

# The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Instructions on Chemical Dependency: A Model of Practical Theology

Oliver J. Morgan

**ABSTRACT.** This article examines the pastoral stance and theology of the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops regarding chemical abuse and dependency. Comparison with both "classic" pastoral methods (Vatican II) and more contemporary methodologies (Browning) suggests that the bishops have used a dialogic paradigm in confronting this current pastoral problem. The paradigm utilizes insights from a variety of Christian sources including bible, tradition, and discerned pastoral experience, as well as open and collaborative exploration of solutions with other concerned caregivers. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: [getinfo@haworth.com](mailto:getinfo@haworth.com)]*

Since 1981 a number of important pastoral instructions have been issued by individual U.S. Catholic bishops and several state bishops' conferences on the issue of chemical dependency and abuse. These writings culminated in the 1990 document from the U.S. bishops, "New Slavery, New Freedom: A Pastoral Message on Substance Abuse."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, these instructions have not received the attention they deserve.

These are more than caring, compassionate documents with a practical concern. In these instructions the bishops face an important contemporary

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Oliver J. Morgan, SJ, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Counseling and Human Services at the University of Scranton, Scranton, PA. He also serves at the University of Scranton's Counseling Center and as a clinical consultant to St. Pius X Seminary, Dalton, PA. A graduate in Pastoral Psychology from Boston University, he has a long-standing interest in issues of chemical abuse and dependency.

Address correspondence to: Oliver J. Morgan, SJ, PhD, Department of Counseling and Human Services, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510.

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issue and in doing so exemplify a model of practical theological thinking. In these days when Catholic thought is coming to terms with the exact nature of "practical" theology and the extent to which practical concerns and concrete action are integral to theological methodology, these documents present a timely and useful area of study.

Pastoral instructions that specifically address the topic of chemical abuse or dependency will be the focus of this article.<sup>2</sup> We will focus both on the *content* of these instructions and on the practical theological *approach* that the bishops employ in formulating their instructions.

How have the bishops addressed the issues of abuse and dependency? How do they see themselves and their pastoral role vis-à-vis this "situation" that confronts Christian life and ministry? What actions do they recommend? How do they arrive at their recommendations?

These instructions are called "pastoral." What is implied by this term? For example, does the term mean something as simple as "documents from pastors"? Are they documents that are moving toward some solution to a concrete "pastoral" issue? Are they examples of a kind of "pastoral reasoning," or do they employ a specific kind of analysis that is appropriate to the field of "pastoral theology"? In that case, then, how are these documents "theology" as well as "pastoral"? These are not small or unimportant questions. They touch on contemporary discussions about the nature of theology and the specific role of a pastoral, or "practical" theology.<sup>3</sup>

The bishops utilize a practice-theory-practice, fully dialogic paradigm of practical theological thinking.<sup>4</sup> This way of proceeding is a creative and judicious use of pastoral responsibility in the contemporary world and is a model for practical theological thinking and action today.

The bishops provide a powerful *description* of a particular "situation" that the church confronts in its ministry, namely chemical dependency. They adopt a pastoral stance toward this situation (caring and prophetic solidarity) and then elaborate a *critical approach*, using the resources of Scripture, tradition and gospel values to aid in a pastoral "diagnosis" of the problem, while maintaining dialogue with more secular ways of understanding. In this way mutually informing and open dialogue between Christian and secular sources shapes a *strategic pastoral response*. We will explore this approach in some detail.

#### *GAUDIUM ET SPES: A MODEL FOR "PRACTICAL" THEOLOGY*

Within Catholic circles the discussion regarding practical theology may have received its impetus with the promulgation of *Gaudium et Spes* ("Joy

and Hope"), the church's first "pastoral constitution."<sup>5</sup> Rahner pointed out that something "new and unique" had occurred in the issuing of a "pastoral" constitution.<sup>6</sup> He believed that the Council, in its concern "to throw light upon the concrete contemporary situation in which the world, the Church and the individual Christian live and have to accomplish their tasks," had embarked upon a new way of acting pastorally and of thinking theologically.<sup>7</sup> The church, he believed, was accepting its need to use knowledge and the methods of gaining it that are the province of scholars and others both within and outside the church. Resorting exclusively to biblical or theological sources would no longer suffice in facing the contemporary situation. However, the constitution itself lacked a clear and explicit consideration of this unique element, as well as of the precisely "pastoral" nature of its intention.<sup>8</sup>

Rahner elaborated several elements that he believed to be involved in this new "pastoral" (or "practical") approach.<sup>9</sup> first, it would incorporate a description of the "situation" of human society, faith and ministry; second, it would not be confined to the work of clergy or the cure of souls, but would be fully modern, a "reflection on the special nature of our own times";<sup>10</sup> third, it would describe "in a specifically theological way" the concrete situation and a strategy for the church "with the help of secular sciences."<sup>11</sup> In Rahner's view this secular-theological analysis of the contemporary situation "radically distinguishes pastoral theology" from other branches, for example, ecclesiology or canon law.<sup>12</sup>

Several authors have noted the impact of this approach on pastoral letters from the U.S. bishops on topics of peace and the economy. Gelpi<sup>13</sup> outlines a model of "instrumental" theological thinking in the bishops' letters that (a) identifies the "situation" as a direct challenge to Christian or fully human living, (b) gathers information in public fashion and names the problems accurately, (c) identifies resources within Christian faith that might contribute to resolution of the problems, and (d) moves toward practical policies and concrete strategies that embody these solutions.<sup>14</sup> Dulles<sup>15</sup> depicts the pastorals and their public methodology (e.g., use of hearings and consultations) as examples of a "secular-dialogic" model of theology recommended by Vatican II.<sup>16</sup> Magill,<sup>17</sup> in discussing the bishops' economic pastoral, believes that this way of proceeding sketches "the contours of an exciting terrain for religious dialogue in the public arena."

Perhaps the Council came closest to naming this new method in the phrase "reading the signs of the times." In a study of *Gaudium et Spes*, entitled *The "Signs of the Times" as Word of God*, Cernera<sup>18</sup> argues that the constitution consciously provided Catholic theology with a new starting point. Although the document never fully delineated what was meant

by "signs of the times," these came to be understood as phenomena occurring so frequently and so pervasively that they characterize a given age and seem to express the needs and aspirations of contemporary humanity. Discerning their meaning and import opens a new relationship between the Church and the world, and sets the context for contemporary Christian ministry.

In reading the "signs" of their own time, the condition of humanity as they saw it in 1964, the Vatican II bishops began with a stance of solidarity with "the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men [sic] of this age; especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted" (GS 1, 3). The Church's presence and immersion in the world raises questions that must be brought to critical dialogue with Gospel values and Christian sources (GS 4) as well as with the sciences and understandings of others (GS 44, 52). Thus, the model begins in solidarity and proceeds through mutually informing and shaping dialogue about questions raised from within pastoral ministry and presence.

Their reading of those "signs" convinced the Vatican II bishops that there was a need to address a fundamental question, namely, what does it mean to be human (GS 12)? Through critical dialogue with scripture, tradition, ecumenical conversation, and the human sciences they proposed a powerful theological anthropology, a "theology of human existence."<sup>19</sup> The bishops grounded this theology in the creation of humans "in the image of God" (GS 12).<sup>20</sup> This potent statement of faith about the creation of women and men affirms the dignity of every person. God's creative love is the source of inestimable dignity for every person shaped in God's image and likeness. So, too, is human dignity rooted in a call to "communion" with God (GS 19, 21), best expressed in "authentic freedom" (GS 17), and nourished in "companionship" (GS 12) and "community" (GS 32).<sup>21</sup> With this more deeply articulated vision of humanity, the conciliar bishops address the role of the Church in the modern world. *Gaudium et Spes* is the first conciliar document to address this relationship explicitly.

The bishops affirm that the Church has the responsibility of "scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (GS 4). This was a significant departure from previous models of conceptualizing theology and pastoral mission.<sup>22</sup>

Cernera notes that *Gaudium et Spes* envisions a hermeneutic model of mutually critical dialogue as integral to its method. Not only does the Church have something to say about human problems, through its reading of the "signs of the times" and the questions it brings into dialogue with the Gospel. The Church also has something to learn in the dialogue.<sup>23</sup> The Church must adopt a listening stance, ready to have its understanding and

response shaped by the wisdom and knowledge of others as well as its own. The very questions raised in reading the "signs of the times" may clarify the contemporary meaning of the Gospel (GS 40, 44, 62).

Cernera summarizes the major methodological changes proposed by *Gaudium et Spes* this way:

Subsequent Catholic theology would recognize in the methodology of *Gaudium et Spes* a call to undertake the theological enterprise with a new point of departure, namely, the epoch making events of the times, searching in these events for the presence and activity of God. Implicit in this new methodology was a call to enter into dialogue with and to learn from the social sciences, the questions and aspirations of the age, and the activities of Christians in the world. This would have profound effects for Catholic theology in the post Vatican II era, implications which have not yet been articulated fully.<sup>24</sup>

#### THE U.S. BISHOPS AND CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

In *Gaudium et Spes* Vatican II provided Catholic theology with a new starting point in the "signs of the times," that is, in discerning the meaning of phenomena that characterize an age and express important needs and aspirations of humanity. These "signs" can be either positive or negative. The U.S. bishops approach the issue of chemical abuse and dependency as one such "sign."

The bishops have incorporated the methodology (reading the signs of the times in open critical dialogue with Christian and other sources), as well as some of the essential themes (e.g., human dignity) from *Gaudium et Spes* into their pastoral approach to issues such as peace and the economy. A similar approach can be discerned in their pastoral instructions on dependency and abuse, highlighting elements that are needed in a contemporary practical theology. A review of the documents will allow us to see this in more detail.

We will review five instructions that have been published in *Origins*: Two pastoral letters from individual bishops,<sup>25</sup> two statements by state bishops' conferences<sup>26</sup> and the 1990 pastoral statement of the U.S. Bishops' Conference.<sup>27</sup>

The format for analysis will address three "moments" in a functioning model of practical theology.<sup>28</sup> First, we will examine the bishops' *description of the situation*. The task of practical theology is to reflect on questions that arise from pastoral practice within concrete situations of faith

and life. We will look at the bishops' descriptions of chemical abuse and dependency through their use of metaphor and pastoral analysis, and we will pay attention to their sense of personal involvement or "stance" regarding this situation. Description of situation and stance can reveal what questions to bring to deeper inquiry.

Next, the "moment" of descriptive theology leads to *critical reflection*, using multiple sources as tools for listening accurately to pastorally-based questions. This second "moment" allows for engagement between the situation as described and the sources to be used for deeper understanding, Christian as well as other sources. Through a mutually informing engagement between sources and situation, the goal is a clearer grasp of the nature of the situation (a pastoral "diagnosis"), deeper understanding of the meaning and implications of the questions and challenges that arise, and better guidance for pastoral practice.

This leads to the third, *strategic* "moment" of practical theology. Here the pastoral investigator/actor communicates the fruit of theological reflection and dialogue, recommending action within the church and in the world.

### *Description of the "Situation"*

In the five pastoral instructions to be reviewed the bishops are practicing a form of descriptive theology.<sup>29</sup> The bishops engage in the task of description using information, statistics, and interpretive formulas from the social sciences. They make a serious effort to describe the situation of chemical abuse and dependency with accuracy, often through consultation with pastors and other experts. Not infrequently, they explicitly acknowledge the contributions of these consultants. However, while their instructions contain up-to-date social science information, the bishops do not stop at this level of description.

The bishops add their own faith-based formulations to this wealth of data, using metaphors that are both more theologically and biblically sensitive. They also forthrightly stand in solidarity alongside addicts and others affected by addiction (e.g., family members). Their descriptions and pastoral stance interpret the reality of abuse and addiction "from the inside."

### *Metaphors for Abuse/Addiction*

In individual instructions Archbishops McCarthy and Hickey describe addiction as a "disease," a "web of human tragedy" that is "sadly perva-

sive." McCarthy likens it to a "scourge" and a "serious cause of the grave problems of our community" (p. 62). Hickey utilizes two themes that continually recur in pastoral documents, describing addiction as (a) a "terrible slavery" (p. 80), a "sinister entrapment of body and soul" (p. 79) and (b) a form of "escape" (p. 79).

The metaphors of "slavery" and "escape" pick up earlier usage by the New Jersey bishops in their 1988 statement on addiction, "Called to Live in Freedom." These metaphors appear to capture the pastoral view of a number of bishops and, as we shall see, shape the ongoing pastoral diagnosis of the situation. The New Jersey bishops contribute a third theme as well, describing abuse and addiction as "a dehumanizing pattern of living" (p. 95). The New York bishops a year later develop the theme of "disease," highlighting the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of this descriptive metaphor (p. 269), while presenting a sophisticated theological vision within which a Christian response to addiction may be seen (p. 268-269). We will look at this vision later.

The pastoral statement of the full national conference of U.S. bishops, "New Slavery, New Freedom," benefits from these developments. It picks up the themes of "slavery" and "disease," while focusing on the more personal devastation and tragic costs of this "modern darkness." The bishops focus on addiction as a "direct assault on the dignity of the human person" (p. 392) and a "perversion of God's creative plan" (p. 392). Here the earlier theme of "dehumanization," that is, the costs to personhood and dignity, takes center stage while muting efforts to speak about causes of addiction, as several bishops had tried to do by reference to the metaphor of "escape."

Thus, four metaphors assert themselves in the bishops' pastoral instructions as descriptions of abuse/addiction: (1) slavery, (2) escape, (3) disease, and (4) dehumanization, a "perversion" of God's creative plan for persons created with human dignity.

### *Pastoral Stance*

Each of the bishops' instructions—individually, as state conferences, and as a national conference—contains strong statements of empathy and solidarity with addicts and affected others. McCarthy's 1981 pastoral letter, written not long after an outbreak of rioting and violence in South Florida, places him squarely in the midst of that area's struggles with racism, drugs, and crime.<sup>30</sup> Hickey addresses the Archdiocese of Washington in a highly personal pastoral letter, as "a concerned pastor who has felt the pain" of addiction and its effects (p. 78). Addicts and affected others are, he says, "our sisters and brothers, part of the family of Washington" (p. 79). He states, "we cannot

stand by as our children, our neighbors and communities are overtaken by a new slavery to drugs and alcohol abuse and the hopelessness, fear and violence that often come with them" (p. 78).

The bishops of New Jersey refer to those affected as "our neighbors, parishioners, and co-workers" (p. 95). They insist that "no individual, no family and no church is exempt from the potential harm" of addiction (p. 94). Likewise, the New York bishops speak of "a problem of epidemic proportions which affects every family, parish and community in New York state."<sup>31</sup>

The national conference's pastoral message highlights this stance of solidarity by beginning their statement with personal testimony from David, one of those consulted in open community forums and hearings (pp. 390-391). After a lengthy quote from David's testimony about the ravages of addiction, the bishops state: "There are many Davids in our midst, people recovering from drug and alcohol abuse whose daily courage is a sign of the power of God's healing presence to all of us" (p. 391).

The national bishops' statement contains no less than ten direct appeals to solidarity with addicts and affected others. They remind their readers that "the lives and dignity of so many in our family of faith are being undermined or threatened by the abuse of alcohol and other drugs" (p. 391), and they describe addiction as "a reality in the lives of many members of our own church, clergy and laity alike" (p. 391). Facing the challenge contained within a pastoral stance of solidarity, the bishops state:

We who have experienced the tender compassion of a loving God should graciously share it with others wounded by dependency and addiction. . . . The church is called to serve, to reach out, to help rebuild lives and to support individuals, families and communities in the fight against the slavery of drug and alcohol abuse. . . . Let us together extend the healing hand of Christ to one another and to all those suffering from substance abuse in our midst. (p. 393-394)

### Summary

In the five documents we have reviewed the bishops situate themselves in solidarity with addicts and affected others, as caring interpreters of the contemporary "situation" of chemical abuse and dependency. This is a prophetic pastoral role. Through metaphors of "slavery" and "disease" they highlight the nature of addiction as they see it. In speaking of "escape" some bishops highlight a potential cause of addiction. References to

"human dignity" and "dehumanization" touch on a more theological theme of God's creative and redemptive intention for persons.

These descriptions initiate the second "moment" of a model for practical theology.

### Critical Reflection

Each of the five documents takes a unique approach to the issue of chemical abuse/addiction, yet utilizes similar themes. The "uniqueness" comes from each instruction's reading of the gospel challenge, understanding of the role of Christians and church in the world, and rationale for church intervention and action. These aspects of practical theological thinking arise from a confrontation between the description of the situation and mutually informing dialogue with Christian and other sources.<sup>32</sup> After reviewing each bishop's pastoral diagnosis, we will examine linkages with a more contemporary theological source, namely themes from instructions by Pope John Paul II.

### Archbishop McCarthy (1981)

McCarthy frames his pastoral letter explicitly as a reading of the "signs of the times" in South Florida. It is concretely focused on the needs of his archdiocese and reflects on "the unsettled conditions of our times" (p. 55). It is in this context that he presents reflections to his people: "In these critical times, we members of the church need to reflect profoundly on who we are and what is expected of us" (p. 56). At the end he reminds readers that he has "attempted to enumerate the principal evils confronting South Florida in our time . . ." (p. 63).

The church, the people of God in South Florida, have responsibilities to address the times in which they live. They can have "an enormous impact" on their communities and can "make a special contribution"; they are "called to be the transforming presence of Christ in our society" (p. 56). Why?

Under the lordship of Christ, our love reaches out to others simply because they are human persons, children of God. . . . The church is the sign and the safeguard of the transcendence of every human person [who is] first and foremost an eternal utterance of God in love and freedom, a creature whose humanity has reached its fullest meaning and reality in the incarnate humanity of Jesus Christ. (p. 56)

What is needed, the archbishop says, are efforts to "renew our troubled communities by enriching them through living out the gospel values" (p. 56).

He then proceeds to list a number of "special concerns": youth, family life, schools, criminal justice system, drugs, poverty, unemployment and poor housing (pp. 58-59). Speaking of youth, he says that: "Often they are frustrated and hurting, troubled by a poor self-image as they grow up in a complex, torn society where there is a high suicide rate among youth, a tendency to find escape in drugs and alcohol" (p. 59). Drugs are a "scourge," McCarthy states (p. 62).

Drug users lose their inhibitions and good judgment and engage in conduct quite contrary to the standards of human behavior . . . Drug users are victims of peer pressure. They are exploited by the greed of those who commercialize the vice. . . . The people of God cannot be indifferent to this menace to themselves, their fellow citizens and to society. (p. 62)

What is his pastoral diagnosis regarding causes? There has been a decline in the "critically needed spirit of brotherhood and respect for law" due to a weakening of faith and the rise of worldliness and selfish materialism (p. 57). "Frequently the problems are the results of the serious failure of our society to live out gospel values" (p. 58).

Clearly Archbishop McCarthy's pastoral diagnosis of the situation confronting South Florida includes the facts of racism, crime, violence, and drugs. Yet, he has gone beyond describing this "situation" and his stance within it, to a more critical reading of these facts within a context of (a) gospel demands, (b) human dignity, rooted in creation by God in love and in the "incarnate humanity" of Jesus, and (c) a sense of the role of the church in society, viz., to be a "transforming presence." Through a process of description and critical reflection—that is, writing as pastor and practical theologian—he has articulated a vision that includes this present situation of faith and a sense of Christian responsibility for meeting that situation. His description and diagnosis are shaped through critical dialogue among a variety of sources.

#### *Archbishop Hickey (1989)*

Hickey reminds his readers that "our" community is wounded by a crisis; the lives and dignity of "brothers and sisters" are undermined and threatened by abuse. In the face of this crisis, Christians have a responsibility: "We are called to defend the lives and dignity of our sisters and brothers and to build communities of true caring and justice . . . we cannot stand by" (p. 78).

Hickey suggests his sense of a root cause for the problems that plague

his archdiocese, namely, that many seek relief from the burdens of life through "escape" into abuse (p. 79). Some seek to escape the pain of daily living, others seek momentary pleasure. Yet, dependency gives only false hope and ultimately bondage, a "sinister entrapment of body and soul" (p. 79). As the title of the document indicates, this "slavery" is his major focus throughout.

In standing up against substance abuse, Christians and others stand up for human life (p. 80). This must be an effort of true collaboration, working with other concerned persons in the religious community, leaders of human services and educational groups and officials of government. "We are in this together," Hickey states (p. 80).

He ends this moving pastoral letter, tying together the demands of love from both testaments of scripture:

Finally, let us take heart and direction from the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor. . . ."

Jesus read these words in Nazareth, and they describe our mission today. Here in Washington, in the midst of crisis and heartache, of loss and fear, we are called to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts broken by the tragedy of substance abuse and bring liberty to those imprisoned by drugs and alcohol. In so doing, we follow in the footsteps of the prophets of old and of Jesus, who came to bring us life in all its fullness. Together let us be the courageous voice of the prophet to all those who can help us rid our community of this terrible slavery of drug and alcohol abuse; and let us bring to all who suffer from substance abuse the healing hand of Christ. (p. 80)

Hickey's "voice" in this document is very personal and moving. He clearly speaks as one "from the inside," and his words have power on that account. The vision and sense of obligation he articulates for his readers is also informed by a pastoral reading of scripture and the gospel's demands, as well as the sense of human dignity. This blend of pastoral experience along with scriptural and theological reflection shapes his diagnosis of the situation and suggestions for concrete action.

#### *New Jersey Bishops (1988)*

The New Jersey bishops highlight the theme of human dignity from the very beginning of their letter. Quoting from John Paul II, they affirm each person's

. . . right to a dignified existence, one in harmony with one's condition as an intelligent and free being. This right, viewed in the light of revelation, takes on an unsuspected dimension: Christ . . . freed us from the radical slavery of sin so that we could have full freedom . . . we must fight decisively against new forms of slavery. (p. 94)

Then, they assert that "our freedom is being threatened every day by drug and alcohol abuse" (p. 94). No one is exempt.

The bishops emphasize a theology of creation/redemption as their background for addressing abuse and addiction:

Since the dawn of human existence, our Creator has reached out lovingly to us with open arms, inviting us to appreciate our innate goodness and to participate in the continuing act of creation. . . . we are called to grow and mature in a movement that is harmonious with nature and congruous with grace. . . . His death and resurrection establish a new covenant, which provides us with the freedom necessary to live and grow in accordance with our human potential and God's loving plan. (p. 94)

Next, after stating that growth can be stressful and involves effort and pain, the bishops move toward a by-now familiar diagnosis of "escape":

. . . people are sometimes drawn by a promise of instant relief or the pleasurable escape offered by the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The result is an experience of disengagement from the natural process of living. Hoping that these chemicals will permanently relieve painful feelings or provide artificial happiness, people find that the effects of the substance are not the answer. . . . The addict then becomes trapped in a dehumanizing pattern of living which affects his or her total being. . . . Physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual health are all violently interrupted and the person ceases to thrive. This inhibits the addict from responding to the fullness of life and love to which God has called each of us. (pp. 94-95)

The bishops explicitly touch on themes of collaboration, use of secular as well as theological sources of understanding, and affirmation of practical efforts already underway. In these ways, they believe, they are able to serve in solidarity with others and be true to the nature of the church:

. . . we are not alone in our concerns. We urge and support cooperative efforts among all churches and secular groups. Our role as church is not to duplicate or replace, but to enhance and enrich existing services. We have the tools to offer support for people who are experiencing pain in the growing process of life . . . [our] focus on the spiritual growth of each person enables us to live out our faith. (p. 95)

#### *New York Bishops (1989)*

The pastoral document issued by the New York bishops is entitled a "policy statement on the care and treatment of those suffering from the consequences of the abuse of alcohol and other drugs."<sup>33</sup> It strikes both a clear pastoral theological tone and stance, while espousing a contemporary holistic understanding of the nature of this problem.

The New York bishops assert from the outset that the Good News provides a "clearer vision of the human condition" and helps the believer to see the limitations of human experiences through the eyes of faith (p. 268). In particular, followers of Jesus, "the great healer" (p. 269), through recognition of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus and understanding of the Gospel of conversion, believe (a) that human suffering has ultimate redemptive value, (b) that there is always the possibility for rehabilitation, (c) that the human body is due respect and care as created by God and destined for glory, and (d) that they, as followers, are challenged to respond to each other's needs as Jesus did. Living these principles within the present context, the bishops say, Christians "are called to discern the suffering and vulnerabilities of each other and to respond as Jesus would" (p. 269). For them, "those who abuse alcohol and other drugs are persons who suffer greatly" and therefore are "persons to whom we must respond," as are the "families and significant others affected by those who abuse alcohol and other drugs" (p. 269).

Beginning with self-examination, Christians are "called to discern [and] respond" (p. 270). This response will involve close working relationships with a variety of concerned others, secular and religious (p. 270). This letter is the most detailed in its recommendations, and is accompanied by an "action guide" for further work at various levels (e.g., parish, family, school, etc.).<sup>34</sup>

In discussing the various dimensions of this problem, the bishops review the history of various models of addiction/abuse that have led to the currently accepted view. Previous perspectives saw addiction either as a

"lack of will power and moral fiber" or as an entirely medical problem (p. 269). The more modern, holistic view acknowledges and tries to integrate the biological, social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the problem (p. 269). In addition, the New York bishops highlight the role of Christians in discerning human suffering in the "times" in which they live, and responding as Jesus would. This is a challenge of discipleship and involves collaboration with others.

The New York bishops use social science data and interpretive frames with ease, while subordinating them to a lively sense of Christian discernment, vision, and responsible action.

### *U.S. Bishops (1990)*

The national conference of U.S. bishops strikes familiar themes, seeing many in "our" midst whose lives and dignity are being undermined or threatened by the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (p. 391). This is a nationwide problem, the bishops state, and the Catholic community must demonstrate Christ's own love by opening its arms and hearts and by advocating for public action to turn the tide (p. 391).

As pastors, the bishops state that they feel the pain and know the suffering of addicts and affected others (p. 391). Chemical dependency is a reality in the lives of many members of the church, clergy and lay. It tears at the fabric of family and community, and of the faith community as well (p. 393). The church is called to serve, to reach out, to help rebuild lives (p. 394).

The bishops insist that understanding involves looking at the "harsh realities of addiction"—as a people of faith, who can recognize the struggle of slavery and freedom in the evil that enslaves and the love of Christ; as people of hope, who look for "transformation" in the midst of the "darkness" of abuse and addiction; and as a people of love, willing to confront addiction wherever it is found and to extend the hand of healing (p. 391). Within this faith context, the bishops use a significant amount of social science data regarding the "casualties," patterns, and "costs" of abuse and addiction; later they use medical data on serious problems addicts face (pp. 391-392).

Chemical dependency is a "direct assault on the dignity of the human person" (p. 392). It is a "perversion of God's creative plan for us," since persons are created in God's own image and are intended to share in love, freedom, and happiness (p. 392). The "spiritual symptoms" of abuse and addiction "reveal most poignantly the human devastation from chemical dependency" (p. 392). For the bishops, these symptoms include: an inca-

capacity for "mature love," an experience of reality devoid of a caring God and dominated by evil, lying, blaming, reduced self-worth, hopelessness, alienation, and "spiritual starvation." The condition of those thus enslaved "cries out for others to recognize the problem and intervene" (p. 392).

The U.S. bishops present their understanding of addiction through the medium of a publicly informed and collaborative pastoral letter that stresses themes of human dignity, family, community, and the role of Christians in action on behalf of addicts and affected others. "Our stand against substance abuse is a stand for human life and dignity" (p. 392). They have culled themes and metaphors from previous instructions and formulated a fully pastoral diagnosis of the situation as well as practical recommendations for concrete pastoral action.

### *Summary*

The fruit of critical reflection on the situation of abuse and dependency is a guiding vision and sense of obligation.<sup>35</sup>

While at first it may seem odd, there is a logic that ties the bishops' use of social science data, public hearings, task forces, explanatory models of "disease," and pastoral experience into their diagnosis of "slavery" and "escape," the challenge of human dignity, and the call to serve those who are afflicted. It is the logic of discernment and pastoral reflection, or "reading the signs of the times."

As the bishops bring their descriptions of the "situation" of chemical abuse and dependency into critical dialogue with scriptural, conciliar, and theological sources, they utilize narratives of creation and redemption in Christ to focus a theology of human dignity on the problem of dependency and abuse. Here they find a vision that gives deeper meaning to the suffering they see "from the inside" and they discover a mission in the service of afflicted brothers and sisters. The "moment" of critical reflection leads to deeper meaning and a call to action that is shaped by who the church is, as "followers of Christ." As the New York bishops state, Christians "are called to discern the suffering and vulnerabilities of each other and to respond as Jesus would" (p. 269).

### *A Further Resource*

It may be important to note here another resource used by the bishops in their discerning critical dialogue with pastoral and theological sources of meaning.

The four metaphors used by the bishops in their *description of the situation* of chemical abuse and dependency echo metaphors from the pastoral stance and "diagnosis" of John Paul II. This pontiff has frequently and passionately addressed the issue of abuse/addiction, often in language reminiscent of reading "the signs of the times":

Among today's tense threats against the young, and against society as a whole, drugs are placed first as a danger all the more insidious as it is less visible, and not yet adequately valued according to the full extent of its gravity.<sup>36</sup>

Each of the salient metaphors used by the U.S. bishops to describe addiction has been used by John Paul: "disease,"<sup>37</sup> "slavery,"<sup>38</sup> "escape."<sup>39</sup> The Pope regularly uses an intriguing biblical metaphor to describe his "diagnosis" of the situation of addiction; he refers to the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke's gospel,<sup>40</sup> highlighting a view of addicts as victims who are "robbed of the most precious values, profoundly wounded in body and in spirit, violated in the depth of their consciences and offended in their dignity as persons."<sup>41</sup>

Whenever he addresses the issue of chemical abuse and dependency, the Pope most often stresses the pastoral theme of "human dignity"—its roots in the creative love of God, its diminishment by abuse of chemicals, its power as motivation for Christian solidarity with, and service of, addicts and affected others.<sup>42</sup> In this way Pope John Paul and the U.S. bishops are in harmony with the guiding theme of *Gaudium et Spes* in reading this particular "sign" of the times, namely, chemical abuse and addiction.

Use of biblical metaphors and similar themes, theological and secular, between pope and bishops, particularly as they highlight more theological interpretations of a contemporary situation that confronts the church and its ministry, illustrates the second "moment" of practical theology: critical reflection on pastoral experience through confrontation with varied sources of interpretation.

### *Strategic Pastoral Action*

The five pastoral documents under review make wide-ranging recommendations and initiate a variety of pastoral actions.<sup>43</sup> We will not review every recommendation, since our goal is to understand the basic content and theological approach of the bishops in these documents. However, we will focus on four topics that permeate the bishops' more specific recom-

mendations: (1) education and family, (2) public policy, (3) collaboration and consultation, and (4) discernment and prayerful awareness.

### *Education and the Family*

The bishops make a variety of concrete recommendations to supplement activities already occurring at the diocesan and parish levels. Many involve various educational programs that can be enhanced with alcohol and other drug information and with raising the awareness of youth, parents, and pastoral staff.<sup>44</sup>

The New Jersey bishops remind their readers that the mission of Catholic education is both educational and "formational" (p. 96). Consequently there is an important role for substance abuse education, addressed from a multi-dimensional perspective that includes religious and spiritual dimensions. This perspective should inform catechetical work, youth ministry, and enrichment programs of all kinds. Enhancing the knowledge and awareness of parents and pastoral ministers is also highlighted by the bishops (pp. 95-96). A significant proportion of the New York bishops' *Study and Action Guide* that accompanies their pastoral letter is given to discussion of enhanced educational programming at all levels, K through college and beyond (pp. 270-272). The U.S. bishops encourage both schools and parishes to be involved in ongoing education and prevention work (pp. 392-393).

Programs to strengthen family life also receive a good deal of attention from the bishops.<sup>45</sup> The U.S. bishops describe the family as essential in prevention, and state that "the family remains the best resource for prevention, early detection, recovery and treatment of chemical abuse" (p. 392). Hickey states that "our families have absolutely essential roles in substance-abuse prevention" and recommends parish-based substance abuse education and prevention (p. 79). The New York bishops explain this family-oriented rationale well:

At the heart of every prevention program we must emphasize over and over again the essential role of the family, especially when it is founded on the love of Christ and the teaching of the church. The family unit is the key element in establishing stable, loving relationships and in offering to every person the support needed for a drug-free and fulfilling life. (p. 270)

In general, addressing recommendations and prevention strategies toward education and family was predictable. Church leadership often sees these two areas as involved in moral and health-related behavior.

However, the pastoral instructions present both areas through two allied themes of "values" and "responsibility," giving them a more substantive base.

Hickey echoes many experts in the field of abuse/addiction: "It is vitally important that in encouraging our youth to say no to drug and alcohol use we emphasize religious values and build self-esteem" (p. 79). The U.S. bishops stress that, within the family, members must help one another "to make responsible choices about alcohol and drugs in the larger context of their personal responsibility to use the gifts God has given each of us in service to others" (p. 392). The New York bishops clearly state their vision of the links between alcohol and other drug prevention, family, values, responsibility, as well as the church's role and mission in this crucial pastoral matrix:

As an institution which plays a major role in creating societal values and mores, it is incumbent upon the church to play a leadership role in developing programs designed to prevent persons from falling prey to alcohol or other drug abuse.

At the heart of every prevention program we must emphasize over and over again the essential role of the family, especially when it is founded on the love of Christ and the teaching of the church. The family unit is the key element in establishing stable, loving relationships and in offering to every person the support needed for a drug-free and fulfilling life. This emphasis must include a focus on the responsibility that each individual has to respond to the challenge God presents to each of us to use the gifts we are given in a way that helps those around us. . . .

Through church agencies, there are significant opportunities for developing comprehensive preventive education programs which focus on underlying values, but also specifically provide information about alcohol and other drug abuse. (pp. 269-270)

There is a match between several bishops' diagnoses of a decline in individual and societal values and their emphasis on a values-enhancing prevention strategy. McCarthy calls his readers to "a recommitment to raising moral standards" (p. 57) and suggests: "How appropriate would be any efforts we make to renew our troubled communities by enriching them through living out the gospel values" (p. 56). His letter diagnoses racism, violence and dependency as "inevitable results" from a societal decline in a "needed spirit of brotherhood," a "weakening of faith" and a "rise of worldliness and selfish materialism" (p. 57). The New York bishops insist on "value-based prevention programs [that] will stress the

importance of family and the responsibility of individuals" and will "realistically address societal causes of alcohol and other drug abuse" (p. 270).

Importantly, the New Jersey bishops stress elements in social life that form the backdrop to the situation of abuse and dependency:

In recent years we have witnessed drastic societal changes. We now live in a culture full of conflicting moral messages and inconsistent values, particularly as portrayed by the media. The unified value structure that in times past was supported by extended families, neighborhoods, churches, schools, and government has all but disappeared. The resulting confusion, coupled with widespread denial concerning the diseases of alcoholism and drug addiction, has contributed to the urgency of the current situation. (p. 95)

Each of the bishops' instructions emphasizes the role of education and family-based prevention in confronting chemical abuse and addiction. For many of the bishops this "situation" requires not only treatment and rehabilitation but prevention, awareness, and a recommitment to value-based living individually and as a society.

#### *Public Policy*

The pastoral instructions also convey a sense of the need for public societal responses to situations of chemical abuse.<sup>46</sup> As we have seen, several bishops emphasize the need for a return to value-based living. Several also remind their readers that society must address the "underlying problems" that form the seedbed for abuse/addiction.

Hickey calls his readers, as citizens, "to take an active role in shaping public policies designed to respond effectively to this crisis" (p. 80). These policies include funding and resources for prevention, enforcement, and treatment as well as providing "a voice for the poor and those working against substance abuse" (p. 80). The U.S. bishops make a similar call:

. . . we must address the underlying problems which contribute to the allure of these substances and promote an illegal economy based on drug trafficking—lack of employment, poverty, inadequate education, lack of purpose and meaning, poor housing and powerlessness. (pp. 392-393)

While reflecting more systemically on larger societal issues that affect the situation of chemical abuse and addiction, the bishops also remind their readers of the Catholic values that must also be considered along with

systemic solutions. Both Hickey (p. 80) and the U.S. bishops (392-393) warn against turning to "means inconsistent" with life-enhancing values in fighting against abuse and addiction, and insist on public policies built on values that enhance life. Here they refer to several issues on which they have previously expressed themselves:

Our stand against substance abuse is a stand for human life and dignity. Therefore, we must not let our fear and frustration turn us to means inconsistent with our values, such as the use of the death penalty for drug-related crimes. Furthermore, the widespread use of handguns and automatic weapons in connection with drug commerce reinforces our repeated call for effective and courageous action to control handguns, leading to their eventual elimination from our society. (U.S. bishops, p. 392)

As we call for more police and swift punishment for violent crime, we should also insist on adequate resources for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Let us also continue to focus on the underlying problems which can contribute to the allure of substance abuse: lack of employment, poverty and powerlessness. (Hickey, p. 80)

Regarding efforts by our government to reduce the supply of drugs, particularly in the countries of Latin America . . . we share the deep concern of the church in the region over the increasing militarization of the U.S. drug program. Such programs may prove not only ineffective but counterproductive. (U.S. bishops, p. 394)

One last point here. In 1981 McCarthy condemned the racism and injustice that were an obvious part of the social unrest he was combatting along with drug-related crime and addiction. More recently, the bishops, acknowledging an entrenched situation of drug-related crime and addiction in the cities, speak to their people of the need to confront a more subtle racism:

We must confront the indifference, cynicism and even racism, which implies that as long as the most brutal aspects of this crisis are confined to a few neighborhoods, it does not touch us or merit our active participation. This kind of attitude is short-sighted. Violence and suffering in one part of our community touches us all and will have social, fiscal and economic consequences upon the entire region. And indifference is morally wrong as well. The victims of this slavery are our sisters and brothers . . . their suffering and death diminishes us all.<sup>47</sup>

The bishops' concrete pastoral responses to the situation of chemical abuse and addiction include a systemic societal analysis conducted in the light of Christian principles. More fully articulated elsewhere, this analysis nevertheless undergirds their approach to action in response to chemical abuse and addiction.

### *Collaboration and Consultation*

As mentioned earlier, the bishops' instructions arose from concrete pastoral experience and were formulated in consultation with a variety of experts and sources. Many of the instructions explicitly thank collaborators in their work. The instructions also promote ongoing collaboration and consultation in addressing the problems they describe and analyze.<sup>48</sup>

Hickey's comments can speak for the others: "In all our efforts, we need to work with other concerned persons in the religious community, leaders of human service and educational groups, and officials of government. We are in this together" (p. 80).

### *Discernment and Prayerful Awareness*

Throughout these five documents we have seen the bishops practicing the art of "reading the signs of the times" in relation to chemical abuse and dependency. These realities are pervasive and characteristic features of contemporary culture. They are salient elements in the "situation" of faith, expressing deep needs among men and women for healing, reconciliation, and meaning in life. Abuse and dependency are "signs" of our time. The bishops chose to focus on them as a challenge for Christian discernment and response.

Each of the pastoral instructions discusses the crucial role of discernment, prayer, and liturgy in making Christians aware of chemical abuse and dependency and sensitizing them to the need for effective and collaborative response. McCarthy speaks directly to the role of prayer in helping his readers to "become more sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters" (p. 57). For him, reflecting on the "unsettled conditions of our times" evokes the question of how to respond (p. 55). The first response he recommends is prayer and celebration of eucharist—"the very focal point and source of Christian unity, loving and sharing" (p. 57)—as support for the "transformation" that is needed. He calls this transformation the building of "social love," based on justice, to counteract the problems of racism, crime, and drugs he has examined (p. 58). Hickey speaks of praying for victims of chemical abuse and their families. Significantly, in

the same context he speaks of prayer and preaching as opposing the "denial" that could impair discernment and sensitivity to the extent of the problem (p. 79).

The New Jersey bishops speak eloquently of the eucharistic liturgy as "source and summit" of the ministry of God's people, combatting the "isolation and despair" that are endemic to addiction (p. 95). Reading of Scripture and good preaching convey a sense of "participation in God's loving plan" and help persons to "embrace the struggles of the human condition with confidence and hope" (p. 95). They affirm the "spiritual resources" present in the church, particularly communion and reconciliation, as important for providing both a "moral imperative" and a "spiritual catalyst" for living the gospel. The New York bishops, after reviewing the implications of Christian participation in the gospel of conversion and resurrection, remind their readers:

These timeless truths of our faith must be applied at each moment in history and in every place to current realities. As Christians, we are called to discern the suffering and vulnerabilities of each other and to respond as Jesus would. (p. 269)

The bishops of New York challenge their readers to "begin with a self-examination" in order to understand "the ways in which we cope with life" and thus to "overcome our own tendency to deny our own frailties" and to "better recognize the needs and problems of those who abuse alcohol and other drugs" (p. 271). This can overcome denial and lead to discernment of the "proper response" to abuse and dependency (p. 271).

The U.S. bishops challenge readers to "look at the harsh realities of addiction as a people of faith" (p. 391), and remind them that "[chemically dependent persons'] condition cries out for others to recognize the problem and to intervene" (p. 392). Prayer, and the clear and active vision it brings, is at the heart of ministry to dependent persons and affected others:

As a believing community we try to confront chemical dependency with both the honesty to recognize its power for human destruction and the faith that we can prevail with the grace and power of God. Christ comes into our hearts and our lives whenever any one of us takes the bold steps to see addiction for the slavery it is, to act to prevent its spread and to reach out to those suffering from its devastating power. (p. 394)

### A MODEL OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The outline of a "practical theology" is discernible in the bishops' pastoral instructions on chemical dependency. It emerges when seen through the dual lens of "reading the signs of the times" and a contemporary model of fundamental practical theology.<sup>49</sup> In this article, it has been brought into critical dialogue with the content and structure of the bishops' instructions, helping to shape an understanding of what is occurring there. Significantly, this task expanded and deepened as the bishops' instructions were seen in light of the vision of Vatican II, especially the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*).

The bishops begin with a "moment" of descriptive theology that is personal, concretely situated, dialogical, and focused. They present a description of their own stance and what they bring to the task. This personal effort by pastoral agents, laying out their own beliefs, histories, and commitments is important. What is the "voice" with which they speak? Regarding chemical abuse and addiction, the bishops situate themselves as caring prophetic interpreters of the contemporary situation, and as actors in solidarity with its victims. Next the bishops describe the situation of abuse and dependency in concrete detail and in dialogue with the human sciences. They utilize social science data and formulations, descriptions of medical and social consequences, criminological statistics, and sociological theorizing to inform their own descriptions drawn from actual practice.

Finally the bishops attempt to describe this "situation" that is a challenge for life and faith from within a horizon of Christian theology and their sense of the questions that emerge from description and "situated practice."<sup>50</sup> They present an initial perspective on the human condition that, as we have seen, is perhaps best articulated by the descriptive metaphors used to convey their sense of what is going on and what it means. This first moment of descriptive theology flows naturally into a process of critical reflection and confrontation with guiding sources.

The bishops undertake a second "moment" of critical reflection and hermeneutic confrontation. They bring their "thick" description of the situation into dialogue with Christian and other sources to explore deeper levels of meaning and understanding. In this "moment" of dialogue and "pastoral diagnosis" they utilize contemporary scientific sources and Christian classics to arrive at a meaningful interpretation of the situation. This entails a listening, mutually informing, hermeneutical dialogue between situation and texts, and among the texts themselves.<sup>51</sup> The process attempts to gain "a more systematic and critical grasp of both situated practice and text."<sup>52</sup> It allows the bishops to place the description more

explicitly within the context of a community of faith, standing in solidarity and service within a wider society.

This second "moment" allows for explication of meaning and call, the visional and obligational dimensions of practical reasoning as described by Browning.<sup>53</sup> Dialogue with Christian sources is important for understanding "how the world really is."<sup>54</sup> Here one encounters, in dialogue with sources, texts, parables, and metaphors, those critical themes that can illustrate the Christian vision and story as it pertains to the problematic situation as thickly described. Note, for example, that the bishops use visional and obligational metaphors touching on guiding theological themes such as Creation ("imago Dei," each person's innate "human dignity"), Jesus' healing and redemptive role (called to heal as Jesus did, the Good Samaritan) and the Church's own self-understanding (community of service) to flesh out and guide both the nature and practice of Christian service.

As we have seen, these metaphors/themes were found in Scripture, *Gaudium et Spes*, and papal documents. They articulate a vision of Christian being-in-the-world and of Christian service within the world, an ethic of gospel care rooted in solidarity as co-humans and service as "neighbors" beyond the simple demands of citizenship.

Finally, in the third "moment" of concrete recommending and action that Browning calls "strategic practical theology," the bishops return to the realm of pastoral practice.<sup>55</sup> This is the moment for communicating the fruit of "thick" description and theological reflection. In this moment of return to "strategic" and informed practice, the bishops look to an "ecology of interacting resources" both within and outside the church.<sup>56</sup> They implicitly—and sometimes explicitly—assume a stance of openness to collaboration and continued dialogue with a wider community. In this sense they cast themselves and the church into a posture of ongoing "critical correlational dialogue,"<sup>57</sup> ready to discuss the validity of their "diagnosis" and strategies, and to continue in mutually informative conversation and collaborative action.

It is important to notice in this lengthy description of the process of practical theology, as laid out by Browning and exemplified by the bishops' instructions on abuse and dependency, that the entire process is both *practical* and *dialogical* from beginning to end. It is a thoroughgoing practice-theory-practice model of practical theology.<sup>58</sup> It may also be viewed through the metaphor of reading of the "signs of the times" advocated and pursued by the bishops of Vatican II.<sup>59</sup>

## DISCUSSION

In this article we have maintained a dual focus on the *content* of the bishops' pastoral instructions on chemical abuse and dependency and on the *method* of practical theology utilized in formulating these instructions. Several observations emerge from this analysis.

First, one wishes that the bishops were more explicitly self-reflective and critical about their way of doing practical theology in these instructions. Attention to the methodology underlying their instructions and conclusions would be helpful in the contemporary Christian debate about the nature, focus, and relevance of a "fundamental practical theology."

Second, there is much emphasis in these instructions on solidarity, empathy with the victims of addiction, and the negative consequences (personal, medical, social) of abuse. While laudable, this approach mutes other potential ways of confronting the situation. For example, there is no clear articulation of a sense of "sin" in these documents. This is a missed opportunity. Discussion of disordered affections, habit, and sin as these relate to abuse and addiction might be helpful today. The work of education and prevention might be facilitated by a clear statement of all the theological and pastoral implications of chemical dependency.

Third, in regard to Browning's model of practical theology, one misses a discussion of the role of prayer and discernment in the elaboration of a personal or pastoral stance vis-à-vis gospel demands and norms. Browning discusses eloquently the need for laying out one's history and personal commitments early in the process of practical theological thinking. For him this is an essential part of the "thick" description required in the first moment of practical theology.<sup>60</sup> Browning also spells out at length the need for critical dialogue, stressing the need to "listen" to the classic texts of Christian and other sources in searching for deeper understanding and practical guidance.<sup>61</sup> He describes this as "a practical process of putting the theory-laden questions that emerge from contemporary praxis to the great religious monuments of the religious tradition."<sup>62</sup>

However, the methods by which this listening and dialogical encounter are to be conducted are not explained by Browning in any detail. One gets the impression that this is a matter of dry theological analysis and academic reflection. There is almost no discussion of the role of prayer and discernment, either in the emergence of faith-related questions from "situated practice" or in the appropriation and mutually informing dialogue with Christian and other sources.

As we have noted in examining the bishops' approach to chemical dependency, the correlation of description with the demands of practice informed by Christian sources and Gospel values is deeply involved with

prayer (personal, communal, liturgical) and discernment. The "classics" interact with discerned and prayerful practice. Yet, there is virtually no discussion in Browning's model of how this may be so. Deeper exploration of these elements of a Christian approach to pastoral practical theology is still needed. Perhaps if church leaders were more explicit about their ways of proceeding, this crucial element would come to the fore more clearly and practical theologians would be able to describe it more fully.

The U.S. bishops have presented important pastoral instructions on the contemporary situation of chemical abuse and dependency. Their analysis is thoroughly modern and deeply imbued by Gospel values. Their recommendations show wide-ranging concern for education, family life, public policy, and ongoing collaboration and dialogue with involved others. Because the church can have a large impact on this situation through the involvement of individual members and church institutions, the bishops' focus on this area is needed and welcome. In addition, the method they use to arrive at their recommendations is both open and informed, and casts the church in a collaborative and listening mode while speaking publicly from its own wisdom about this challenging human situation.

These documents deserve serious attention.

#### NOTES

1. Published by the United States Catholic Conference; re-published in *Origins*, 20/24 (1990) 390-394.

2. *Origins* cites five such instructions by U.S. bishops: (a) individual pastoral statements of Archbishops McCarthy and Hickey; (b) instructions from the New Jersey and New York state bishops' conferences; and (c) the 1990 statement of the full U.S. bishops' conference. Full citations are given below.

3. An exhaustive listing of references regarding this important discussion is not possible here. Interested readers may refer to D.S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (1991) and Browning, ed., *Practical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983); T. Groome, "Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap Between Academia and Ecclesia," in *Formation and Reflection*, ed. L. Mudge and J. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); D. Miller & J. Poling, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985); and David Tracy, "Foundations for Practical Theology," in *Practical Theology*, ed. D.S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983).

4. Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

5. See "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966) 199. Later citations will be referenced in the text by GS and paragraph number.

6. Karl Rahner, "On the Theological Problems Entailed in a 'Pastoral Constitution'," *Theological Investigations*, 10 (1973) 293-317.

7. Rahner, "On the Theological Problems . . .," 308.

8. Rahner, "On the Theological Problems . . .," 308.

9. Rahner, "On the Theological Problems . . .," 308. Also Rahner, "The New Claims Which Pastoral Theology Makes upon Theology as a Whole," *Theological Investigations*, 11 (1982) 115-136.

10. Rahner, "The New Claims . . .," 136.

11. Rahner, "The New Claims . . .," 119.

12. Rahner, "The New Claims . . .," 120. Also Rahner, "The Future of Theology," *Theological Investigations*, 11 (1982) 137-146.

13. Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1994).

14. Gelpi, 40-42.

15. Avery Dulles, *The Reshaping of Catholicism: Current Challenges in the Theology of Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

16. Dulles, 118, 128.

17. Gerard Magill, "Public Religious Dialogue: The Economic Pastoral and the Hermeneutics of Democracy," *Theological Studies*, 54 (1993) 678-697.

18. Anthony Cernera, *The "Signs of the Times" as Word of God: Recent Developments in Catholic Ecclesial Experiences and Reflection and Their Implications for Theological Method* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1988).

19. Cernera, 101.

20. Cernera, 97-102.

21. Cernera, 110-127.

22. Cernera, 83. See pp. 84-87 for Cernera's view of "reading the signs of the times" as a model for "practical theology" in the U.S. bishops' letters on peace and the economy.

23. Cernera, 52-54, 149f.

24. Cernera, 153.

25. Abp. McCarthy, "Solving Problems in a Divided Community: Racism, Drugs, Values," *Origins*, 11/4 (11 June, 1981) 55-63; AND Abp. Hickey, "Confronting a New Slavery: Pastoral Reflections on Washington's Substance-Abuse Crisis," *Origins*, 19/5 (15 June, 1989) 78-80. Page references will be listed in parentheses in the body of the text.

26. New Jersey Bishops, "Called to Live in Freedom: Pastoral Statement on Substance Abuse," *Origins*, 18/6 (23 June, 1988) 94-96; AND New York Bishops, "Chemical Dependency: A Challenge for the Church," *Origins*, 19/16 (21 September, 1989) 268-272. Page references will be listed in parentheses in the body of the text.

27. U.S. Bishops, "New Slavery, New Freedom: A Pastoral Message on Substance Abuse," *Origins*, 20/24 (22 November, 1990) 390-394. Page references will be listed in parentheses in the body of the text.

28. The model to be used is described in Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*.

29. Browning, 75-135. This is the first "moment" of Browning's model.

30. McCarthy, "Solving Problems . . .," 30, 63. These three topics are the focus of this pastoral letter.

31. New York State Catholic Conference, "Chemical Dependency: A Challenge for the Church" [See Abstract]. Available from NY State Catholic Conference, 119 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210. Text of the document duplicated in *Origins*.

32. Browning, 137-207. This is the second "moment" of Browning's model for practical theology.

33. New York State Catholic Conference, "Chemical Dependency . . .," cover sheet.

34. New York State Catholic Conference, "Study and Action Guide to Accompany Statement on Chemical Dependency: A Challenge for the Church" (1989). Available from the NY Conference.

35. Browning, 105-108. Browning speaks of these important "dimensions" of practical thinking as flowing naturally from critical reflection on situations. The "visional" dimension provides meaning to events and actions through narratives rooted in the community's self-understanding; the "obligational" dimension calls for action based on principles that flow from these narratives. See *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 105-108.

36. John Paul II, "Drugs and Youth: Address at Viterbo's Therapeutic Center of San Crispino," *The Pope Speaks*, 29/3 (1984) 229-231.

37. John Paul II, "Drug Addiction—Disease of the Spirit: Homily during celebrated Mass and baptisms at the inauguration of new headquarters for the Italian Solidarity Center in Rome," *The Pope Speaks*, 31 (1986), 305-308.

38. John Paul II: "Pope's Address to Cardinals: Overview of Church Concerns," *Origins* 9/31 (22 December, 1980) 503; "The Evil of Drugs: Address to participants at the Eighth World Congress of Therapeutic Communities," *The Pope Speaks*, 29 (1984) 357; "Drug Addiction—Disease of the Spirit," *The Pope Speaks*, 31 (1986) 306; "Drugs: The New Slavery," *Origins*, 16/8 (1986) 164.

39. John Paul II: "Homily in Boston: The Demanding Service of Love," *Origins*, 9/17 (11 October, 1979) 268; "Drugs and Youth," *The Pope Speaks*, 29 (1984) 231; "Youth, Builders of the 21st Century: Message for the 1985 World Day of Peace," *Origins*, 14/30 (1985) 493; "Remarks of Pope John Paul II at Prayer Vigil for World Youth Day (August 14, 1993)," *Origins*, 23/11 (1993) 184.

40. John Paul II: "Drug Addiction—Disease of the Spirit," *The Pope Speaks*, 31 (1986) 308; "Responding to the Contagion of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism: Address to participants in Vatican Conference, entitled 'Drugs and Alcoholism Against Life,' sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers (21-23 November, 1991)," *Origins*, 21/26 (1991) 422.

41. John Paul II, "Responding to the Contagion . . .," 422.

42. In virtually every papal instruction on chemical abuse and dependency, human dignity, as an intrinsic value rooted in creation and redemption, undergirds the Pope's pastoral analysis.

43. Browning, 209-293. This is Browning's third "moment" of practical theology, namely the "strategic" moment.

44. See, for example, Hickey, 79; McCarthy, 58-59, 62; New Jersey bishops, 95-96; New York bishops, 270; U.S. bishops, 393.

45. See Hickey, 79; McCarthy, 59; New Jersey bishops, 95; New York bishops, 270; U.S. bishops, 392-393.

46. See also McCarthy, 57-58, 61-62; New York bishops, 270.

47. Hickey, 79; See also U.S. bishops, 392.

48. See McCarthy, 62; Hickey, 79-80; New Jersey bishops, 95; New York bishops, 270; U.S. bishops, 393.

49. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*.

50. Browning, 213.

51. Browning, 213.

52. Browning, 213.

53. In several publications Browning has elaborated his view of the moral "dimensions" of practical theological reasoning. See Don S. Browning, *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) and *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), as well as *A Fundamental Practical Theology*.

54. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 142.

55. Browning, 213.

56. Browning, 235.

57. Browning, 237.

58. Browning, 237.

59. Cernera, "The Signs of the Times" as Word of God.

60. Browning, 59-66.

61. Browning, 139-207.

62. Browning, 139.