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Some Possible Implications of Gandhi's Satyagraha for Pastoral Counselling in the Indian Context

DAYANAND D. PITAMBER*

Introduction

Pastoral counselling as a proper discipline is something new to India. However, it has been practised in India by Christian ministers in a traditional way. They have used the indigenous resources of their authoritarian culture. Mostly, people came to them with their everyday problems, expecting definitive solutions, as the minister had a certain traditional status and wisdom. The ministers, conscious of their role, were very willing and ready to provide solutions for their people. However, it is a matter of controversy whether the help provided by them actually helped the people to become mature and able to stand on their own feet, to make their own decisions in times of crisis. It is quite common knowledge that this traditional approach of helping others often made people dependent upon their ministers. After the resolution of one problem, another problem was ready to be dealt with and resolved by the 'wise man'. Any failure to resolve the problem of people was considered as a sign of lack of knowledge and experience on the part of the minister.

Pastoral counselling, as a new discipline, brings a new focus on the solution of personal and social problems. It challenges the old assumptions and opens new possibilities of experiencing the *fullness of life*. Making one's own decision and becoming aware of one's unique identity and actualising it is to experience the *fullness of life*. Therefore, now the minister, who has been trained in the new discipline of pastoral counselling, is no more a problem-solver but a person who helps others to become persons in their own right and to discover their own identity.

Now with this introduction, we have to recognise that pastoral counselling as a movement in the Indian Church has a great input from the West. Most of the innovators and teachers in this field have been educated in the West. Therefore, there is a great temptation to 'transport' the skills and techniques from the West to our culture, without any serious consideration of the cultural differences. As a result, instead of helping to develop an Indian into a growing person

* Dr Dayanand D. Pitamber is the Professor in Pastoralia and Christian Education at the United Theological College, Bangalore.

in the Indian context, the person is often developed on a model foreign to our culture. This has serious consequences for the growth of persons and the Indian community. Theological education cannot ignore this important aspect of the personal and social development of the Indian person. As in science and technology, there are universal truths, irrespective of cultures, but their application must always take note of the cultural context. In the area of human development, we must be very careful in bringing ideas from other cultures because of the long term consequences on ipersonality and culture. It takes much longer to make corrections in this area than, perhaps, in technology.

In the West, the pastoral counselling movement has made extensive use of the insights and skills developed by the psychotherapeutic movements. Sometimes in its zeal to be on a par with the other 'health professions', it lost touch with its own roots in the Christian heritage. However, there is emerging a new trend of balanced approach in the West. It is seeking its own foundation in biblical and theological thought, as well as in the insights developed not only in the behavioural sciences but also in other cultures. The use of *Yoga* is only one example. We also need to give serious attention to the movement of pastoral counselling in India. I hope that as we introduce this discipline in India we will be aware of our Christian faith, as well as of our culture and its resources. My article attempts to deal with some of these concerns.

This article attempts to show that Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, as a method of personal change, has some possible implications for a theory and practice of pastoral counselling in the Indian context. My interest in trying to discover some of the possible implications of *Satyagraha* for pastoral counselling arose as a result of my high regard for Erikson's book, *Gandhi's Truth*. As one of the leading psychoanalysts of our time, Erikson pays a great tribute to Gandhi and to his method. He writes:

Finally, the truth of *Satyagraha* and the 'reality' of psychoanalysis come somewhat nearer to each other if it is assumed that man's 'reality testing' includes an attempt not only to think clearly but also to enter into an optimum of mutual activation with others.¹

Thus, Erikson discovers the secret of mutuality which is implicit in Gandhi's *Satyagraha*. He maintains that Gandhi's method is not a mere technique of bringing the necessary change in the other person but also an encounter which produces the possibilities of growth in both directions. Gandhi's method could easily be compared with Martin Buber's understanding of Dialogue.² Gandhi was interested in creative dialogue which would bring change in both directions.

¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-violence*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 1969, p. 439.

² V. V. Ramana Murti, 'Buber's Dialogue and Gandhi's *Satyagraha*,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, October-December 1968, pp. 607-608.

Basic Elements of Gandhi's Satyagraha

It is well known that Gandhi's *Satyagraha* is based on three important principles: the Principle of Truth, the Principle of Non-violence and the Principle of Self-suffering. Gandhi was able to integrate all these principles into his *Satyagraha* method.

It is difficult to isolate one from the other without doing serious damage to the whole concept of *Satyagraha*. Actually, these principles are not totally new to the Christian faith. In fact they have deep roots in the way God deals with human beings through Jesus Christ. The kind of change which Gandhi wanted to bring about in human beings through his method is somewhat similar to the change implicit in the method of Christian conversion or *metanoia*. Let us explore and seek some of the implications of *Satyagraha* for pastoral counselling:

1. *The Principle of Truth*

In an imaginary letter to Gandhi, Erikson writes:

In studying your method of Satyagraha, I have become increasingly convinced that psychoanalysis, not if judged by its physicalistic terminology and theory but if understood as it is practised and lived according to the rules and intentions of its originator, amounts to a *truth method*, with all the implications which the word truth has in Satyagraha.³

Gandhi was not a professional psychologist, but he had a clear understanding of human nature. Recognising that the concept of truth, in the ultimate sense, cannot be separated from God, he went on to accept the validity of the relative truth in human existence. He writes: 'But as long as I have not realised this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it.'⁴ Gandhi recognises that everyone gains insight into the nature of truth according to his own perception, and, therefore, there is bound to be a conflict between two people's perception of truth. Since no one can claim to know the absolute truth, one must be humble and open to the truth as grasped by another person.

Since the pastoral counsellor works within the context of the Christian Church, the problem of claiming knowledge and possessing the absolute truth has serious consequences for his ministry. The problem of truth is implicit in any encounter between two people, and, therefore, any sense of superiority in possessing the absolute truth creates not only conflicts, but also possibilities of violence in the form of manipulation and exploitation of human personality. I think that the Church has often fallen into this trap in its zeal to proclaim the absolute truth to non-Christians.

³ Erikson, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245.

⁴ M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiment with Truth*, tr. from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, pp. xiii-xiv.

Paul Tillich, in the context of denominational conflict, writes:

But in so far as the divine Spirit conquers religion, it prevents the claim to absoluteness by both the churches and their members. Where the divine Spirit is effective, the claim of a church to represent God to the exclusiveness of all other churches is rejected.⁵

In a counselling situation there is always an encounter between two or more people in terms of their respective truths. If the pastoral counsellor is not open to the truth of his counsellee, he cannot listen to him adequately and understand him from his perspective. The problem becomes critical when the counsellee is discussing a problem of ultimate value. A pastoral counsellor, whether he is discussing one's faith or some other issue, cannot escape the encounter of truths. The counsellor and the counsellee have their own approaches to truth. How does he deal with the conflict in the counselling situation? According to Gandhi, only those who are firm in their own truth can be open to the truth of others. This means that the interaction between the counsellor and the counsellee should be genuine and authentic. The counsellor should be committed to his own truth in order to be ready to listen to the truth of another. S. J. Samartha has put it rightly: 'Without this freedom to be committed, to be open, to witness, to change and be changed, genuine dialogue is impossible.'⁶

Of course, the pastoral counsellor is not merely committed to his own subjective understanding of truth, but also to the universal truth. It is this larger truth which gives freedom to the counsellor to be open to his own truth as well as to that of another. This means that the counsellor's understanding of this larger truth is very important. What kind of image does he have of God? What is his view of God? If he believes in a God of only a few, then it is difficult for him to engage in any meaningful counselling. Any view of God which does not allow him to venture into the unknown restricts him to a superficial relationship, which has no place in an authentic and therapeutic pastoral counselling; such a counsellor will be either sentimental or dogmatic in his approach towards his counsellee. Neither of these facilitates growth. They may provide temporary aid, including 'hope', but in the long run they will do more damage than any real help. All this help will be of an impersonal nature. The counsellor will pretend to be of a loving and caring nature, but his actions will contradict his words. What I am trying to emphasise here is that no *actual* encounter is possible between two people without authentic relationship. And counselling, particularly pastoral counselling, should provide an opportunity for authentic encounter.

Now this does not mean that as soon as two people meet, an authentic relationship is automatically created. This is not the case.

⁵ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967, II, pp. 244-245.

⁶ S. J. Samartha, 'Dialogue as a Continuing Christian Concern,' *Religion and Society*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, CISRS, Bangalore, March 1971, p. 8.

In fact, in counselling the counsellee, because of his problem, has difficulty in establishing an authentic relationship. And, therefore, it is the task of the counsellor to remove all the barriers that interfere in the establishment of an authentic relationship, and to provide conditions and attitudes which will facilitate authentic relationship.

The counsellee will tell his truth—no matter how bad or distorted it is—if and only if he gains the trust of his counsellor. He will reveal the very depth of his being to his counsellor if he feels that the counsellor will not reject him because of what he intends to tell him. It is in this process of self-revelation that the counsellee begins to appreciate not only his own subjective truth, but also the objective reality, and becomes aware of its implications for his life and the life of others.

Respect for the truth of another person necessarily implies careful listening. I think, whether counselling is done in the Indian context or in the Western context, listening on the part of the pastoral counsellor is an essential skill, without which he cannot do his job. He may do many other things for his counsellee, but he cannot counsel in the real sense of the word. Listening is not a skill easily acquired. It involves first of all listening to one's own truth. If a counsellor has been ignoring his own truth, or is completely alienated from his own self, it will be difficult for him to participate in the journey of another person. In fact, he may not even allow the other person to go through the process of growth, which is often painful. The counsellor has to learn the art of listening. He not only absorbs what is being said, but also reflects in such a way that the counsellee begins to see different shades of his self, with a sense of appreciation of his own personality and that of others.

Now genuine listening to the truth of another person cannot be done without some sense of personal commitment. The process of listening takes place between two people and, therefore, implies that the counsellor, even though open to the truth of another person, has some commitment to his own truth. Firmness in one's own truth gives freedom to be confident in listening to what the other has to say. Gandhi was always aware of this dimension. Even though he was convinced of his own truth, he was willing to listen to the truth of others. He was not just open to the truth of another, but also ready to accept it, with all its implications. The greatest implication of being open to the truth of another person is the possibility of being changed in one's own perspectives and making corrections in one's own understanding of truth. One must be ready to be changed by the truth of another, but only after integrating it into one's own life and making it one's own truth.

In this sense, the pastoral counsellor is open to the universal truth. It means that he cannot be too dogmatic about his own faith. This is not a very easy matter for anyone, because it threatens one's sense of security. Is the pastoral counsellor ready to take that risk? Now here the pastoral counsellor finds himself caught in the tradition of his faith. Here he has to struggle with his own community of faith; but

openness to the universal truth demands that he be open to all situations and, if need be, challenge the truth of his own community. A growing person is a person who is critical of all truth and makes any truth his own only after careful analysis. In this respect I would like to say that many people have misunderstood the Christian truth. Unfortunately, in a zeal to propagate Christianity to the people of other faiths, Christianity became more or less fixed and rigid. And this can be seen in some sectarian and fanatical groups. Instead of helping people to integrate the truth of the Christian faith, they imposed it upon others with the aim of proselytization. We are aware of the consequences of this approach. It created seeds of alienation and resentment. Here Gandhi's outlook has relevance. James W. Douglas writes:

Unlike Christianity, which has allowed its belief to become fixed in a narrowing conception of God at the expense of its openness to truth especially as found in its own Gospels, Gandhi felt in no way threatened by an absolute commitment to truth as it opened out to him. . . . God as truth opened him to every aspect of man's search for dignity and meaning.⁷

A minister is not only a pastoral counsellor, nor does he deal only with Christians, but he is also a leader of his community. He interacts with people of all faiths. His ministry cannot be limited to any particular group. In the Indian context, how will he deal with the people of other faiths if he is approached by them for counselling? Should he refuse or accept the responsibility of helping another human being, irrespective of his faith? I think by now I have made it clear that to look upon another person in terms of his religion or denomination is a barrier to the idea of openness to truth. Therefore, a pastoral counsellor cannot refuse help on the ground of one's faith. However, if he feels incompetent, due to lack of skills, he should try to refer the person for necessary help to someone else who is more competent to deal with his problem.

One of the qualities of a good counsellor is that he is aware of the fact that he himself is a growing person. If he feels that he has attained what is to be attained, he is not likely to help another person to grow. Human existence is finite and all knowledge is finite. Therefore, the desire to grow and become aware of genuine truth is a sign of a growing person. Any counsellor who has stopped growing is not fit to carry on his Christian ministry. Even St Paul confesses his lack of the complete knowledge of the Christian faith, and hopes to gain a more clear view as he progresses in his life. We can learn the same quality from Gandhi. He writes:

I am but a seeker after truth. I claim to have found the way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find truth completely

⁷ James Douglas, *The Non-Violent Cross: A Theology of Revolution and Peace*, MacMillan, New York, 1968, p. 37.

is to realize one's self and one's destiny, that is, to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my limitation and therein lies all strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.⁸

Awareness of one's self is essential for a pastoral counsellor. However, it is not merely one's limitations but also strength which one must know. A counsellor who is not aware of his limitations will not be conscious of blocking growth for his counsellee. On the other hand, if he is aware of his own limitations he will be able to overcome them while he is counselling his counsellee. In psychoanalysis, therefore, it is essential for a practitioner to go through the process of self-examination, so that he becomes aware, not only of his limitations, but also of his strength. Anyone who engages in the practice of counselling cannot depend merely on his own status or his experiences, but must constantly engage in self-examination. The Indian tradition of meditation provides a good opportunity for self-examination.

According to Gandhi, no person can become an effective *satyagrahi* without going through a complete self-purification of his motives, prejudices and emotional problems. By self-purification, he means getting rid of any falsehood which interferes in the realisation of one's genuine truth. Self-purification is not merely an awareness of one's weakness and strength, but also an attempt to make appropriate changes in one's attitude and behaviour. The process of self-purification is not once-for-all, but an ongoing process throughout life. It is to be willing to examine oneself, whenever confronted by the truth of another, and to grasp the opportunity of making necessary change. One cannot wait for tomorrow. The counsellor must recognise the significance of 'now'. He cannot afford to postpone a change in his own life. The nature of truth requires that he attend to what is true now. Erikson has put this idea very well. He writes: 'What is true now will, if not attended to, never be true again; and what is untrue now will never, by any trick, become true later.'⁹

Therefore, the pastoral counsellor is a person who is in the process of becoming and is constantly overcoming the force of alienation within his own self. In other words, the counsellor cannot afford to set aside his own personal estrangement and conflicts. He must make efforts to resolve them before he can become an effective counsellor. For example, in the Indian context, a male minister must resolve his conflicts and prejudices regarding the opposite sex, before he can adequately counsel women. A mere intellectual change is not sufficient. The change must take place in his total being. Kemp writes well:

The greater the congruence between the theory he has assimilated and what he really believes about man, the greater is the

⁸ Gandhi, *Young India*, November 19, 1931, cited by Bondurant in *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1958, p. 17.

⁹ E. H. Erikson, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

efficiency to be expected in the counselling process. The therapist's view of human nature does have consequences in his therapy.¹⁰

The responsibility of a counsellor is very great when he takes upon the task of helping another person, who is confused and is seeking a solution to his problem. He cannot exercise his responsibility effectively, unless he recognises the fact that genuine and constructive change cannot be brought about by mere advice or giving words of wisdom. Even great saints of India, such as Buddha, asked their disciples to seek their own salvation. In other words, they must find their own answers and solutions to their unique problems. Christian ministers have to learn this important aspect of their ministry. Gandhi recognised that it is in the nature of truth that one must discover it for himself and must not blindly accept the truth of another. After discovering his own truth, a person can live with his conflicts without confusion. He will be able to find a way out and arrive at a decision, which will help him to become more mature and wise.

2. The Principle of Non-Violence

The Principle of Non-Violence is another of the most important principles of Gandhi's *Satyagraha*. According to Gandhi, non-violence is the means of finding the truth. It is a means of arriving at a decision without doing harm to another person. It is a means of helping another person to discover truth. It is not a technique but an attitude of the person which facilitates the process of self-discovery. Gandhi is so convinced of the need of non-violence in the process of searching for truth, that he affirms the impossibility of arriving at truth without non-violence. He writes:

It is clear . . . that without *ahimsa* it is not possible to seek and find truth. *Ahimsa* and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc.¹¹

In using the concept of non-violence in his method, Gandhi was aware of the dignity of human existence. He was aware that violence of any kind to another person facilitates the process of dehumanisation. It alienates him from his human existence and therefore from human solutions. He fully recognised that potentialities inherent in a person can be actualised only through the method of non-violence.

A pastoral counsellor who does not affirm the dignity of another person as a child of God is likely to use violence in bringing about change. In fact whenever coercion is used in changing another person,

¹⁰ C. G. Kemp, *Intangibles in Counselling*, Houghton Myflin, Boston, 1967, p. 13.

¹¹ M. K. Gandhi, *Non-violent Resistance*, ed. by Bharatan Kumarappa, Schocken, New York, 1972, p. 42.

there is a negation of the concept of the 'Image of God' in man. Each person has his dignity and respect, even in his fallen state. It is the task of the counsellor to help his counsellee build up that dignity. Erikson catches this idea in Gandhi's thought and writes:

With all respect for the traditional translation of *Ahimsa*, I think Gandhi implied in it, besides a refusal to do physical harm, a determination not to violate another person's essence. For even where one may not be able to avoid harming or hurting, forcing or demeaning another whenever one must coerce him, one should try, even in doing so, not to violate his essence, for such violence can only evoke counter-violence, which may end in a kind of truce, but not in truth. For *ahimsa* as acted upon by Gandhi not only means not to hurt another, it means to respect the truth in him.¹²

Gandhi is talking about one of the greatest principles which is essential in therapeutic counselling. To be respected by the counsellor means to be loved. It means that as long as he is respected by the counsellor he remains human. And that is important for growth. Only people who recognise themselves as human beings and are willing to affirm their human existence have the possibility of growth and development. No person who is made an object of manipulation can learn the secret of growth from his counsellor. He may learn only the art of manipulating others. I personally feel that those 'methods' of counselling which over-emphasise techniques contribute to the process of dehumanisation. Such counsellors deal with their counsellees as mere objects. How can a pastoral counsellor love another person who comes to him for help, and not treat him as an object of problems? It is here that the Christian faith can help a pastoral counsellor to develop his capacity for love. He, on his own, because of his finitude, cannot develop love for all. He must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I think Gandhi was well aware of this human weakness, and therefore writes boldly:

It is impossible to have a living faith in non-violence without a living faith in God. No man can practise non-violence without the power of God's grace. Unless he has it he cannot have courage to die without anguish, fear, revenge. And this comes from the belief that God is in every man's heart and that one should have no fear in God's presence. To know the omnipresence of God inspires man with reverence for life, even the life of those we call our enemies.¹³

The strength and power to do counselling does not come because of our knowledge of the principles of counselling or the skills of counselling, although they are necessary. For a pastoral counsellor the real

¹² Erikson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹³ *Harijan*, June 18, 1938, cited by Regamey in *Non-violence and Christian Conscience*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1966, pp. 197-8.

power comes from God. Of course, even with the help of God, our human finitude never allows us to love others completely. It is good to know this or else we are likely to become frustrated in our work and might resort to the methods of violence. Gandhi, out of his own experience, writes: 'It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this point.'¹⁴ The pastoral counsellor is a human being with limitations inherent in his human nature. Gandhi is not proposing a sentimental approach to non-violence, but a pragmatic one. If a pastoral counsellor enters into a counselling relationship with another person, whom he does not like because of certain reasons, it is very important for him to become aware of his limitation. If he is not able to overcome his resentment or hatred for his counsellee, it is better for him to terminate the relationship without violating his integrity, rather than pretending to be doing counselling. The principle of non-violence in the real sense of the word is love. Gandhi said, '*Ahimsa* means love in the sense of St Paul, and much more.'¹⁵ Gandhi's non-violence is based on the affirmation that no man has any right to violate the integrity of another person, because no one is completely righteous and fully able to pass judgement on another. In the traditional approach to pastoral counselling, judgement was used extensively.

The phenomenon of judgementalism, in many a case, arises because of defensiveness. When a man is blind to his own faults, he often falls into the error of projecting his own shortcomings onto others. Such a person or a counsellor lives pretending to be righteous at the cost of others. Such counsellors can never help other people to grow into maturity. On the contrary, they may drive them to further immaturity. Our young people, who are often faced with the problem of judgementalism from the older people, become rebellious and difficult to counsel.

Of course, I do not imply that there is no place for judgement in pastoral counselling. That would be too naive. Judgement finds its place in pastoral counselling only within the framework of love or non-violence.

Judgement could be growth producing only when it conveys a sense of genuine love on the part of the counsellor. In fact when judgement is pronounced, within the context of love, the counsellee appreciates the counsellor. I think it would be correct to say that the method of non-violence is the method which is directed towards the humanisation of man and is completely opposed to any force which dehumanises man.

Gandhi's method of non-violence is very much similar to the divine method of bringing change in human beings. God wants man to change and discover his true destiny, not out of fear, but out of love.

¹⁴ M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi, 1962, Vol. XIII, p. 228.

¹⁵ *Harijan*, March 14, 1936, cited by Miller in *Non-Violence, A Christian Interpretation*, Association Press, New York, 1968, p. 24.

God gives freedom to man to make a decision for his life. Judgement, if it is not out of love, removes such a possibility. I think even in ordinary relationships love is the potent agent of change. A pastoral counsellor cannot afford to ignore this important aspect of counselling. Kemp writes: 'Love has always been considered a strong change agent. Because of the love of another, many a person has changed his outlook on life. Our love for someone provides the conditions in which change in the person loved has the optimum chance of taking place.'¹⁶ The importance of love or non-violence has great significance for the pastoral counsellor because of his faith in God's love. He must translate his belief in God into action. If he wants to be authentic and not a hypocrite, he cannot but appreciate the principle of non-violence in his practice of counselling. He will gain his own integrity and dignity as a human being and will not do anything to violate the dignity and integrity of another person. It is only in this way that he can call his practice of counselling 'religious'. Gandhi not only appreciated this principle, but applied it effectively in all situations and regarded it as the divine way of dealing with others.

Seifert writes:

God does not coerce man with extraneous arbitrary thunderbolts out of the blue. . . God does not compel any man's obedience or love. He provides a framework of conditions within which man acts, a standing ground that guarantees a dependable natural outcome. Within this creation, continuous loving persuasion is the dynamic action of God directed toward winning the assent of man.¹⁷

Now if love or non-violence is so very essential in bringing about spontaneous and self-motivated change, is it possible for all counsellors to practise love? I think that before one can express authentic love, it is essential that one should have a sense of one's identity or individuality. Therefore, no one can love another person unless he has a certain sense of individualisation. It is only those who have a sense of individualisation, who can be confident and have the courage to love another person. In our Indian context where individualisation is lacking, the Indian pastoral counsellor must recognise his limitation in loving another. Because of this serious factor, we must examine carefully the 'communal love' which is supposed to exist in our society. I am of the opinion that what exists as 'communal love' in our society does not produce growth. In fact, it may be a source of violation of human integrity. It may be the barrier for many people to actualise their God-given potentialities. The pastoral counsellor in the Indian context is faced with the problem of his non-individualisation. Is it possible that such a person can facilitate in others the process of becoming? Paul Tillich

¹⁶ Kemp, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

¹⁷ H. Seifert, *Conquest by Suffering*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1965, p. 105.

is aware of this problem when he writes: 'Love is absent where there is no individualisation and love can be fully realised only where there is individualisation in man.'¹⁸

What is the role of a pastoral counsellor in a culture where people have submerged their individual personalities and adopted roles given by the society? I think this is a great challenge for the pastoral counsellor in India. Is he ready to take the risk of making people individuals? But genuine love requires that each person become what he is.

3. *The Principle of Self-Suffering*

Self-suffering is the third principle of Gandhi's *Satyagraha*. According to Gandhi, non-violence is not passive in the sense of not doing any harm to another person, but an active voluntary acceptance of any suffering arising as a result of conflict and confrontation between two or more people. In fact, according to him self-suffering is a part of the process of searching for truth. A person who is searching for truth through the method of non-violence necessarily accepts the possibility of self-suffering. Of course, Gandhi is talking about self-suffering which is a part of love; otherwise it becomes demonic. Miller writes: 'It is not the suffering but the sacrificial act of willing acceptance that makes it spiritually effective, and sacrifice is an act of love.'¹⁹ The pastoral counsellor is faced with the problem of self-suffering in almost every encounter with his counsellees. There is no escape from it. All those who have been engaged in the practice of counselling are fully aware that the counsellee not only brings to the counsellor his problems to be solved, but also his maladjusted ways of relating to other persons. The process of transference, which may take place in short-term or long-term counselling, often involves a certain sense of suffering for the counsellor. If the counsellor is not aware of this process, he may retaliate by his counter-transference. If this happens, there is hardly any possibility of real counselling. On the other hand, if the counsellor is aware of the process of transference, he can accept it within the framework of love. Even where there is no 'classical transference', the counsellee may produce suffering in the counsellor through his acts or even through his lack of growth. The pastoral counsellor has to deal with self-suffering in such a creative way that it becomes redemptive for his counsellee as well as for himself.

To deal with one's self-suffering is not a matter of techniques (although there are many types of counselling which have been developed to avoid this painful process) but a matter of personal existence and personal faith. Gimmicks and tricks are not useful in helping a person to grow. Pastoral counsellors must not adopt some of these 'techniques' developed by some psychotherapists. I think we can

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966, p. 162.

¹⁹ William Robert Miller, *Non-Violence: A Christian Interpretation*, Association Press, New York, 1968, p. 171.

learn a great deal about our own faith as we examine Gandhi's method of *Satyagraha*. Finally, I would like to quote the words of James Douglas:

A faith in truth's power to overcome the world by love and accepted suffering is as essential to an understanding of the Gospel. . . . The renewed presence of such faith, in the non-violence of Gandhi and Vinoba, has begun once again to reveal crucifixion as power.²⁰

I think that the three basic principles of Gandhi's *Satyagraha* provide a framework, within which principles and techniques, as developed in the West, could be integrated after careful consideration. We cannot simply transport the methods of counselling developed in a different culture to our culture. At the same time we cannot reject a method which fulfils the requirements of universal truth.

²⁰ James Douglas, *Non-Violence and the Cross: A Theology of Revolution and Peace*, Macmillan, New York, 1968, p. 18.