**Mind and Ministry: to what extent is secular psychotherapy compatible with Christian pastoral care?**

**by Rebecca Guildea**

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the potential engagement with modern psychotherapy for those in Christian Ministry. In the face of a deepening mental health crisis in Irish society, pastors are increasingly likely to encounter situations of mental illness in their ministry, yet may be hesitant to recommend secular psychotherapy to sufferers. This dissertation aims to answer, theologically, certain basic questions that may surface when those in ministry encounter the field of psychotherapy. In attempts to provide, in Chapter 1, a foundation for reconciling biblical anthropology and concepts of ensoulment with a psychological and neuroscientific understanding of the person, based primarily on an exegesis of Genesis 1-3. Chapter 2 goes on to explore the reconciliation of a New Testament understanding of grace and sanctification with the role of modern psychology in inner healing, via an exegesis of Romans 7. Here, the reformed theology of common grace is proposed as the basis for reconciling sanctification aas understood by Paul, and psychotherapeutic techniques designed to bring about human flourishing. This is followed in Chapter 3, by a discussion of commonalities and potential conflict areas between discipleship in the Christian tradition, and modern psychotherapeutic technique. It discusses the interplay between secular psychotherapy and the approaches of Thomas Aquinas, Ignatius Loyola, Ignace Lepp, Anthony de Mello, Joyce Meyer, Richard Beck and Henry Cloud. In the final Chapter, Chapter 4, an analysis of variant viewpoints on the demonological nature of mental illness is offered. Neil Anderson’s model of demonization is critiques, but the chapter maintains that there is strong theological basis for belief in personal demonic forces. This chapter advocates the understanding of the demonic proposed by John Richards, Martin Israel and others. It sets forth recommendations for those ministering n such situation, including guidelines set out by member churches of the Anglican Communion.