difficulties in establishing such relationships. Since my responsibility in the hospital where I work is to help alcoholics in this area, I am particularly sensitive to the problems typical addicts face. I have discovered the following:

1) Almost everyone in a hospital treatment program has some feeling for a power or force sustaining the universe and life. The majority, however, have difficulty personalizing that power. In clinical terms, they have difficulty objectifying the Power and therefore tend to separate their emotional experience of loss of control from their intellectual concept of a higher power.

2) The majority of those in a treatment center have difficulty relating past religious training and experiences with the Power they presently need to combat loss of control over drugs. A.A. has been cannily effective by labeling its program “spiritual” rather than religious, because “religious” suggests repressive denominational connections.

3) The vast majority of those in treatment centers have difficulty, no matter what their denominational background (except Pentecostal), thinking of God as Jesus Christ, even though they may say Jesus Christ is God. American people tend to think of God as providence or as a judge rather than as incarnate in Jesus Christ (or nature) as regenerator or forgiver. American religious sensitivity is heavily docetic and gnostic. Ironically, Jesus Christ, I believe, is rendered in popular consciousness more docetic than God himself.

As a pastoral counselor you may, however, as I have suggested in my own book, present Christ as a model reflecting the addict’s experience both as a sufferer and as one who rises from suffering. If the client has capacities for thinking of Christ as both human and divine, he may identify with Christ and find in him a source of divine forgiveness and power for the future.

If you can help the recovering addict personalize God in one fashion or another, you will greatly increase his possibilities of recovery through the A.A. program. I have been able to provide this kind of assistance consistently in one-to-one counseling situations. People in groups resist Christological language. When alone, facing problems over which they have no control, they may find themselves identifying with Christ almost effortlessly.

If the addict is able to find in Christ a resource for recovery, then the counselor may recommend him to a Christian congregation gathered around Word and Sacrament—that is, gathered consistently around Powers higher than self. Consistent with your own denominational

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