domain is now thought to limit the ability of the therapist to understand the holistic person.

In this paper, we will discuss the Sacrament of repentance and confession in the Orthodox church and its advantage in the healing of the soul.

French: Pendant de nombreuses années, les croyances et pratiques religieuses ont été séparées de la psychothérapie professionnelle. La psychothérapie professionnelle et le conseil spirituel se préoccupaient uniquement de la guérison de l'âme par le biais de processus conversationnels et mentaux utilisant la relation humaine comme outil.

Au milieu de l'intérêt personnel incontrôlé qui a dominé une grande partie des années 1990, de nombreuses voix progressistes exhortent désormais à s'éloigner de cet état d'esprit. Les conseillers spirituels doivent reconnaître qu'une proportion substantielle de leurs demandeurs de conseil peuvent avoir des croyances, des attitudes et des pratiques religieuses et spirituelles qui affectent potentiellement leur développement personnel et leurs capacités de résolution de problèmes.

Une convergence bien nécessaire se produit actuellement entre les deux domaines de la spiritualité et de la psychothérapie. Les deux sont désormais considérés comme mutuellement complémentaires. Les conseillers professionnels commencent à conceptualiser l'individu comme un être bio-psycho-social-spirituel. On pense désormais que le fait de négliger la spiritualité dans le domaine du conseil limite la capacité du thérapeute à comprendre la personne dans sa globalité.

Dans cet article, nous discuterons du sacrement de repentance et de confession dans l'Église orthodoxe et de son avantage dans la guérison de l'âme.

German: Seit vielen Jahren waren religiöse Überzeugungen und Praktiken von der professionellen Psychotherapie getrennt. Professionelle Psychotherapie und Beratung konzentrierten sich ausschließlich auf die Heilung der Seele durch Gespräche und mentale Prozesse, wobei die menschliche Beziehung als Werkzeug diente.

Inmitten des ungehemmten Eigeninteresses, das einen großen Teil der 1990er Jahre prägte, fordern heute viele progressive Stimmen eine Abkehr von dieser Denkweise. Berater müssen anerkennen, dass ein beträchtlicher Anteil ihrer Klienten religiöse und spirituelle Überzeugungen, Einstellungen und Praktiken haben könnte, die potenziell ihre persönliche Entwicklung und ihre Problemlösungsfähigkeiten beeinflussen.

Gegenwärtig findet eine dringend benötigte Annäherung zwischen den Bereichen Spiritualität und Psychotherapie statt. Beide werden nun als sich gegenseitig ergänzend betrachtet. Systemorientierte Berater beginnen, das Individuum als ein bio-psycho-sozial-spirituelles Wesen zu begreifen. Spiritualität im Beratungsbereich zu ignorieren, wird nun als Einschränkung der Fähigkeit des Therapeuten betrachtet, die ganzheitliche Person zu verstehen.

In diesem Artikel werden wir das Sakrament der Buße und Beichte in der orthodoxen Kirche und seinen Vorteil für die Heilung der Seele besprechen.

Greek: Για πολλά χρόνια, οι θρησκευτικές πεποιθήσεις και συνήθειες διαχωρίζονταν από την επαγγελματική ψυχοθεραπεία. Η επαγγελματική ψυχοθεραπεία και η συμβουλευτική ασχολούνταν αποκλειστικά με τη θεραπεία της ψυχής του ατόμου μέσω συνομιλιακών και νοητικών διαδικασιών που χρησιμοποιούσαν ως εργαλείο την ανθρώπινη σχέση.

Εν μέσω της ανεξέλεγκτης ιδιοτέλειας που κυριάρχησε σε μεγάλο μέρος της δεκαετίας του 1990, πολλές προοδευτικές φωνές προτρέπουν τώρα να απομακρυνθούμε από αυτή τη νοοτροπία. Οι σύμβουλοι πρέπει να αναγνωρίσουν ότι ένα σημαντικό ποσοστό των πελατών τους μπορεί να έχει θρησκευτικές και πνευματικές πεποιθήσεις, στάσεις και πρακτικές που ενδεχομένως επηρεάζουν την προσωπική τους ανάπτυξη και τις ικανότητες επίλυσης προβλημάτων.

Επί του παρόντος συντελείται μια αναγκαία σύγκλιση μεταξύ των δύο πεδίων της πνευματικότητας και της ψυχοθεραπείας. Και τα δύο αντιμετωπίζονται πλέον ως αλληλοσυμπληρούμενα. Οι συστημικά προσανατολισμένοι σύμβουλοι αρχίζουν να αντιλαμβάνονται το άτομο ως ένα βιο-ψυχο-κοινωνικό-πνευματικό ον. Η αγνόηση της πνευματικότητας στον τομέα της συμβουλευτικής θεωρείται πλέον ότι περιορίζει την ικανότητα του θεραπευτή να κατανοήσει το ολιστικό άτομο.

Στην παρούσα εργασία θα συζητήσουμε το Μυστήριο της μετάνοιας και της εξομολόγησης στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία και το πλεονέκτημά του στη θεραπεία της ψυχής.

Italian: Per molti anni, le credenze e le pratiche religiose sono state separate dalla psicoterapia professionale. La psicoterapia e la consulenza professionali si occupavano esclusivamente della guarigione dell'anima attraverso processi conversazionali e mentali, utilizzando la relazione umana come strumento.

Nel contesto dell'interesse personale incontrollato che ha dominato gran parte degli anni '90, molte voci progressiste oggi sollecitano un cambiamento rispetto a questa mentalità. I consulenti devono riconoscere che una parte sostanziale dei loro clienti può avere credenze, atteggiamenti e pratiche religiose e spirituali che influenzano potenzialmente il loro sviluppo personale e le capacità di risoluzione dei problemi.

Si sta verificando una convergenza strettamente necessaria tra i due campi della spiritualità e della psicoterapia, che ora vengono visti come reciprocamente complementari. I consulenti orientati ai sistemi stanno iniziando a concettualizzare l'individuo come un essere bio-psyco-socio-spirituale. Trascurare la spiritualità nel campo della consulenza è ora considerato un limite alla capacità del terapeuta di comprendere la persona nella sua totalità.

In questo lavoro discuteremo il Sacramento del pentimento e della confessione nella Chiesa Ortodossa e i suoi vantaggi nella guarigione dell'anima.

Swedish: Under många år var religiösa övertygelser och tillämpningar avskilda från professionell psykoterapi. Professionell psykoterapi och rådgivning handlade enbart om att hela själen genom samtal och mentala processer, där den mänskliga relationen användes som ett verktyg.

Mitt i det obestridda egenintresse som präglade stora delar av 1990-talet uppmanar nu många framstegsvänliga röster till ett skifte bort från detta synsätt. Rådgivare måste erkänna att en betydande del av deras klienter kan ha religiösa och andliga övertygelser, attityder och praktiker som kan påverka deras personliga utveckling och problemlösningsförmåga.

En mycket behövlig sammanflätning sker för närvarande mellan de två fälten spiritualitet och psykoterapi. Båda ses nu som ömsesidigt komplementära. Rådgivare med systemorienterat synsätt börjar nu se individen som en bio-psyko-socio-spirituell varelse. Att bortse från andlighet inom rådgivning anses nu begränsa terapeutens förmåga att förstå människan som en holistisk varelse.

En efterlängtd konvergens sker nu mellan de två fälten, andlighet och psykoterapi. Båda ses nu som ömsesidigt kompletterande. Rådgivare med ett systemorienterat synsätt börjar betrakta

individens som en bio-psyko-social-andlig varelse. Att bortse från andlighet inom rådgivningssområdet anses nu begränsa terapeutens förmåga att förstå hela personen.

I denna uppsats kommer vi att diskutera botens och biktens sakrament i den ortodoxa kyrkan och dess fördelar för själens helande.

Introduction

Some people today think that one can come to self-knowledge through introspection and psychoanalysis only. The Orthodox tradition believes that through these spiritual practices mentioned and returning the heart to God, one can fully realize the work of the Holy Spirit. It is through the grace of God, along with our own work, that our soul can be illuminated and we can actualize our being. Therefore, the healing process reveals the Holy Spirit and when it empowers us, we can control the passions that overwhelm us [1].

The Orthodox Christians believe that Orthodoxy is a religious therapeutic science and treatment. It can heal the person. It speaks of God and attempts to bring the person into union and personal communion with God. This is spirituality within the Orthodox faith [2].

The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession

Following Repentance, the Orthodox believers must confess their sins (1 John 1:9). From a spiritual point of view, confession purifies the soul. Confession is defined as 'acknowledgement of sin before God' [3]. The individuals confess their sins, yet they want God in their lives. Sins of deed, thought, or feeling are confessed. The confessing persons condemn their actions and thank God for His redeeming Grace.

Confession is blaming oneself and being accountable to the person's own sins. It does not excuse the person from sin. It does not blame others for the sin committed. The confessing person cannot take on the sins of another.

Confession is not merely revealing one's sins but is a detailed account of one's passive and active struggles to improve one's relationship with God. Passive struggle is to resist sin while active struggle incorporates spiritual growth and acquires the Christian virtues [4].

Revealing one's thoughts to a priest indicates that a sin is not hidden in the heart. Therefore, if there is no sin hidden in the heart, there is no evil thought. For Orthodox Christians once sin is acknowledged, God erases it and through the priest, God gives a guidance. It is also believed by Orthodox Christians that when passions are revealed, they can then be absolved. Through confession we receive the gift of forgiveness of sins through the Lord Jesus Christ. In confessing we examine and purify our souls [5].

A priest is someone, a human being, to whom the Orthodox Christians can talk about their worries or problems and to receive comfort from and gain wise counsel. Usually, a priest serves many roles. A confessor father, a teacher, a nurturing father, and a keeper of one's secrets are a few of these roles [6].

Absolution, which is given at the end of confession, is the pronouncement of remission of sin to the penitent [3]. The Orthodox faithful believes the Holy Spirit grants the person the remission of sins if the person is truly sorry for the sinful ways; the person confesses them in the presence of an orthodox priest; and vows to move spiritually forward

in the life. The priest bears testimony to the repentant person, God forgives the sin, and reconciliation takes place between the Christian believer and God through the Church.

Meditation on God's great love and mercy will continue to assist the Orthodox Christians in their quest for eternal life. The hope of salvation encourages Christians to persevere through life's challenges, striving for a life with fewer struggles. Limiting the problems in one's life can bring forth a sense of serenity.

With continuous repentance and confession, sin is overcome. Penitence and humility promote spiritual growth. An Orthodox Christian, who overcomes sin, is said to be powerful and thus develops spiritual maturity. Therefore, the devil cannot enter and defeat the person's heart since God's commandments abide in the heart.

Advantages of Repentance and Confession

The advantages of the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession from a psychological point of view are many. The current philosophy of health care purports that the persons presenting themselves with mental health care needs should participate and take responsibility for their own care. From the beginning of time, it has been recognized that a health care provider should care for the patient and not just the illness [7].

In the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession the individual must individual must admit that he/she sinned without justifying the sinful deeds. Taking responsibility for the sin means that the sin must be confessed to a priest. Solutions for the sin are discussed and options identified for sin resolution. It is solely up to the individual to take responsibility for the behavior change that is needed to resolve the sin and to evaluate the progress of the behavior change.

Another advantage of Repentance and Confession, from a psychological viewpoint, is that within Orthodoxy the person seeking to repent can be assured of the presence of a trusted person. A trusted person will communicate to the presenting person that he has not been abandoned. The trusted person, the priest, will not share any parts of the repentance and confession with another person. A reassuring experience will also make the individual seek consolation through guidance more frequently.

Also, within this sacrament, a confessor father will demonstrate genuine respect for the one confessing. This develops an understanding relationship in which the individual can be encouraged to identify his own feelings and sins and to seek appropriate resources for managing them. The Orthodox Christians can be assured of being given the correct guidance at the time when they need it by someone trustworthy.

Within the spiritual realm, the person has experienced and attempted to understand the essential features of a sound mental state. Orthodox Repentance and Confession recognizes the impact of a sound mental state through forgiveness of sins, upon spirituality and the healing of the soul.

The Role of Counseling and the Life of Repentance

Counseling and the life of repentance are deeply interconnected. Counseling in reality is a tool for self-awareness and healing. Counseling provides a structured, supportive environment where individuals can explore their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It allows people to become aware of patterns in their lives that may be harmful to themselves or others, such as negative thinking, unhealthy relationships, or destructive habits. This awareness is often the first step toward meaningful change.

In a spiritual context, counseling can help individuals see their need for repentance more clearly by identifying areas where they have strayed from their values, faith, or moral code. A counselor, particularly one with spiritual insight, can help frame these struggles in light of a deeper need for transformation.

Repentance, in its fullest sense, is not just about feeling sorrow or regret for wrong actions. It involves a sincere commitment to change one's behavior and mindset. In Christianity, repentance is a central element of faith and spiritual development. It involves turning away from sin or harmful behavior and toward a life aligned with divine principles or moral integrity.

Counseling can support this process by offering practical steps toward change, whether that means managing anger, overcoming addictions, repairing relationships, or fostering forgiveness. Through counseling, individuals can move from simply acknowledging their wrongdoings to actively transforming their lives.

Both counseling and repentance involve ongoing effort and reflection. In Christianity, repentance is a continual process—a daily turning away from wrongdoing and moving toward greater spiritual growth. Similarly, counseling often involves ongoing sessions where individuals are encouraged to revisit and refine their goals. The combination of counseling's emotional support and the life of repentance fosters a deep, sustained change, promoting both personal healing and spiritual renewal.

The Synergy of Counseling and Repentance

- **Emotional Healing and Spiritual Renewal:** Counseling addresses the psychological and emotional aspects of guilt, shame, or regret, while repentance touches the psycho-spiritual dimension. Together, they provide a holistic approach to healing, helping individuals reconcile with themselves, others, and God.
- **Accountability:** A counselor can serve as a guide and accountability partner. Just as Christianity encourages confession and repentance before the priest, counseling provides a safe space for individuals to admit their struggles and receive guidance.
- **Practical Steps to Repentance:** Repentance requires ongoing effort, and counseling can offer practical strategies to support this. For example, someone seeking to repent for hurtful actions may need to develop better communication skills, manage anger, or heal from past trauma. Counseling can guide this process step by step.

Conclusion

Orthodox spirituality is the very essence of the everyday activity of life in communion with God. Therefore, spirituality to Orthodox Christians is doing all things for the glory of God as the meaning and substance of life for a human being. The importance of understanding and researching spirituality from an Orthodox Christian's perspective is of utmost importance to the field of multicultural counseling as well as those Orthodox clients presenting for mental health treatment.

The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession in the Orthodox Church is a profound spiritual practice that serves as a cornerstone for the healing of the soul.

Through this sacrament, individuals experience not only forgiveness of sins but also a deep renewal of their spiritual lives. By confessing sins and seeking God's grace, the soul is unburdened from guilt and shame, leading to a sense of inner peace and spiritual clarity.

Confession is more than just a ritual; it is an opportunity for transformation, allowing individuals to realign their lives with God's will. The healing it brings is not limited to the spirit, but extends to emotional and psychological well-being, offering peace of mind and a fresh start. Identifying the need for additional counseling, when available, should be of significant value in optimizing individual's needs to lead a Godly and balanced healthy life.

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