THE LIMITS OF ADAPTABILITY

The Eighteenth Annotation In Developmental Perspective

Elizabeth Liebert

IN THE CURRENT RENAISSANCE OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES,[1] a variety of adaptations have sprung up in response to varying circumstances and needs. What principles ought to guide such adaptations? Are there limits to these adaptations beyond which they should no longer be called the Spiritual Exercises? Ignatius himself suggested adaptations, particularly in his eighteenth and nineteenth Annotations. The nineteenth Annotation speaks primarily of those people, otherwise suited to the full Exercises as described in the twentieth Annotation, whose circumstances do not permit them to step aside from the ordinary rounds of life in order to devote themselves full time to the Exercises. We can easily imagine those people, and increasingly the Spiritual Exercises according to the nineteenth Annotation are springing up in major urban centres, under the auspices of parishes or universities.

But it is the people envisioned in the eighteenth Annotation that pose more radically the issue of adaptability. These people are not appropriate candidates, by virtue of intelligence, education, disposition, or some other reason, to make the Spiritual Exercises as they are described either in the nineteenth or twentieth Annotations. The eighteenth Annotation, then, points us to a range of test cases regarding the elasticity of the *Spiritual Exercises*.[2]

[1] This essay originated in a presentation at the 1993 Symposium on Ignatian Spirituality at Loyola House, Guelph, Ontario. It is used with permission.

[2] Elder Mullan's literal translation of the eighteenth Annotation runs as follows: 'The Spiritual Exercises have to be adapted to the dispositions of the persons who wish to receive them, that is, to their age, education or ability, in order not to give to one who is uneducated or of little intelligence things he cannot easily bear and profit by. Again, that should be given to each one by which, according to his wish to dispose himself, he may be better able to help himself and to profit. So, to him who wants help to be instructed and to come to a certain degree of contentment of soul, can be given

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I begin by stating my own position: I have nothing sacred to preserve in the *Spiritual Exercises* and am inclined to be more rather than less free in adapting. At the same time, one ought to know what one is adapting, what its original intent was, how it was likely to have been received in its day, and what kinds of adaptations it has undergone. Is there a danger of 'adapting' to the point that one has lost the essence of the *Spiritual Exercises*? How radically should we interpret Ignatius' eighteenth Annotation? Quite radically, would be my tentative answer. Let me make a few comments by way of setting a context before I turn to developmental psychology.

The Eighteenth Annotation: An Adaptation

The first thing one notices about the eighteenth Annotation is that Ignatius says the *Spiritual Exercises* should be adapted to the disposition of the people who desire to make them, that is, to their age, education and ability.[3] Ignatius first makes the case negatively:

> In this way someone who is uneducated or has a weak constitution will not be given things he or she cannot well bear or profit from without fatigue.

And then conversely:

> Similarly exercitants should be given, each one, as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress.

Ignatius goes on to suggest what such an adaptation could look like.

the Particular Examen, and then the General Examen, also, for a half hour in the morning, the Method of Prayer on the Commandments, the Deadly Sins, etc. Let him be recommended also to confess his sins every eight days, and, if he can, to receive the Blessed Sacrament every fifteen days, and better, if he be so moved, every eight. This way is more proper for illiterate or less educated persons. Let each of the Commandments be explained to them; and so of the Deadly Sins, Precepts of the Church, Five Senses and Works of Mercy. So, too, should he who is giving the Exercises observe that he who is receiving them has little ability or little natural capacity, from whom not much fruit is to be hoped, it is more expedient to give him some of these easy Exercises, until he confesses his sins. Then let him be given some Examens of Conscience and some method for going to Confession oftener than was his custom, in order to preserve what he has gained, but let him not go on into the matter of the Election, or into any other Exercises that are outside the First Week, especially when more progress can be made in other persons and there is not time for everything.'

[3] In the remainder of the essay, I am following the translation by George E. Ganss in the volume he edited: *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

The second thing one notices is that these recommendations—take people where they are, don't give them what they can't succeed in, and do give them all they can do and all they want—are simply principles of good pedagogy. Even when the curriculum is prescribed from the outside, a creative teacher figures out ways to adapt the material for particular students. Likewise, giving students as much as they can do and want to do generates a kind of self-rewarding enthusiasm: 'I can do this; it's fun, it's a challenge to see how long it will take me to figure it out'.

Ignatius, always the pragmatist, was primarily interested in what would bring greater glory to God. It is not surprising to see this pragmatic bent at work in the Exercises. I imagine him saying: 'Don't discourage or burden people with what they are not ready for or do not want. The last state may be worse than the first, and you also have wasted precious time and energy that could be used more effectively elsewhere.'

Ignatius' pragmatism in dealing with others shows up in his maxim: 'We have to go in by our neighbour's door, but come out by our door'. Thomas Clancy claims that this characteristic—taking people where one finds them and carefully and patiently moving toward the goal—was the most distinctive element in Ignatius' whole ministry of spiritual conversation. And, for Ignatius, the ministry of spiritual conversation lies in a direct line with the ministry of the Exercises.[4]

Who were those people for whom the Exercises needed to be adapted? We have some clues in the wording of the eighteenth Annotation: 'age', 'education', 'ability', 'uneducated', 'weak constitution', 'willing to dispose themselves to receive', 'rather simple and illiterate', 'poorly qualified', and 'little natural capacity from whom much fruit is not to be expected'. This list has a negative tone, as if the people envisaged by the eighteenth Annotation were second-best candidates. Clearly such people were not the priority in taking on the highly intensive labour of the complete Exercises, guided one-to-one. But were they less entitled to the assistance of the Exercises? Ignatius did not think so, and constantly encouraged the use of a shorter, foundational form for the vast majority of people.

[4] Thomas Clancy, *The Conversational Word of God* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978), pp. 26, 31.

How did Ignatius arrive at this option? He made it out of his experience of conversations 'on the street' with many, many people over the years of experimenting and refining his Exercises. Some people can benefit from Ignatius' full programme and some are simply not developmentally able—at least not yet, even if, with appropriate nourishment, they may be later. Here the eighteenth Annotation comes into play.

There appear to be two groups of people whom Ignatius is envisaging here: those who have little natural ability, and those who do have the natural ability but do not have the need or desire for the full process. The evidence from the early directories seems to bear out this assessment. According to Michael Ivens, the Directories envision the '*rudis*', a person lacking in intellectual subtlety, in reflective capacity and possibly even in literacy; the 'slightly more gifted'; the 'gifted who seek only to purge their consciences'; and 'people with both the mental and spiritual aptitude for the full Exercises but who have neither the time nor the compelling need'.[5]

A Developmental Perspective

A little theory will be necessary in order to set the context.[6] When most of us think of human development, we automatically refer to the view of development that takes its inspiration from Erik Erikson, what I call the maturational paradigm of development. In this perspective, development is linked in some way to the maturing of the biological organism. Each period of one's life bring its particular challenge or crisis. One's own history of decisions and personality (ego) and the expectations of society converge with biological maturing to generate predictable life crises. Familiar examples include adolescence and mid-life. 'Good enough' mastery of the challenge of one era prepares the person for the challenge of the next stage. But inadequate mastery leaves a person's psychosocial strength at risk as the next task approaches. Whether or not one has successfully resolved the crisis of the present or past eras, life continues to bring subsequent

[5] Michael Ivens, 'The Eighteenth Annotation and the Early Directories', *The Way Supplement*, 46 (Spring 1983), pp. 3-10, here p. 4, citing the Directory of Paul Hoffaeus (*Dir* 17, especially nn. 2-20).

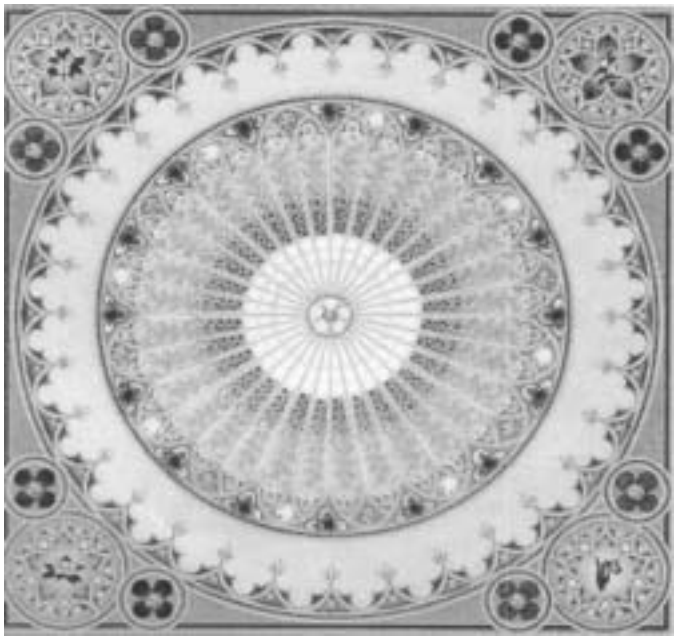
[6] I have developed this material more extensively in *Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000 [1992]).

developmental tasks. It is possible, though more difficult, to resolve a psychosocial crisis at a later time. To do so requires that one rework the unresolved issues from the past in terms of life's present contingencies.

A clue suggests that development may be more complex than the maturational paradigm can explain, though at first the issue does not appear to be linked to development at all. Different people approach the same developmental tasks in vastly different ways, so different, in fact, that they assign importance to quite dissimilar aspects of their common task. Imagine the arrival of a first child. According to Erikson, this event would usher in an era in which generativity is the key developmental task. But notice that there are different ways of dealing with generativity. One person might be preoccupied with survival in the welfare system, or with continuing her education while juggling vastly increased responsibilities with inadequate supports. For her, a good mother 'keeps her kids clean and dry and doesn't let them mouth off'. Another person might be primarily concerned with being an ideal parent in the traditional or stereotypical sense characteristic of her socioeconomic, religious or cultural spheres. She might envision a good mother as one 'who stays at home with her children while they are small because raising a family is the most important thing in any woman's life'. A third person might delight in the self-fulfilment and enhanced self-understanding that the presence of this new human life has precipitated. She might claim, 'a good mother learns lots about life from her own children'. Yet another person might be preoccupied with a sense of responsibility for this new life, and a hope that the world's systems can welcome and sustain it. For her, a good mother 'wants to make life good for other women's children' as well as her own. These varying perceptions about mothering constitute qualitatively different contexts in which to work out generativity.

Different people approach developmental tasks in different ways

Jean Piaget first provided the conceptual tools to grasp that such differences in worldview could have a developmental basis. Piaget carefully observed how small children approach and solve problems. Eventually he recognised that certain conceptual abilities were required to solve certain problems, and that these abilities were acquired in a predictable order. Piaget's scheme describes a progression from sensorimotor thinking in infancy, to preoperational or intuitive thinking in early childhood, to concrete operational thinking during



elementary school, and finally to formal operational thinking, which, if it develops at all, will take place after the age of thirteen or even later. Each kind of thinking involves a qualitatively more complex logic system, which Piaget called a stage. Successive stages cannot be achieved simply by repeating again and again the earlier set of operations. This can only occur through applying to the problem a whole new principle of logic, a more complex hermeneutic. Since development, viewed this way, deals with the formal structure of the cognitive processes, theories which take their root in Piaget can be called 'structural theories' of development. This discussion explores the implications that this kind of theory raises for giving the Exercises.

Let me illustrate the structural theories from my own experience. As a fourteen-year-old, I had great difficulty with algebra. Substituting letters where before I had used numbers created a level of abstraction that confounded me. I could do the operations with numbers, but as soon as the letters appeared, I was stymied. Formal operational thinking, the ability to think about the process of thinking, requires a person to step outside the literal one-to-one correspondence between a number and an object. Since I could not yet do this more complex process, I was reduced to memorising the ways the operations worked and repeating the pattern every time I wanted to solve a problem. I

now recognise that, at fourteen, my ability for formal operational thinking was insufficiently developed to accommodate the level of abstraction that algebra required.

Structural developmental theories differ greatly from maturational theories of development in their assumptions about how and when change occurs—and this difference is the important issue here, particularly the way structural theories deal with change.

First, structural theories employ the concept of 'stage', which is a convention used to describe the global, largely unconscious way of organizing one's perception of reality, which operates relatively consistently in ordinary life. A stage is a coherent outlook on the world and describes the patterns, styles and principles out of which the person acts. By contrast, maturational theories tend to describe the actions themselves.

Second, stages describe qualitatively different ways of viewing reality. These stages cannot be created by simply summing up prior stages. Each new stage is, in fact, a new way of organizing reality; it starts with an entirely new organizing principle. By itself, more and more arithmetic did not produce algebra in my fourteen-year-old mind. Instead, I needed a qualitatively new ability for abstract thinking that could account for both the arithmetic and the algebraic operations at the same time.

Third, the movement to a subsequent stage requires a 'higher order of ordering' to account for the increased complexity. That is why the stages become increasingly complex. Stages cannot be skipped but people can understand and use any of the simpler ordering systems they have already transcended; indeed in some situations, the simpler systems provide the most elegant and common sense solution. For example, a child who thinks in concrete operational categories cannot understand the theory of relativity, even though they could perhaps recite it. But a physicist presumably has the ability both to understand the theory of relativity and to explain how it is that two plus three equal five. Research shows that people begin to deal with a level of complexity characteristic of a certain distance ahead of their own development (perhaps half a stage or a whole stage); but they will reframe any greater degree of complexity in terms of their present stage. Teachers and preachers and spiritual directors can thus expect some listeners to hear something different from what they said!

Fourth, stages are remarkably stable, since they represent entire systems of meaning-construction. Change takes place in such a stable structure only when the stage no longer accommodates the contrary data that it must absorb. Significantly, structural theories with their stable stages can account for the remarkable consistency within the human personality. In a structural system, there is no theoretical necessity for change. Without sufficient dissonance to require a new structure, the person will not change. It follows that stage change does not inevitably result from advancing age. In fact, there is substantial empirical data suggesting that many adults do not change structural stages after their early twenties. When stage change does occur, it is likely to be a protracted process; many forays into the more complex worldview occur before it becomes more or less habitual.

Stage change does not inevitably result from advancing age

Thus we uncover a critical point for the matter at hand: structural stage change takes time, perhaps a long time, and it is not at all inevitable without an appropriate developmental context. The good news is that, with such a developmental context, many people do continue to develop, even according to this very stable way of viewing human development.

We are now in a position to think developmentally about the eighteenth Annotation. How might one know if a person is a good candidate for the full Exercises? This question is the reverse of one about the people appropriate for the 'eighteenth Annotation retreat'. In terms of the Exercises, there is a watershed between two developmental stages, with the person on the far side of this watershed a potential candidate for the full Exercises, and the person on the near side developmentally unready for them but potentially a wonderful candidate for some of the adaptations Ignatius suggests under the eighteenth Annotation.

The Crucial Transition

The watershed occurs between the stages I call Conformist and Conscientious respectively. Let us look at the Conformist stage first. Here the key reality is the group: one defines one's welfare with reference to a group, normally by conforming to its values, but occasionally through some kind of counter-dependence, or even studied neutrality. Groups, however, will be face to face, related to

directly and personally: one's family, one's peer group, one's church or denomination. Within the group(s), unanimity prevails, fostering group cohesion, but not really respecting individuality. Consistent niceness, genuine reciprocity prevails within the group, but not towards others outside the group. The person 'is' what the group defines; in a different group they will 'be' a different person. The personality is defined from outside, by the company it keeps. There is no firm self apart from these surrounding groups. Teenage conformity (and anti-conformity as a form of conformity) is the most obvious example of meaning being constructed in this kind of way.

The following characteristics also apply to Conformist people. They will:

- appeal to rules and external signs to set parameters for behaviour;
- experience disapproval by peers or valued authorities as a sanction;
- be preoccupied with appearances, reputation, doing things 'right', belonging;
- exhibit stereotypical thinking, using clichés and all-or-nothing statements;
- allow right and wrong to have few exceptions or nuances: behaviour is rule-governed;
- act concretely rather than reflect inwardly, experiencing only relatively simple and generalised feelings;
- repress sexuality or 'negative' emotions such as anger because such feelings will rupture the group cohesion (and note that what is 'negative' is concretely defined by the norms of the group).

The strength of the Conformist stage comes from its investment in people and institutions outside oneself. Socialisation into groups readily occurs. But the strength of one stage is also its weakness with respect to subsequent constructions. At the Conformist stage, individuals remain submerged within the various groups to which they belong. The lack of an inner, self-chosen identity allows Conformist people to take on various identities—to be different people as dictated by membership in those groups.

The virtues of the Conformist stage include generosity, consistency, niceness, helpfulness. Conformist people will actively promote the goals of the groups with which they identify. They have moved beyond the self-protectiveness characteristic of very early stages of human development and are capable of a new level of trust and interpersonal relations, including a personal relationship with God. Prayer will be action-oriented and concrete (but with so-called affective prayer still largely beyond their developmental range). Temptations include an outright return to impulsive behaviour, resisted by limiting one's negative feelings; literal and concrete interpretations of rules, texts and relationships (including the relationship with God); prejudice against others perceived as different; authoritarianism; rigidity; harsh judgments for infractions of rules; and succumbing to shame for personal failures.

If and when the transition to the Conscientious stage occurs, we see a quite different person. The key issue now is self-identity. The central developmental attainment is the critical appropriation of one's value system, which formerly was tacit. Now the person operates out of a new awareness of the self as an internally organized, consistent identity. The self-as-organization can judge relations; it *has* relationships rather than being determined by them. This stage receives its name from the word 'conscience', because the major elements of adult conscience become developmentally ascendant at this stage.

Listing more characteristics of the Conscientious person helps reveal the watershed between the Conformist and Conscientious stages. Generally, Conscientious people will:

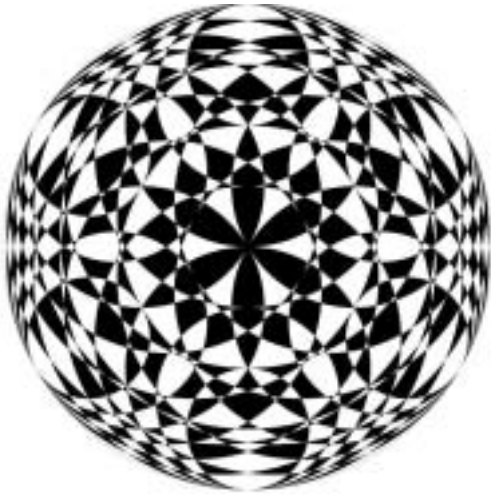
- recognise traits and motives in themselves and others;
- internalise rules, choosing and evaluating them for themselves;
- listen to themselves as their most potent critic;
- located authority within themselves rather in some outside agency;
- reason about their options in relatively complex ways, showing awareness of the consequences of alternatives, and of contingencies, thinking in and about whole systems, and seeing themselves as agents within systems;

- see themselves as at once within their communities and society, but also as distinct from them;
- manifest a deeper mutuality, a deeper understanding of others' personalities and desires;
- take a longer view of time, with long-term goals, ideals and values coexisting alongside short-term goals.

The strengths of the Conscientious stage include the ability to grasp long-term, self-evaluated, self-chosen goals, and the reflexivity and psychological-mindedness that accompany a developed and differentiated inner life. Its limitations include idiosyncratic, self-centred and subjective judgements about self and others, and excessive confidence in one's own assessments and critical reflections.

The characteristic virtues of Conscientious people include internal moral standards; integrity; truthfulness; understanding; empathy; altruism; even a kind of humour which persists through successive developmental transformations. Its characteristic temptations include avoidance of responsibility; hyper-critical self-examination; excluding oneself from the scope of care; getting side-tracked into a search for inner religious experiences or ideological formulations; and seeking to control others by one's own norms.

It is now possible to see Ignatius' genius with respect to those who were developmentally ready for the full Spiritual Exercises in contrast should be given some other version adapted to their needs.



Stages of Development and the Spiritual Exercises

Readiness for the Exercises

I assume that people who make the full Exercises must have certain abilities. They should, at the very least, be able to 'work inside', a shorthand phrase for the ability to notice and name inner movements; without this ability, discernment of spirits is impossible. They should be able to deal directly with God, and not be unduly influenced by the person of the director; otherwise the director becomes a 'guru', no matter how skilled they are at staying out of the way (and, of course it is the director's responsibility to stay out of the way of God's work with this particular retreatant [Exx 15]). The retreatant must be able to envision long-term goals and marshal resources towards those goals, else the Election makes no sense. I am speaking here of purely human abilities which form a necessary but not sufficient basis for the call and desire to make the Exercises, and for the dispositions of generosity they require. These human abilities exist in a person at the Conscientious developmental stage, but do not exist (or only barely exist) in the person at the Conformist stage.

Ignatius suggests adapting according to the 'disposition' of the people who desire to make the Exercises, that is, to their 'age, education and ability'. Each of these can be linked to the idea of stages of development. Though, as I have already noted, there is no inevitable correlation between advance in age and structural development, there are indirect connections: a certain amount of time must pass before a person has accumulated enough life experience to move through the stages up to the Conscientious. Only when a person experiences perspectives clashing, and the consequent disruption of the assumptions shaping their world, can they shift out of Conformity into a self-grounded Conscientiousness. Experiences which often foster this developmental transition for contemporary people in the developed world include leaving home for military service, for higher education, or for extended periods of living in other cultures; and such traumas as divorce or the death of a spouse or child. At the same time, one cannot presume that educated people, or people well into their middle years, are automatically good candidates for the full course of the Exercises. Nor, given that the full Exercises have been successfully given at home to people in a very deprived area of Glasgow, can one

presume that lack of education precludes the necessary developmental foundation.[7]

I can only speculate as to whether the same proportion of the population of Ignatius' world made the transition from Conformity to Conscientiousness as in our culture. A smaller percentage of people had access to education; fewer people had the luxury of extended travel and of living in other cultures; certainly a far smaller percentage of women had these experiences. Yet people then, as now, were subject to the blows of life as well as its blessings. If the average level of adults in North America is half way between the Conformist and the Conscientious stages (that is, half the adults exhibit a developmental level less complex than this mid-point and half are more complex), then a majority of adults even now are either developmentally unready or only marginally ready to undertake the full course of the Exercises—and this is not yet to consider the other conditions of call and generosity. I think it safe to say that in Ignatius' time the percentage that had the necessary developmental prerequisites for profiting from the full Exercises was no higher and may very well have been lower.

Although Ignatius frequently stresses that the Spiritual Exercises are for a select group, one should not thereby conclude that Ignatius was unconcerned with the large numbers of people for whom the full Exercises were not appropriate. On the contrary, he includes them among the ministries in which Jesuits were to engage,[8] speaks of them as the main means available to help people, and encourages Jesuits to make use of 'this weapon, which is so much a familiar part of our Society'.[9] He also encourages scholastics to learn to give the Exercises, especially the Exercises of the First Week.[10] It was not unknown for people who had only made the Exercises once themselves to be encouraged to offer them to others.[11]

[7] Martha Skinnader, 'Who is the Nineteenth Annotation For?' *The Way Supplement*, 49 (Spring 1984), pp. 59-69.

[8] Ignatius to Giovanni Pelletari, 13 June 1551, in *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, selected and translated by William J. Young (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959), pp. 244-249, here pp. 247-248.

[9] Ignatius to Fulvio Androzzi, 18 July 1556, in *Letters*, translated by Young, pp. 433-434, here p. 434.

[10] *Constitutions* IV. 8. 5, E [408-409].

[11] Ivens, 'The Eighteenth Annotation', pp. 8-9.

People unfamiliar with developmental theories often assume that higher is better. In one sense it is: more developed people have more tools to deal with what life brings them. But it does not follow that higher is holier. Holiness is about singleness of purpose, generosity and integrity regardless of one's developmental stage. I believe there is an appropriate kind of holiness among Conformist people just as there is among Conscientious people. Each developmental stage has its strengths and weaknesses, its virtues and temptations. Likewise, people at each developmental stage need pastoral care. Ignatius makes a point of asking us to prioritise our time according to our call, and he suggests that Jesuits of his time were called to search out for the labour-intensive experience of the complete Exercises those who would make the most difference in Church and society. We need not conclude that others are less important, but just that other pastoral options will be more suited to them. The Formula of the Institute specifically mentions the Spiritual Exercises as one ministry among others—including preaching, lecturing, educating children and the illiterate, and administering sacraments.[12] When we understand that the eighteenth Annotation forms of the Spiritual Exercises *are* the Spiritual Exercises as much as the twentieth Annotation version, Ignatius' pastoral concern becomes very clearly linked to the ministry of the Exercises.

Ignatius encourages us to set priorities

Ignatius, was, I believe, an astute observer of human nature. I also believe he gleaned sufficient pastoral experience to understand what sorts of things would help a variety of people. His suggestions for those who chiefly want instruction and a certain level of peace of soul—most of us—included the Particular and General Examen; the variety of ways of praying included in Exx 238-260; weekly confession of sins; and fortnightly reception of the Eucharist. These are all within the range of Conformist people and of sufficient concreteness to be of benefit to them, but they can also be adapted for Conscientious people. These exercises performed regularly may provide a context for developmental stage change, and may allow a deepening of the inner life to the point that the full Exercises might become appropriate later.

There can also arise the temptation to move people on prematurely to the next stage or to some 'highest stage'. This strategy

[12] *Formula of the Institute* [1550], n. 3.

simply does not work, and can very easily be experienced as violence by the recipient; directors who do this are inserting themselves where God belongs. There are things we can appropriately do, however, to help create a developmentally favourable environment.

Developmental Images of Change and the Exercises

At this point, we need to introduce two further ideas from developmental theory that provide ways of understanding change. The first is the concept of the 'pacer'. This is a term introduced by William Dember, in the context of his suggestion that people grow when they are somehow attracted by styles of behaviour roughly a half stage more complex than their present stage (what he calls 'pacers'). Anything less complex keeps them where they are; anything more complex they simply block out.[13] The second idea, put forward by Robert Kegan at Harvard, is that of the 'naturally therapeutic environment'.[14] Kegan articulates the dynamics of situations where development seems to happen of its own accord. In such situations, three things happen. Firstly, the people involved are *confirmed*: they experience themselves as noticed, valued, worthwhile, and competent. Secondly, something is nevertheless *disconfirmed*: something (the pacer) in the environment 'upsets the apple cart' and disarranges the order of the person's universe. When this upset happens at a deep enough level, one's way of understanding the world will need to change in order to accommodate the more complex universe. One is launched into a stage change. Thirdly, other elements in the environment *remain constant*: something must remain stable, providing a context for the integration of the new, more complex view of the universe.

The director's first task is always to listen to the person, finding out where they are, what concerns them, who God seems to be to them, how God has been working and is inviting them. This in many ways corresponds to what Kegan says about *confirming*. The process of relationship building may be lengthy or short; much depends on the people and the situation; but the director can be of little assistance

[13] William Dember, 'The New Look in Motivation', *American Scientist*, 53 (December 1965), pp. 409-427.
[14] Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1982).

until the relationship of trust and confirmation has been established. *Disconfirmation* may come later; combining the notion of pacer with the notion of disconfirmation suggests that the director must be very astute in the amount and timing of disconfirmation. As spiritual guides, we seldom introduce disconfirmation; that is, I believe, largely God's prerogative. Instead, we help the person recognise and work with the disconfirmation that God provides, whether directly or through the exigencies of life. And we *remain faithful and constant presences,* representing God's faithfulness, during the inevitable upheavals and re-working that accompany any major transition.

These ideas are helpful for understanding pastoral care in general and the Exercises in particular. Spiritually and developmentally, it makes great sense simply to help some people form habits of prayer and of a consistent sacramental life. For those more proficient in the inner life, a particular aspect of their call may be opening up, or an aspect of the person of Christ, or a new way of praying, or a transition that will involve discernment—all possible contexts for some more extensive form of the Exercises. The common factor here is the focus on particular people: the Exercises are always modified according to individual needs.

The Exercises are always modified for individual needs

Ignatius' genius for spiritual conversation is closely related to the adaptations called for in the eighteenth Annotation. Through a careful ministry of conversation, Ignatius cultivated in others the necessary personal gifts and generosity that paid off richly as time went on. The first step in spiritual conversation, according to Ignatius, took place in the heart of the conversationalist: they were to concentrate their heart and soul on loving the person they were conversing with. Then they were to find out everything possible about that person through patient and careful listening: their present and past station in life, their intelligence, their physical makeup, their temperament, their present and past deeds. The next step was to 'enter through their door' by accommodating oneself to them: persuade without seeming to argue, be slow to speak, back up anything said with deeds, never promise what cannot be delivered. Finally, bring the conversation around, little by little, to things of the Spirit; and head with great patience toward the 'more' to which the person is being called.[15] Here

[15] Jerónimo Nadal, 'Sixth Exhortation' (MHSJ MN 5, pp. 820-865, especially pp. 842-846), cited in Clancy, *The Conversational Word of God*, pp. 52-54.

we have a picture of Ignatius and his colleagues carefully accommodating themselves to others for the good of the Kingdom, a picture which contemporary spiritual directors might do well to emulate. This account from the sources indicates that the early Jesuits' method fitted admirably with what we now recognise as the principles of developmental change. No wonder that such ministry occupied Ignatius throughout his life, as his preferred way of preparing people for the full Spiritual Exercises.

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