



The Christian as Resident Alien in Augustine: An Evaluation from the Standpoint of Pastoral Care

WILLIAM A. SMITH

Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Should the Christian be like everyone else, totally involved in the affairs of this world, totally immersed in its passions and pursuits? Should the aims of the Christian include the search for enjoyment of life, for possessions, for high position and status in society? Or should the Christian strive for something even higher, having some distance and detachment from these other aims and desires without denying their relative value? This is the question that Augustine poses. There are admonitions in Scripture which come to mind, such as that in 1 Peter: "I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul. Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (2:11-12). Here the Christian is characterized as not really being a citizen of this world, but in some way an alien. The Christian is a citizen of another country, a citizen with full right of citizenship there. The writer to the Ephesians says, "So, then, you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus, himself, being the chief cornerstone" (2:19-20).

This attitude, which is strongly developed and emphasized by Augustine, was a basic orientation in the life of the early Christian. Now the question: Is this "resident alien" attitude healthy and wholesome, or would it, in our lives as modern Christians, create more problems and conflicts and lead to psychic sickness? Or is this "resident alien" consciousness rather a very healthy attitude—a healing attitude which could offer great help to a person in recovering from inward conflicts, psychic distortions and sickness, and lead the person to inner "wholeness" (cf. Acts 3:16).

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We shall look to Augustine and ask: How useful or how harmful for our work in pastoral care is this picture of the "resident alien" Christian that he holds up so passionately to admonish, to comfort, and to edify?

I. THE "RESIDENT ALIEN" (*Civitas Peregrina*) MOTIF IN AUGUSTINE

Augustine sees original sin not as a single fact, happening sometime in dim prehistory. It is a psychological reality present in the unconscious and made conscious when one sees its consequences. It is residing in humanity permanently.

The basic attitude of original sin is pride (*superbia*). That is, a corrupt and perverse self-exaltation—an attempt to be above everyone else without regard to the needs of others, to

dominate or manipulate others, even to the point of cruelty. It is the separation from the source of all goodness, that is, from God, and the making of oneself central in life instead of him. “When the soul abandons him to whom it ought to cleave as its end and becomes the highest principle to itself, this makes the soul smaller than it was when it cleaved to God who supremely is, who exists in himself” (*City of God*, XIV:13). Original sin is a permanent tendency in a person to abandon God, either in a crude or subtle form.

Augustine sees that just as pride separates a person from God, so pride also splits the inner life of the individual and pits the person against himself or herself. One’s basest and lowest drives rebel against good common sense and reason. In his penetrating observations in his *Confessions*, he sees numerous examples of the effects of original sin. He looks back on his vain ambition to be a “star” in the theatre of the world. He finds his morbid, hypocritical ambition far worse than his simple craving for sensual pleasures. He looks with great pain also at his irresponsibility in relation to the woman (his concubine) who loved him deeply and bore him a son, and his abandonment of her, as further evidence of this. He observes his arrogance concerning Holy Scripture. The Scriptures seemed to him to be so primitive and incomprehensible. He was looking to the Word of God for some special, exalted wisdom. He sees this attitude, in retrospect, simply as self-deception. He looks back over his life and observes his permanent desertion of his heavenly Father who secretly guided him and who, as he felt, was constantly calling him to be one of his children. In all this, he sees his conversion back to Christianity as along and agonizingly torturous process.

Augustine reflects on how there always was in him resistance to the loving voice of his heavenly Father calling him in Jesus Christ. He thus looks back and sees God’s great mercy as, at times, a very severe mercy (*severa misericordia*). He recognizes that God gives such painful experiences to his children in order to educate them and enable them to grow into becoming real persons. He poignantly recalls how, driven as he was for worldly power and prestige, he was permanently in anxiety over his effort to falsely flatter and fawn over powerful people with whom he could gain favor. He sees himself, overwhelmed by his ambition, based on lying and falsehoods, as far worse off than a drunken tramp he meets on the street in Milan. At least this poor, inebriated wretch is easily satisfied with a few, momentary enjoyments, while he himself is permanently in a state of restless unhappiness.

When Augustine uses the word *superbia*, it is usually translated as “pride.” But the word “pride” is too anemic to get at the full impact of *superbia*. It really means an inordinate arrogance which is an insult to divinity: “for pride is the beginning of every sin, and what is pride but the craving for perverse exaltation?” (*City of God*, XIV:3). Augustine’s word translated as “exaltation” here is *celstudo*, which means an extremely high, lofty position, up into heaven. “It happens when the soul abandons him to whom the soul ought to cling and becomes a kind of end to itself” (ibid.). By this turning to oneself, Augustine contends that the person does not become larger or a more broad-minded or finer person. Rather, this turning to oneself narrows one and shrinks the person inwardly:

To abandon God and to please oneself is not quite to become non-existent, but to approximate that. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures designate the proud by another

name: self-pleasers. The proud ones are those who please themselves. It is good to have the heart lifted up, not towards one's own ego, this would simply be pride. We need to lift our hearts toward the Lord, which is obedience, and at the same time it is humility. (ibid.)

Humility, for Augustine, is symbolized by standing at the foot of a mountain, looking up, and thus appreciating fully its grandeur and height. So humility, as he understands it here, is an appreciation for the higher spiritual values, being uplifted and joyful by such perception. A characteristic of humility is that it lifts up the heart. A characteristic of arrogance is that it drags the heart down. He points out that when the words were spoken to Adam and Eve, "You shall be like gods" (Gen 3:5), they would not have been ensnared into open sin, had they not already begun to please themselves (ibid.).

Alfred Adler finds these words "You shall be like gods," extremely significant. In his *Individual Psychology* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan, 1955), he considers this attitude—the striving to be god-like—as a basic cause of much mental derangement and emotional conflicts. The person with such acute feelings of inferiority combines this with the inordinate striving for superiority—the striving to be powerful, honored; to be dominating. All this exploiting of others makes one highly vulnerable and easily susceptible to psychic wounds. Sooner or later the person feels inwardly deeply wounded. Moreover, this person can wound countless others, can excite individuals to conflicts, and even be the driving force behind terrible mass murders and wars.

The healing power of humility in pastoral care cannot be over-estimated. Leaders in the field of psychotherapy remind us of what genuine honor and respect for the patient or client can mean to the healing process. For example, C. F. Midelfort, the pioneer of family therapy, speaks of how vitally important it is that each member of the family be aware of the therapist's sincere respect for that person, and of what this can mean for the healing process, enabling the family to grow in mutual love and respect. Similar emphasis on the high regard for the patient and on engendering this attitude in the patient toward others as a means of finding healing is referred to in the works of Ludwig Binswanger, Paul Tournier, Viktor Frankl, and others. Augustine maintained that humility is not only the ability to see the greatness of God and cling to him, but at the same time

to see the great value of the other person. In fact, he pointed out that humility inclines one to see the other person as greater than oneself.

Augustine characterizes as a pernicious form of *superbia* the desire to defend oneself in open sin. He sees this in the story of the fall in the self-justification of Adam and Eve. Eve: "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." Adam: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate." Augustine points out that there is not a word of begging for pardon, no word of entreaty for healing. He puts it thus: "Pride seeks to refer its wickedness to another" (*City of God*, XIV:14). Here is inward dishonesty. From our own lives and in the work of ministry, we know very well what inward dishonesty can do to a person, not only psychically but physically as well.

Freud, in his work in psychoanalysis, saw as one of his aims in alleviating neurosis, that of educating the person in the development of inward honesty. His goal was to enable the patient

to admit fully the secret intentions within, in order that the person, as Freud initially hoped, would disclose to the analyst things not shared with anyone else. This way the patient could get free from the destructive influence of these inward dishonesties. Likewise, Max Scheler, a great Christian philosopher of this century, has very rightly emphasized that the confession of sins is apart of the “self-healing” of the soul.

The basic trait in the “resident alien,” as Augustine uses this picture of the Christian, is seeing one’s true citizenship in the invisible City of God and therefore having permanently to fight the tendencies produced by original sin. The more fully the person is aware of himself or herself, the more there is the recognition of the inward energy of original sin as *superbia*, which is self-pleasing and alienation from God. There are two ways to react to this growing distance from him. One is simply to pursue the direction of pleasure, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” (I John 2:16). The other is to go the opposite direction as a “resident alien.” The person who lives with the “resident alien” consciousness sees his or her direction as a straight and ideal way; but, in reality, there are many detours and obstacles. It is filled with all kinds of setbacks. The “resident alien” is conscious of seeking after the things above while yearning for one’s true homeland. On the other hand, the “things below” tempt and distract.

II. THE “RESIDENT ALIEN” MOTIF IN CONTEXT

The concept of the “resident alien” is related systematically to others in Augustine’s thinking. In this section we shall review some of these related concepts which cohere with the “resident alien” concept, since they too are important for drawing out implications for ministry.

A. *The Two Loves.*

Because of the constant struggle against the power of original sin, the soul of the “resident alien” is in permanent tension. There are two powers pulling in two opposite directions. Augustine speaks of them as “two loves.” The two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, are founded by these two loves. The one is love of oneself (characteristic of the earthly city). This love of oneself goes so far

as to disregard God. The other, the heavenly love, on the contrary, goes so far in loving God as to forget oneself. The one glories in oneself. The other glories in God. The one seeks glory from other persons. But the great glory of the other is God who is giving his witness in one’s conscience. The one loves ruling, dominating, and subduing. The other, in contrast, seeks to serve another in love. The one has delight in its own strength. The other has God as its strength (*City of God*, XIV:28). The “resident alien,” according to Augustine, is drawn by this heavenly love, even though following it imperfectly because of all the inordinate ties with the “earthly city.” The more this “resident alien” consciousness develops in the Christian, the less the person is tied to himself or herself in a kind of self-idolatry. Augustine asserted that the more one makes oneself a false god, the more one makes God an enemy. But if one really loves God, one loves those who are loved by God. This means truly seeing God as a God of love and how much one is loved by him. The “resident alien” is conscious of how great God’s love is for him or her and is thus profoundly aware of how much God loves the sinner who is so bound up in the life of the “earthly city.”

Augustine, however, saw a peculiar, very positive type of self-love in this “resident alien” consciousness flowing directly out of love for God. This self-love includes the desire for one’s salvation; the desire to possess goodness of character and to be helpful to one’s neighbor; and the yearning to be near God and to be a citizen in the city of God. “The one who knows that he loves himself loves God. The one who does not love God, even if he loves himself, it can be truly said that he hates himself” (*On the Trinity*, IV:14:18). “We love ourselves the more we love God” (*ibid.*, VIII:8:12). This kind of “intelligent self-love” (*intelligenti amare se ipsum*; *City of God*, X:3) needs to be elicited and strengthened in the process of pastoral care. Frequently, Christians who come to the pastor are so burdened, or even inwardly debilitated, that they will no longer accept the message of God’s unconditional love for them.

B. *Grace and Free Will*

The “resident alien” fights to win freedom from the enslaving power of original sin by the means of the exercise of free will. The gift of God’s grace means the increase of this freedom and always gives hope for a full victory. In spite of speaking sometimes about irresistible grace or about divine transformation of the human will—that is, from being unwilling to willing, from being unbelieving to believing, from being pagan to becoming a Christian—Augustine makes his emphasis on the freedom of the human will even stronger in the later years of his life as a pastor and a bishop. Even when he speaks about “irresistible grace” that rescues the sinner, this is not some kind of mechanical action or crude coercion, but the gift of God’s Spirit working within the person and increasing that person’s freedom and dignity. This experience of irresistible grace was, for Augustine, something like this: At last I am conclusively persuaded by the goodness and greatness of God’s love to follow his leading without hesitation. The stubborn resistance of my egoism and its lusts for power and pleasure are defeated by the insight into God’s great care for me. The way he wants to lead me is the only true direction.

This emphasis on the freedom of will comes out in a treatise that was writ-

ten just a few years before he died, *On Grace and Free Will*. “The Holy Scripture revealed to us that in man there is free will. How this is revealed, I will remind you, is not by human eloquence, but by divine” (11:2). In this treatise Augustine refers to John 15:22; Romans 1:18-20; and James 1:13-15. In the light of these references, he claims that humankind knows God’s will but does not do it and is therefore without excuse. He points out in this treatise that it would have been senseless for God to give orders or commandments, if a person does not have the free will to fulfill them. “Does it mean that there are so many commandments of God which are to be kept and the fulfilling of which God orders? How could God order if there is no free will? Does not God clearly say that by his own free will man can stand in God’s law?” Augustine goes on further, “To live a good life and to do rightly, it is necessary for the person to have a free will. The same can be said about God’s grace without which we cannot do anything really good” (IV:7).

In practical life, freedom of the will usually means either the possibility to choose the goals of my activity, or to choose the ways of action—that is, how to reach these goals. Simple observations from daily life confirm that freedom of the will is present in everyone’s life. On the other hand, this freedom of the will is always limited by outward situations which narrow the

choice or only seem to show one direction. There are other limitations imposed by inward psychic conflicts—compulsions, fears, passions, prejudices, and other psychic sickness that can minimize it.

In view of Augustine's emphasis on the absoluteness and consistent character of God's providence and predestination on the one hand, and on the power of original sin on the other, we would expect from him a full denial of the freedom of the will. Instead, he makes a strong case in favor of it. But how God can determine or "move" our will, or direct it, without limiting our freedom, remains a mystery. Here we can only use the analogy of persuasion when the will is changed, but the decision of changing is free. It comes from within the person.

It turns out that every good act of free will is a gift of God's grace, without which nothing really good is possible. "We have always a free will, but not always a good will. Our will is free from righteousness if it serves sin. It is free from sin if it serves righteousness and then it is good. Grace, however, is always good, and through grace a person of evil will become a person of good will" (XV:31). Augustine's strong affirmation of the freedom of the will is very important in our work of pastoral care. There are many times the pastor must clearly admonish the counselee, calling on that person's ability to make a decision regarding a vital, moral issue, or in regard to upholding a sacred value. Not only in admonishing, but also in the pastor's function of comforting, this awareness of the freedom of the will can be a great ally in enabling the suffering person to survive some grave difficulty. There may be nothing the counselee can do regarding a personal tragedy, but the pastor can still encourage that person to take a stand concerning the kind of attitude he or she will take toward the tragedy. A major chapter in Viktor Frankl's book, *The Will to Meaning* (New York: World, 1939) summarizing his theory of logotherapy, is entitled "Freedom of the Will." This

necessity to hold up before the person in the midst of some overwhelming trial the value of the freedom of the will was also clearly seen by a remarkable pastoral counselor, along with being the greatest of our Lutheran systematicians, Johann Gerhard. This sense of the freedom of the will can help the counselee to feel that the pastor respects him or her as a free, responsible person, and not merely as a bundle of reflexes and instincts or as some kind of machine or object.

C. The Resurrection as "Example" (exemplum) and "Sacrament" (sacramentum)

The "resident alien" lives with a vision of his or her future homecoming to the city of God, as well as having a present experience of that life above, even in that person's daily life on earth. This awareness comes through contemplating two aspects of the resurrection of our Lord.

1. As *example*, Augustine points out that we need to constantly remember that our Lord's resurrection is followed by the resurrection of the believer at the end of time, the resurrection of the dead. He points to the episode when the risen Christ, in speaking to his disciples, called them to "touch and see" (Luke 24:39) as a confirmation of the resurrection of all his believers (*On the Trinity*, IV:3:6).

2. As *sacrament*. Augustine uses this term in a very general sense, as it was used in the Latin New Testament and the early fathers. Sacrament for him means a sacred sign which sanctifies. In this usage it means something concrete and visual which points to some spiritual reality. This refers to an inward resurrection within the believer, the "sacrament of the inner

man” (*sacramentum interioris hominis*) or “sacrament of renewal” (*sacramentum renovationis*). This inward resurrection is possible if the person embraces the divine greatness of the risen Lord and sees him as equal to the Father. In this connection Augustine refers to the words of Jesus to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17, where he says to her, “Do not touch me because I have not yet ascended to the Father.” The “touching” here, Augustine says, is not to be understood in the corporeal sense, but spiritually, “touching” him as ascending to the Father and equal with the Father. Augustine explains this as a vital teaching. The Christian is not to consider Jesus only as a human person, albeit the most noble and sacred, but is to cling to him as the risen and ascended Lord.

This inner, spiritual resurrection starts ever again with the pain of repentance, with the death of the old and the resurrection of the new within. Faith in this risen, ascended Lord, who justifies the sinner, grows in the believer. The believer is daily renewed by this risen Lord himself, being without sin, having died for sinners, who joins the believer in mystical union (ibid. IV:7:11).

The person to whom God gives the gift to live in this “sacrament of resurrection” is a “resident alien” in this world. That person’s “leading motive” in this life is the longing for one’s true home country and for the immediate nearness to God. This longing was active even in those days when the person seemed to be totally dominated by “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life,” and in this way totally alienated from God. If this “heavenly longing” dominates, does this imply that the person has to neglect the duties of this life and to be fully isolated from it? Augustine’s answer is clearly “No!”

D. *Contemplation and Action.*

The believer, conscious of being a “resident alien,” embraces a life of contemplation and action.

Augustine considers it a great thing to contemplate first the whole creation, corporeal and spiritual, visible and invisible, this world and the world to come, and then to contemplate the creator and “learn from God himself” (*City of God*, XIX:19). This does not mean, for him, that the person has visions, hears voices, or necessarily apprehends images or symbols. Rather, it means that the person is in the presence of truth itself and gains new, relevant insights given to the mind. Augustine points out that our minds, if helped by God, can see much more than we anticipate. In some ways the human mind is a vast mystery. He speaks of it as an abyss that can have an uncanny depth of insight (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 41:13). On the other hand, our human reason has suffered all kinds of distortions and, left to itself, it is unable to reach such depths (ibid., 14). Therefore we are often unable to perceive, or even tolerate, the unchangeable light of God’s presence. Our minds must be gradually healed and renewed to be capable of such unspeakable bliss. He says, “The mind needs to be impregnated with faith to be purified” (*City of God*, XI:2).

One way in which Augustine urges contemplation is in focusing on the beauty and harmony of creation—to look at God’s creation for the “traces of the trinity” (*vestigia trinitatis*). He emphasizes the beauty and grandeur of creation as a whole. He enjoys it as an artist, not simply forcing himself to admire it. Spontaneously, hymns of praise erupt within him. Augustine’s concentration on Christ and his resurrection and the glory of all that God has done in

his eternal Son in no way neglects his appreciation of creation. For him, creation is good, nature is good and, as far as the person is nature then, in spite of corruption, that person, as created by God, is good (*City of God*, XI:22). He eloquently describes the beauty of the things in God's creation and the pleasure that this provides for the beholder. In creation he truly sees the goodness of God.

Another direction of contemplation of God for Augustine is through a return to oneself (*intus se ipsum redire*). In his treatise *On the True Religion*, Augustine invites the reader not to go "on the outside" (*foras*), but to enter into oneself, because the truth lives "within the inner person." The next step in this inward movement is as follows: "If you find yourself changeable, transcend yourself and search for God" (XXIX:72). In another treatise, *On the Teacher*, he says, "God is to be looked for and adored in the secret rooms of the human personality, which is called the 'inner man.' There he wills to have his temple" (XXIX:158). Both of these statements indicate a fundamental method for Augustine which is introspection—where he joins interpretive psychology with religious contemplation.

While emphasizing the contemplative life of the "resident alien," Augustine nevertheless sees this as just one part of this experience. It is not the whole. The other side of life for this person is activity: "No one has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own case the service due to his neighbor; nor has anyone a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God. The charm of leisure must not be indolent vacancy of mind, but

the investigation or discovery of truth, that every one may make solid attainments without grudging that others do the same" (*City of God*, XIX:19).

Augustine holds that service to one's country or defense of the republic is an important part of this action. It is not a matter of withdrawal from the world and its duties and values, as far as they are real values. It is an appreciation of worldly values as far as they are not harmful to higher things. The "resident alien" attitude for Augustine gives great purpose to one's present earthly citizenship and earthly duties and values. For him, this attitude promotes psychic health and is a strong antidote against the feeling of being helpless, useless, and as though surrounded by an enemy environment.

This tension between contemplation and action is a fundamental issue in our ministry of pastoral care. We are seeing more "burned out" pastors and lay persons who have been dedicated servants of the church. This dedication has led them to frenetic activity and an inner emptiness where they are almost devoid of a life of prayer and contemplation.

III. IMPLICATIONS

The "resident alien" is a picture of the genuine Christian which Augustine received from Scripture. This "resident alien" consciousness had as its interpreter, for Augustine, not only his mind, but mainly his heart and another mysterious "teacher" within (we might call it the "unconscious") who speaks to him a language without sounds or sensual visions. For him the "teacher" is Christ speaking within. He thus turns away from outside noises and cares and looks to the inner person of the heart to receive the insights given by these kinds of "revelations."

This "way into oneself," and observing what is going on in this process, is usually called

introspection. Augustine, in going this way, is at first overwhelmed by the greatness of God, and only then does he see the smallness and transitoriness of his own existence. This kind of introspection could qualify as the main factor for Augustine in the formation of his “resident alien” consciousness.

From the preceding sketch of Augustine’s psychology of the character of the “resident alien,” it is necessary to address the questions posited at the beginning of this essay: What are the dangers, as well as the benefits, of this attitude for us and for our ministry of pastoral care?

First of all, the dangers. The introspective process can easily lead to a morbid self-scrutiny into what Alfred Adler called neurotic “self-boundedness.” It can lead to an excessive narcissism in which the person can lose the “resident” aspect of this picture of the Christian life and become only “alien” to others and to the immediacy of life. We know that this “me” generation in our culture has been particularly susceptible to such an obsession with the self. This can only lead to what Luther spoke of as *the sin (homo in se incurvatus)*, the person turned in on himself or herself.

What then are the benefits that Augustine found so vital for his own Christian life as a “resident alien” and for his work as a pastor?

Introspection, for him, clearly means the meeting of God in one’s own

soul. It means, at the same time, seeing one’s own person—one’s own interior person—in God’s light. This implies judging oneself with the criteria of Christian morality. But, for Augustine, seeing his interior life before God meant more. In God’s light, we see how much darkness there is within us. We see our pettiness, our self-centeredness, our selfishness, which lead to a consciousness of guilt leaving us inwardly pained and tortured. Confession of the self as sinner before God is thus vital for Augustine, not only for his own inner healing, but in the pastoral care of his people.

In this regard let us look briefly at what Augustine saw in Christian confession by comparing it with early psychoanalysis. In the introspective process of psychoanalysis, the “confession” is made far easier than when one makes confession before a pastor or fellow Christian. The “analysand” knows well that the analyst is very broadminded. The analyst is committed not to be judgmental and to be as permissive as possible in every respect. All popular moral requirements were, in the early era, to be put aside in psychoanalysis. The analysand could speak without restraint about his or her inner life without being fearful of any moral judgment.

In the case of Christian confession, as a result of introspection, Augustine saw himself standing before his own Christian criteria. This is the same today when a person makes confession before a fellow Christian or pastor. We are before the criteria of the Christian to whom we are confessing. The requirements of our Christian values cannot be avoided, no matter how gentle and caring the one who hears our confession may be.

Augustine gave us no “manual” of confession to follow for our ministry of soul care. Instead, he offered us something far greater. He brought his own confession before God and his own people. He confessed openly his sins, clearly showed his selfishness, his vices, the ugliness of his character and his desperate need for inward healing through absolution. Here we see the crucial difference between psychoanalysis and Christian confession in regard to the relief given to the person. The one who makes confession in psychoanalysis gains relief from some

symptoms, as interpreted by the analyst. Freud himself, however, was much more honest at this point. He freely admitted that the insights gained in psychoanalysis did not give as much healing as he initially presupposed. In fact, his analytic theory is really based on some kind of faith, as he himself admits. It is the patient's "belief in the wisdom of the doctor" (*General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* [Garden City: PermaBooks, 1949] 387)—faith in another human person—"faith in the findings of the analyst."

The Christian who makes confession before the pastor does not rely merely on the integrity of the confessor. Rather, the confessor, in Luther's understanding, is "the servant of the sinner" who tries to help the person confessing to disburden his or her heart before God. The declaration of forgiveness offers infinitely more than the relieving of one's symptoms. Our conscience is torturing and convicting us; "our heart condemns us" (1 John 4:20). And it is exactly this condemning heart which cannot be muted by mere rationalizations. The strong, inner condemning voice can only be silenced by trustfully clinging to God's forgiving love because "God is greater than the heart."

Another fruit of Augustine's way of introspection which also has implica-

tions for our ministry of soul care has to do with the so-called "healing of the memories." Many members of our congregations live with painful traumatic, sometimes devastating memories that prevent them from truly hearing the gospel of God's forgiving love. These "dark continents of the soul" need to be evangelized. Augustine had many painful memories. But he found something else as he went back to those memories. It was the clear consciousness of God's guidance. Returning to those memories, he recognized that those painful anguished times in his life were a part of God's "severe mercy" (*severa misericordia*), of God's loving care. He saw that God was guiding him, even in those times when he was deserting God.

Memories, for Augustine, have special import. One's memory is not outside the person as a special psychic function, as if the memory were independent from the individual. For Augustine, my memory is "I myself." In the process of introspection, he would travel through his past. But the painful, cutting edges of these past memories were removed by God, whom he now feels as companion in his travel.

The central benefit in this introspective process for Augustine was his "seeing" the deep, passionate love for God hidden within himself as a "resident alien." It was his perception that he would not really find his rest, his true home, his true destiny, until he could rest in God. This highest, most sublime love for God within him did not imply that such a love swallowed up all his other lesser loves. Rather, he saw all of these other loves—love of one's betrothed, love of spouse, family, friends; love of beauty, art, music, nature—as flowing out of this love for God. He asks God, as a "resident alien," to order in him all these loves (*ordinate in me caritatem*).

How can this love for God find expression? In Augustine's psychology the question is solved this way: You can love God by loving your neighbor, that sister or brother who is somehow linked to your life and destiny. By loving one's neighbor, one loves "love itself"—because love is of God. When I love another, the love that I experience for that other is closer to me than that person. Thus I see that the love I experience within me in my love for my neighbor witnesses to God's love within me.

The person who provides pastoral care sees numerous depressed and mentally disturbed

people in her or his ministry. These persons are often filled with self-hatred and self-loathing, with a pervasive sense of worthlessness. Whenever these persons can somehow be guided into loving and caring for another, there is great potential for healing and recovery. This is a form of “intelligent self-love” that can be encouraged in our ministry of pastoral care. It is not only a way of evangelizing the sufferer, but away of building up the congregation as a truly healing community.