LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPING CORE COUNSELING COMPETENCIES IN PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

A thesis project submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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December 2, 2011

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

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ABSTRACT

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPING CORE COUNSELING COMPETENCIES IN PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

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The purpose of this thesis project is to present the importance of developing four specific core competencies in the area of pastoral counseling. It is problematic that most pastors have received minimal or no training in counseling resulting in inadequate therapy when parishioners seek pastoral counseling during times of crisis. The material presented in this thesis project enables pastoral care givers to become proficient counselors through a series of learning objectives, best practices, critical tasks, and accomplished practices directed toward improving counseling competencies in the area of personal, marriage, and family counseling. Additionally, this project addresses the problem of pornography, and proposes a blueprint to be implemented in developing a church program that would assist men in overcoming addictions to pornography.

Abstract length: 121 words.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful wife, Terri.
Her sacrifice, love, patience, and encouragement gave me the strength to persevere.
She enabled my dream to become a reality!

"A man's greatest treasure is his wife -- she is a gift from the LORD."
Proverbs 18:22 CEV

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CHAPTER ONE

CONVEYING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CORE COUNSELING COMPETENCIES IN THE CONTEXT OF PASTORAL CARE

Introduction

Pastoral counseling opportunities are divine appointments with individual members of the church community. James Dittes, former Yale University Professor of Psychology of Religion, penned his reflections on the matter of pastoral counseling with these thoughts:

> However casual the person is while waiting around after a committee meeting or in crossing your path after church, however brazen, professional, or apologetic one is in claiming your time, however confident or pompous the person has always come across to you, when you hear the phrase, "Can I talk to you?" or a similar statement, it should be taken as the self-disclosure of a tormented person who feels unable to cope. It is possibly a cry for help more desperate than it sounds because it is a confession, to some degree, of personal deficiency and paralysis.[1]

The pastor is very often the initial crisis counselor sought out by people under the influence of a church ministry. Counseling sessions may occur formally in the church office; but, they also transpire naturally throughout the daily itinerary of the pastor as he or she interfaces with members of the congregation. Wayne Oates referred to this pastoral dynamic in the following manner, "You, as a pastor, move from one crisis to another with those whom you shepherd. In a single day, you may visit the mother of a newborn baby, give guidance to a person who is becoming a Christian, talk with high

[1] James E. Dittes, *Pastoral Counseling, the Basics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 18.

school or college graduates about their life work, unite a couple in marriage, comfort a person who is bereaved, call upon someone who is confronting a serious operation, and listen to the last words of a patient who is dying.[2]

Christian pastors throughout history and in all places have ministered to the presence of personal problems of their parishioners. J. R. Beck wrote, "We have not always labeled this important pastoral function as counseling; but, this function has always existed as a vital expression of ministry for undershepherds caring for their sheep in the name of the great Shepherd."[3] Influenced the past one-hundred years by the discipline of psychology and the past fifty years by counseling, parishioners have grown accustomed to counseling as an expected component of pastoral care. Therefore, inherent in the call of "shepherding a flock" is the necessity to be a competent and skilled counselor.

Most pastors grasp the significance of the pulpit ministry; but, some have not fully comprehended the weight of the counseling aspect. Clyde Narramore once stated, "It has been said that a minister who does not place a strong emphasis on counseling is only half a minister."[4] Preaching is a wonderful blessing; however, it may not always meet a church member's specific need. For example, a young woman is concerned about a matter standing in the way of marriage, but does not get the particular help she needs from the weekly sermon. Another young man is wrestling with homosexual feelings and knows unless his situation improves he is likely to have serious trouble; however, the

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[2] Wayne Oates, *The Christian Pastor*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1982), 17.

[3] J. R. Beck, *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 834-835.

[4] Clyde Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 11.

sermon is miles away from his personal issues.

Every pastor should keep in mind that God is very much interested in the individual person. Jesus manifested this during His earthly ministry. Even though Jesus was pressed by the multitudes, He visibly expressed His interest in individuals and was prepared to meet them at their specific point of need. Jesus called His disciples one by one; He met Nicodemus alone to discuss the things of God. He sat by a well and explained to a Samaritan woman how she could truly quench her thirst with the Living Water. During a bustling street procession, Jesus looked up into a tree and spotted a man sitting on a branch, then left the crowd and went to the man's home to personally discuss his spiritual needs. Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd stated that He left the ninety and nine to help one poor wandering sheep. Therefore, like Jesus, pastors must be well equipped to deal with individuals at their precise point of crisis.

Statement of the Problem

The project, *The Significance of Developing Core Counseling Competencies in Pastoral Care Ministry,* focuses on the development of core counseling competencies essential in the area of pastoral care ministry. Howard Clinebell, in his textbook *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, proposed that for clergy "it is important to obtain the best available supervised training in counseling, both academic and clinical, not only to avoid doing harm but to maximize one's abilities as an instrument of healing."[5] The problem is most pastors have not experienced such training. Some of the fault may lie in the shadow cast on counseling by Jay Adam's *nouthetic* movement; as a

[5] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 49.

result, pastors are hesitant to embrace the discipline of counseling apart from *sola scriptura*. The proponents of the *biblical counseling movement* thwart the use of psychology and psychotherapy, except in special circumstances. One could also blame the readiness of pastors to outsource their counseling responsibilities to counseling ministries, professional counselors, and counseling centers. However, most of the fault must be placed on the lack of pastoral counseling instruction provided in the Master of Divinity Degree programs of American Seminaries. Clinebell would go on to express that it is the competent pastoral counselor who will experience the privilege of guiding people on their inner journey toward wholeness. The minister, who has paid the price of disciplined study and training leading to competency, will experience the wonderful amazement and joy that comes with the realization one has been an instrument through which the Holy Spirit has brought healing and growth to another human being.[6]

After examining Master of Divinity degree curricula from a significant number and diverse selection of theological seminaries in the United States, this writer observed that students trained for pastoral ministry in these programs received minimal education in the discipline of counseling. The seminaries evaluated by this author, offered few, if any, compulsory classes or required minimal credit hours in the field of counseling. The Master of Divinity degree is considered by most institutions to be the only approved first master's degree for students preparing for a pastoral or preaching ministry, as well as any other ministry largely comprised of biblical teaching,[7] and is generally considered the degree required for ordination by most mainline denominations. Yet, most seminaries

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[6] Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 49.

[7] Southwestern Theological Baptist Seminary Catalog, Master of Divinity, http://www.swbts.edu/ catalog /page.cfm?id=32&open=3_area (accessed, July 18, 2011).

neglected an emphasis on pastoral care, which is a key component of pastoral ministry.

An examination of the data queried showed that required counseling courses in the Master of Divinity degrees surveyed by this writer only constituted 2.1 percent of institutional curricula. The information confirmed that the theological seminaries analyzed by this author offered less than one required counseling course, .76 percent, per Master of Divinity program; and, nearly one third, 32 percent, of the seminaries researched did not offer any required counseling classes in their Master of Divinity programs. Furthermore, the nature of most of the counseling classes offered, as part of the curriculum, was introductory rather than specialized.

Think about it, on any given Sunday what do pastors in America see as they look out over their congregations? They may see a husband who admitted his wife to a mental hospital the week before, a young wife deeply depressed by the tragic death of her husband, a couple who recently learned that their child has leukemia, an alcoholic wrestling with his addiction, a husband and wife struggling to overcome the agony of alienation in their marriage, a high school boy whose girlfriend is pregnant, an ambulatory paranoid women who did not responded to psychiatric treatment, a man facing surgery for a suspected malignancy, a man anticipating with near terror the emptiness he fears mandatory retirement will bring to his life, and the crisis list could go on and on. Howard Clinebell proposed, "Such people often trust the very fabric of their lives to the counseling skills of their minister. Frequently, the pastor is the only person they allow to enter their private hells;"[8] yet the reality is, in their desperate need, people will open their hearts to the pastor whether or not the pastor possesses the required

[8] Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 47.

counseling skills. Wayne Oates made the point that pastors do not enjoy the freedom of deciding whether or not to counsel when he stated, "The choice is not between counseling and not counseling, but between counseling in a disciplined and skilled way and counseling in an undisciplined and unskilled way."[9] The problem is many who pastor churches, lack significant training in one of the most important aspects of ministry, pastoral counseling.

Statement of Limitations

The field of counseling is a broad discipline with multiple areas of focus, each requiring unique competencies; however, for the purposes of this project, only four specific core counseling competencies were proposed and developed. After extensive reading on the topic of pastoral counseling, this writer asserts these four core counseling competencies undergird the genre of counseling referred to as "Pastoral Counseling." However, because psychology is progressive and constantly changing, one must approach pastoral counseling as a life-long learning experience, constantly expanding one's knowledge of the discipline. The four core counseling competencies unique to this project are limited to the following:

1. Knowing yourself to guide people
2. Developing your style to connect with people
3. Constructing your strategy to mend marriages
4. Building your plan to repair families

A supplemental section has been included as an appendix to this project pertaining to

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[9] Wayne Oates, *An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1959), vi.

"structuring your church to restore men."

Another limitation of this project relates to use of the Master of Divinity degree as a guideline for determining lack of training in pastoral care ministry. This author is aware that many pastors shepherd churches across America without possessing the Master of Divinity degree. Nevertheless, the Master of Divinity degree was selected because it is considered by most seminaries, educational institutions, and traditional denominations to be the minimum professional degree required for ordination. Traditional denominations primarily refer to the Anglican, Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan denominations. The Master of Divinity degree is also the preferred professional degree for both military and civilian chaplaincy. It should also be noted that the Master of Divinity degrees assessed were general Master of Divinity degrees or Master of Divinity degrees with a concentration in pastoral ministries; and, the research did not include Master of Divinity degrees with specializations in counseling or chaplaincy as these concentrations naturally required a significant number of counseling courses. Information about the Master of Divinity degrees was compiled from current online catalogues posted before July, 2011. The collection of data was for the purpose of establishing the following information, the percentage of curriculum committed to counseling education and the number of counseling courses offered per Master of Divinity degree.

A further limitation of this project pertains to the selection of American theological seminaries used in this writer's query of information about the Master of Divinity degrees. Although there are hundreds of excellent theological seminaries in the United States, it was necessary to select a diverse grouping of religious educational

institutions in order to achieve an accurate representation of facts for this research. Two limiting criteria were implemented in the selection process of theological seminaries reviewed for this project. The first criterion took into consideration the reputation of the theological institutions selected. In other words, whether sectarian or nonsectarian, these religious educational institutions were considered the "flagship seminaries" for those groups which support them. The second condition weighed the need for denominational diversity in the research data.

An added limitation relevant to this project deals with the definition of pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling may be viewed as distinct category of counseling subject to state or national licensure; or, it may be perceived as the counseling component of pastoral ministry. This project limits the definition to the latter.

A final limitation of this project concerns the nature in which the core counseling competencies are presented. The competencies are addressed and presented topically and are not presented in the form of detailed curriculum.

Definitions

The following terms are relevant to this thesis project and will be used repeatedly throughout. The definitions applied to these terms were influenced by this writer's research from multiple sources, the American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology[10] and the Dictionary of Counseling.[11]

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[10] *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007).

[11] Donald A. Biggs, *Dictionary of Counseling* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

Best Practice

Best practice is a term that has experienced "translational drift" over the years. A best practice, for the purposes of this project, is a technique or methodology that through experience and research has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success. Best practices offer a set of guidelines, ethics, or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action.

Clients

Clients for the purposes of this project are members of a church community or parish receiving pastoral care in the context of pastoral counseling. The term client and parishioner are often used interchangeably throughout this thesis project.

Competencies

Competencies are identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of pastoral counselors and their clients. Competencies can be objectively measured, enhanced, and improved through coaching and learning opportunities. The identified core competencies are applicable to basic pastoral counseling.

Counseling

Counseling, generally speaking, is a non-medical discipline in which the goals are to facilitate and quicken personality growth and development for the purpose of helping persons modify life patterns with which they have become increasingly unhappy; and, to provide camaraderie and wisdom for persons facing the inevitable losses and

disappointments in life. Counseling is a systematic approach to problem solving that focuses on helping clients deal with their presenting problems.

Interventions

Interventions are actions taken on the part of a counselor to deal with the issues and problems of a client/parishioner. The selection of the intervention is guided by the nature of the problem, the orientation of the pastoral counselor, the setting, and the willingness of the client to proceed with the treatment.

Pastor

Pastor is an ordained minister serving the body of Christ either locally or at large. It is the assumption of this author that pastors are those who have received ordination by a church or denomination that has tested the theological acumen of the individual in addition to significant biblical and theological training manifested in the form of academic validation.

Pastoral Counseling

Pastoral Counseling is a reparative function needed when the growth of persons is seriously jeopardized or blocked by crisis. Pastoral counseling occurs when the counselor and counselee focus their relationship upon the relationship of God for the process of restoration. God becomes the third person in the relationship; and, instead of being simply dialogue, a trialogue is formed. People need pastoral care throughout their lives, but usually need pastoral counseling during a severe crisis. According to the American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, a pastoral counselor is one who has received advanced training in one or several of the behavioral sciences in

addition to religious training, theological training, or both.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is a form of psychological treatment for problems of an emotional or spiritual nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with a client for the purpose of removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms of mediating disturbing patterns of behavior, and of promoting positive personality growth and development.

Biblical and Theoretical Basis

Master's Seminary president and noted preacher, John MacArthur, declared, "Counseling, particularly counseling that employs and applies God's Word, is a necessary duty of Christian life and fellowship."[12] Since apostolic times, counseling has been a natural function of corporate spiritual life. The Bible commands believers to "admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14)[13]; "encourage one another" (Heb. 3:13); "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18); "build up one another" (1 Thess. 5:11); "confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another" (James 5:16). Along with these commands is the biblical assumption of preparedness. The Apostle Peter encouraged his readers to "always be ready to explain" their hope "in a gentle and respectful way" (1 Peter 3:15-16 NLT); therefore, effective Christ-centered counseling, on any level, is never to be approached in a haphazard manner.

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[12] John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 3.

[13] All scriptures presented in this writer's thesis project, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

The great Baptist minister, W. A. Criswell, once said, "Someday, sometimes, somewhere, every one of us will desperately need the presence and prayers of the preacher. He is God's man to show the right way or give us strength to follow what we ought to do."[14] Criswell considered it a tremendous opportunity to minister as a shepherd-counselor to the needs of the people of God. Jay Adams considered pastoral counseling a significant part of the sum of the whole pastoral activity when he stated, "Pastoral counseling is special, but not a separate area of pastoral activity; indeed, biblically it is close to the heart of shepherding. It involves the extension of help to the wandering, torn, defeated, dispirited sheep who need the restoring mentioned in Psalm 23:3 ('He restoreth my soul')."[15] When a minister neglects the ministry of counseling, other crucial areas of the ministry suffers, such as preaching. When a pastor is not involved in the lives of the people, the pastor loses touch with the difficulties and the thought processes and habits that lead to problems; as a result, the sheep will not be properly prepared for spiritual warfare.[16] Pastors are individuals who have the privilege of leading the way by responding to the words of the Apostle Paul, "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength" (Rom. 15:1), and the occasion to fulfill the law of Christ by carrying the burdens of others (Gal. 6:2 NLT). Because of the significance of pastoral counseling, the pastor of the church congregation should be extremely well prepared to counsel. Paul advised his protégé, Timothy, "Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage

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[14] W.A. Criswell, *Criswell's Guide for Pastors* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1980), 273.

[15] Jay E. Adams, *Shepherding God's Flock* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 172.

[16] MacArthur, *Counseling; How to Counsel Biblically*, 234.

your people with good teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2 NLT).

Already established in the introduction to this thesis project is the inherent responsibility of pastors to counsel as part of one's call to shepherd a flock. The problem posed in this thesis project is, in the area of counseling, many ministers lack suitable training and education partly due to the fact that they received only minimal course instruction and field training in counseling from their seminary educations. An informal scrutiny, by this writer, of lower theological institutional curriculum, such as Bible College and other undergraduate degrees, yielded similar results to that of the seminary research. It is the recommendation of this author that, in addition to proper theological training for the purpose of becoming competent pastoral care givers, pastors should develop four core counseling competencies that are foundational to the discipline of pastoral counseling. Ideally, these core competencies could be delivered in an academic venue, and more specifically, as a required part of all Master of Divinity degree programs, no matter what the specialization or concentration may be.

The theoretical element of this project is based on the notion that the goal of pastoral counseling is holistic healing. The scriptural basis for this approach is demonstrated by our Lord in Mark's gospel account of the life of Christ. Jesus, seeing the faith of a paralyzed man and the four men who had just lowered him through the roof of the crowded home where He was preaching, said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5) and then proceeded to heal the man from his physical affliction (Mark 2:11). In spite of the theological debate surrounding the healing event, the young man got up, took his mat, and confidently walked out in full view of all of them (Mark 2:12). This young man had been spiritually healed through the forgiveness of his sins,

physically mended and no longer paralyzed, and theologically restored being convinced that Jesus Christ was God and had the authority to forgive his personal sins.

From a holistic counseling perspective, the effectual pastoral counselor offers help psychologically, theologically, and spiritually. The pastoral counselor is professionally able to participate fully in a psychological treatment relationship. At the same time, the pastoral counselor identifies with and reflects on emotions within the counseling relationship, the pastoral care giver is also evaluating and assessing from outside the counseling relationship. The pastoral counselor is noticing facial expressions, non-verbal gestures, voice tone, and styles of relating. Mastering this type of psychological practice requires education, instruction, and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, the pastoral counselor considers the theological perspectives that connect to the assorted tasks of counseling. Historical and systematic theology, biblical understanding, as well as Christian tradition are respected and deemed to be key elements of pastoral counseling. In order to accomplish these goals, one must have a basic working knowledge of the God's Word, Christian history, and theological systems. Furthermore, the pastoral counselor is concerned with understanding the spiritual life of the client. Mark McMinn expressed the pastor's concern for the spiritual life of the client in this manner,

> How are the clients' problems related to spiritual development? When is a problem simply a behavioral habit to be eliminated or reshaped; and, when is a problem a reflection of deep, inner yearnings for intimacy with God and others? How can a treatment relationship be crafted to foster qualities of humility and insight? When, if ever, should prayer or scripture memory be used in counseling or prescribed to a client?[17]

These questions are rarely considered by most mental health therapists; but, pastoral

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[17] Mark R. McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Carol Stream, IL: Tydale House Publishers, 1996), 270.

counselors regularly encounter questions such as these. To address these issues, one must be a trained and skilled spiritual practitioner.

The theoretical premise of this thesis project based on the importance of counseling in the Word of God, the significance of the role of pastoral counseling within the context of pastoral care, and the impact of holistic healing on one's spiritual wellbeing is that the pastor must develop and master the following core competencies in order to effectively fulfill the role of pastoral counselor. First, in order to astutely guide others, one must know one's self within the spectrum of one's personality, personal spirituality and theological worldview. This is achieved through a variety of primary "learning objectives." Second, one ought to develop a relational style action plan in order to connect with individual clients. This is attained by implementing specific "best practices" into one's manner of counseling. Third, one should master the "critical task" of constructing the appropriate counseling strategies for the purpose of providing a holistic healing process for couples. Fourth, it is necessary for the pastoral counselor to be proficient in two explicit "accomplished practices" connected with treating distressed families and bringing stabilization into the lives of clients affected by emergency and nonemergency calamity. Finally, the pastoral counselor will be capable of forming group treatment therapies for men desiring to overcome pornography, one of the strongest and most addictive behaviors having a negative impact on the church in today's culture. Developing a program for restoration is a crucial goal in this problematic area. Mastering these significant core counseling competencies enables the pastoral counselor to confidently face the biblical responsibility to "be prepared whether the time is favorable or not" in order to "patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good

teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2 NLT) both from the pulpit and in the areas of individual and family pastoral counseling.

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project provides a viable solution addressing the problem of a lack of counseling training in the area of pastoral counseling in the following manner:

- This project will present "learning objectives" designed to assist the pastoral counselor in the area of self-awareness, a critical component enabling one to guide others.
- This project will establish "best practices" for developing the pastoral counselor's relational style with clients.
- This project will deal with the "critical task" of developing a strategic approach to couples' counseling.
- This project will recommend two "accomplished practices" for counseling families in distress.
- This project will address the problem of men and internet pornography as well as propose a group therapy design to be implemented in developing a church program assisting people in overcoming addictions to internet pornography.

The breakdown of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter One – Conveying the Significance of Core Counseling Competencies in the Context of Pastoral Care

Chapter one introduces the importance of pastoral counseling and the necessity for pastors to master five core counseling competencies that are central to this area of

pastoral ministry. Chapter one also states the problem addressed by this thesis project, affirms the limitations of the thesis project, and delineate definitions that are relevant to this thesis project. Additionally, chapter one presents the methodology by which the stated problem will be solved and reviews literature pertinent to research for this thesis project.

Chapter Two – Knowing Yourself to Guide People

Chapter Two presents core competency number one, "Knowing Yourself to Guide People," and is delineated through three personal learning objectives for the pastoral counselor. The first learning objective unfolds one's life as it is understood in the present and poses the reflective question, "who am I right now and how did I get here?" In addition to personal analysis and reflection, three diagnostic tools were used to support this portion of the thesis project, the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, the *Uniquely You Professional/Leader Profile* diagnostic tool, and the *Adjective Checklist ACL* diagnostic. The second learning objective unfolds one's life as one desires it to be. One's preferred life story considers areas in the life of the pastor that need improvement or change. The third learning objective establishes a plan for change which involves creating master goals that include the analysis of present realities, the shaping of preferences, structuring for change, and setting up support and accountability.

Chapter Three – Developing Your Style to Connect with People

Chapter Three discusses core competency number two, "Developing Your Style to Connect with People," and is allocated through three "best practices" established for pastoral counselors engaging individual clients in today's church. These "best practices"

include learning concepts, skills, and resources necessary to effectively, ethically and safely approach parishioners within the context of pastoral counseling. In order to master these "best practices," pastoral care-givers must address the following critical issues: First, the pastoral counselor must judge the importance of integrating the Bible into the counseling model. Second, the pastoral counselor will consider the proper relational style for creating a context of change and relocation as well as constructing an ethical and safe environment for counseling. Third, the pastoral therapist resolves to address the counseling setting, bearing in mind matters of cultural diversity and how one will influence change within that context. Finally, pastoral counselors are to be astute strategist especially in the area of Solution-Based Brief Pastoral Counseling (SBBFC).

Chapter Four – Constructing Your Strategy to Mend Marriages

Chapter Four, addresses core competency number three, "Constructing Your Strategy to Mend Marriages," and is described as the critical task of developing a strategic approach to counseling couples. Core competency number three presents many of the prevailing psychological theories that have formed the basis for strategic therapies used in couples' and marriage counseling today. It is important that pastoral counselors recognize not only the significance of providing spiritual help for their clients, but also the ability to corroborate appropriate psychological therapies for the purpose of achieving the holistic wellbeing of the couples being counseled. The information presented in this chapter discusses the major tenets and techniques associated with an eclectic group of family theories for the purpose of exposing a cross section of relevant psychological therapies for implementation when counseling couples in distress. This chapter assumes that pastoral counselors are already astute in the techniques of spiritual counseling,

therefore, directing most of its information toward the area of Psychology. The collected facts will provide information to assist pastoral counselors in partnering spiritual and psychological issues through the basic knowledge of these selected therapies.

Chapter Five – Building Your Plan to Repair Families

Chapter Five speaks to core competency number four, "Building Your Plan to Repair Families" by recommending two accomplished practices for counseling families in distress. Accomplished practice one is "embracing a theological foundation" supporting the psychotherapy provided by the pastoral caretaker in times of crisis. Accomplished practice two encompasses "mastering Christian Integrative Psychotherapy," a combination of relational and cognitive therapy as a primary therapeutic tool. This integrative approach fits extremely well with the Christian worldview of most pastoral caregivers.

Appendix B – Structuring Your Church to Restore Men

Appendix B covers "Structuring Your Church to Restore Men," and addresses the problem of men and internet pornography as well as a plan for developing a church program assisting people in overcoming addictions to internet pornography. Because of the shameful stigma attached to this condition, churches tend to shy away from constructing a biblical healing process in this critical need area. The information presented in this chapter unfolds a threefold reparative plan for pastoral counselors of churches that desire to accept responsibility and exhibit compassion to men who struggle with the issue of pornography.

Review of the Literature

Books and journals from experts in the fields of pastoral counseling and Christian counseling are an important component of the process of gathering information and proof for this thesis project. Examining expert contributions from various authorities on this topic provided this writer with a well-rounded point of view on the five core counseling competencies presented in this project. The following is a review of the key literature beneficial to this thesis project:

A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication by Blake J. Neff

A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication, the Other Six Days was a tremendous resource addressing the issue of personal dialogue. This book provided insight and expert training needed by pastors for those personal one-on-one conversations pastoral counselors can expect. Neff's work explored the dynamics of communication and detailed the communication tools available to communicators. This book comprehensively analyzed a variety of topics including perception, self-disclosure, verbal and nonverbal messages, listening, stages of relational development, power assertiveness and dominance, conflict management, forgiveness, persuasion, dual relationships, pastoral family communication, and how to develop a communications model.[18]

The Bible

Isaiah 9:6

The information in this thesis project presents Jesus as the ultimate authority in counseling. It is noteworthy that the prophet Isaiah was inspired by the Holy Spirit to

[18] Blake J. Neff, *A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication* (New York, NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2006).

present our Savior, Jesus Christ, as the "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). Jesus is the highest and ultimate authority to whom one may turn for counsel; and, His Word is the well from which one may draw godly wisdom. One of the magnificent aspects of Christ's perfect sufficiency is the superb counsel and great wisdom He supplies through His Word in our times of despair, confusion, fear, anxiety, and sorrow. One of the primary purposes of the pastoral counselor is to expose the counselee to the healing and encouraging truths of God's Word. All scriptures presented in this author's thesis project, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

The material in thesis project proclaims the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and practice for counseling. The Bible is God's written revelation to man; therefore, the sixty-six books of the Bible, given by the Holy Spirit, constitute the plenary Word of God. The Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation verbally inspired in every word, absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. As the Apostle Paul stated, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. That is to say, the Holy Spirit administered the human authors; and through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man without error. The Bible is the ultimate tool for pastoral counseling.

2 Corinthians 8:10 and Acts 5:38-39

All components of this thesis project maintain that wise pastoral counseling is based on spiritual maturity and knowledge. The Apostle Paul's statement, "Here is my advice" (2 Cor. 8:10 NLT), provides Christian counselors with a biblical example of one giving preferred counsel based on maturity, knowledge, and guidance from the Holy Spirit. The same tone of mature deliberation is presented in the book of Acts as the Jewish leader, Gamaliel, advised the Sanhedrin regarding Jesus' followers and stated, "So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:38-39 NLT). The Bible values wise counsel based on spiritual maturity and knowledge.

1Thessalonians 2:11-12 and Romans 12:8

The ideas proposed in thesis project uphold the notion that pastoral counseling and encouragement are synonymous. One of the inherent responsibilities of pastoral counseling is encouragement. Biblical encouragement in its purest and simplest definition means to come alongside someone as a helper. The Apostle Paul reminded believers in Thessalonica of his caring and helpful pastoral actions with these words, "For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God" (1Thess. 2:11-12). Encouragement strengthens and calls out renewed commitment. Typically, believers are encouraged to some godly course of action. The purpose of encouragement is that one may be strengthened for rehabilitated faith and obedience. How wonderful then is the

spiritual gift of encouragement (Rom. 12:8)! As pastoral counselors exercise the spiritual gift of encouragement, counselees are strengthened and enabled to experience positive spiritual growth and victorious Christian living.

Colossians 4:6, 1 Peter 3:15, and James 3:1

The concepts presented in this thesis advocate contemplative speech. God's Word says, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Col. 4:6), thus reminding pastoral counselors that the gracious demeanor with which one extends counsel is as vital as the advice one gives. The example of salt provides two notable concepts; not only does salt add flavor, it also prevents corruption. Therefore, salt metaphorically symbolizes the importance of tactful, yet confronting, advice if necessary. The Apostle Peter enhances the importance of the counselor's dialogue when he states, "But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15), indicating the critical nature of training and preparation for those who intend to help others with hopeful and helpful advice. Preparation will aid the counselor's speech in the areas of "gentleness and respect." The pastoral counselor's speech is always pensively presented in the tension addressed in the book of James which says, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1).

1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23, Romans 14:21, and 1 Corinthians 8:13

The ideals brought forth in thesis project show that pastoral counseling is not always subjected to expediency and pragmatism. In other words, although a method, intervention, or technique may be ethically permitted for a pastoral counselor to practice, it may not be to the client's spiritual benefit. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers, "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful" (1 Cor. 6:12); and, "All things are lawful, but not all things build up" (1 Cor. 10:23). Pastoral counselors must be extremely careful not to "allow the end to justify the means;" and as a result, cause weaker brothers or sisters in the faith to stumble, or worse, to fall into sin. It is better to follow the biblical principle stated in Romans 14:21 (CNT), "The right thing to do is to keep from eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that will make other believers fall." As the proverbial statement says, "It is better to err on the side of caution," "lest I make my brother stumble" (1 Cor. 8:13).

Proverbs 11:14, Proverbs 24:6 and Proverbs 24:15

All parts of this thesis project grasp the importance of counselors in dispensing godly advice and direction. The book of Proverbs is a valuable collection of God's wisdom for His people. The spiritual, ethical, psychological, intellectual, physical, marital, social, and professional areas of our lives are addressed in this book of wisdom. The practical advice delineated in the book of Proverbs is that the way of wisdom is respect for God, doing right, and using common sense to develop life patterns that will bring joy, harmony, and accomplishment in all areas of life. The book of Proverbs recognizes that counselors are an integral part of staying the course toward these goals. The writer of Proverbs reminds the reader of the importance of counselors when it says,

"Where there is no guidance, the people fall" (Prov. 11:14) and "by wise guidance you can wage your war" (Prov. 24:6). How many persons, couples, and families are waging war against numerous issues; yet, the book of Proverbs says the benefits of counselors are safety and victory (Prov. 11:14, 24:6). The book of Proverbs posits the idea that one often needs wisdom to be pointed in the right direction and to give confidence that one is empowered in the movement toward good goals. The book of Proverbs reminds one that it is "a wise man that listens to advice" (Prov. 12:15).

Proverbs 27:17

The views asserted in thesis project comprehend the importance of peer friendship in the area of pastoral counseling. One of the most recognized passages of scripture is "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). This proverbial truth reminds every pastoral counselor of the need to debrief with a friend or peer. It would be a recommended practice that pastoral counselors enlist a personal mentor or colleague for the purposes of debriefing, encouragement, and personal support.

Christian Counseling Today (Journal)

Contributions from a variety of articles examined in various issues of *Christian Counseling Today* have influenced numerous portions of this thesis project. For example, Stephen Arterburn's, "Your Cheating Heart: Men and Pornography" inspired much of what was written in chapter six which addressed the topic of men and internet pornography. Below is a sample excerpt from that article.

> Just as drug professionals are familiar with drug content, drug paraphernalia, and drug delivery systems, those familiar with pornography implement the internet more and more as the preferred delivery system for their virtual sexual "fix." The internet has allowed men, with ease and anonymity, to become deeply involved with this sinister sin. Sadly, virtual pornography has become the "drug of choice" among conservative Christian men as well.[19]

This writer is extremely grateful to the American Association of Christian Counselors for distributing such a high quality counseling journal with a wide variety of perspectives.

Hoped-Focused Marriage Counseling by Dr. Everett L. Worthington

Dr. Everett L. Worthington's work, *Hoped- Focused Marriage Counseling,* was helpful in constructing the critical task of developing a strategic approach for counseling couples presented in chapter four of this thesis project. This book proved to be a comprehensive and tightly organized theory of Christian marriage counseling based on promoting hope and teaching couples a strategy to build love, faith, and work into their relationships within the parameter of a sufficient, yet limited number of therapeutic sessions. Dr. Worthington proposed a concise, well-organized, and powerful approach to helping couples in distress. His approach flexibly and eclectically drew from interventions originally developed within disparate theoretical frameworks. The author integrated, under a unifying strategy for marriage, interventions drawn from other approaches as well as his own interventions. These interventions focused on fostering hope in partners, the therapist's allegiance to the principles of scripture, and the work of the Holy Spirit in helping couples handle problems. Hope-focused marriage counseling is an evidenced-based Christian approach to counseling couples with a genuinely brief

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[19] Stephen Arterburn, "Your Cheating Heart: Men and Pornography," *Christian Counseling Today,* 14.1 (2006): 12.

and flexible system that extracts from both theology and psychology.[20]

How People Grow by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Two key assumptions supporting this thesis project are the integration of biblical counseling with psychology and the connection of spiritual growth to psychological catharsis. One of the books helpful in assimilating these two notions in the fabric of this thesis project is *How People Grow – What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. The authors supported the previously mentioned concepts by presenting the holistic impact of spiritual growth on relationship problems, emotional problems, and all other problems of life. Cloud and Townsend rejected the notion that one set of solutions exists for spiritual life issues and another for real-life issues. This book detailed how the Word of God and spiritual life speak to the process in which people grow out of their problems. The overarching goal of the research presented in this book is to get people back into a proper relationship with God. However, in addition to the primary goal of the book are the ideals of reconciling people to each other and reconciling people to the ways of holiness and pure living. Spiritual growth is not only coming back into a relationship with God and each other, not just about pursuing a pure life; it is also about coming back to the life that God created people to live, a life of deep relationship, fulfilling work, celebration, and a life that now provides satisfaction and solves problems. [21]

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[20] Everett L. Worthington Jr., *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005).

[21] Henry Cloud, and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004).

How to Solve the People Puzzle by Dr. Mels Carbonell

How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding Personality Patterns presented the value of profiling and assessing the personality patterns of people according to the DISC model of human behavior. The DISC model of human behavior was first introduced by William Marston in 1928 and segregated basic human behavior into four quadrants, which often explained why people do what they do. In 1977, Dr. John Geier, chairman of the Human Behavior Science Department at the University of Minnesota, designed the first paper assessment which identified a person's DISC personality type using a business and personal perspective. After studying under Dr. Geier and Dr. Frank Wichern, staff psychologist at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Carbonell designed his unique combination of personality and faith-based profiles. The comprehension of various human behavior patterns and combinations of human behavior shapes within the DISC model provided profiling rationale for the actions of people within the circumference of relational environments. According to Dr. Carbonell, insight from this information can make the difference between right and wrong responses, and the best or worst behavior in any situation. In his book, Dr. Carbonell profiled various combinations of personality patterns through the grid of two different but identical graphs. "Graph One," was designed to describe specific personality types from a public perspective; and, "Graph Two" discussed particular personality types when individuals were either in their home environments or in settings among friends and relatives. Dr. Carbonell concluded that when individuals were either in public or private environments, they tended to have different relational expectations. The purpose of Dr. Carbonell's book was to assist the reader in developing controlled responses in one's behavior when dealing with other

people. Dr. Carbonell concluded, "We cannot control what others say and do, but we can affect their responses by how we say and do things." Therefore, since behavior is the greatest cause for our happiness and hurts, it only stands to reason that one focus on improving one's relationships.[22]

Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts by Les and Leslie Parrott

The Parrott's book *Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts* was an important source in constructing the critical task of developing a strategic approach to counseling couples outlined in chapter three of this project. According to the authors, every couple marrying today is at risk. More than two-hundred thousand new marriages each year end prior to the second anniversary. The truth is most engaged couples prepare more for their wedding day than they do for their marriage. What would the impact be if the same amount of time, money, and energy spent on the ceremony was invested in the marriage? Because of significant marriage research, more is known today about building a successful marriage than ever before. For instance, it has been proven that happily married couples have healthy expectations of marriage, realistic concepts of love, positive attitudes and outlooks toward life, the ability to communicate their feelings, an understanding and acceptance of their gender differences, the ability to make decisions and settle arguments, and a common spiritual foundation and goal. The previous list forms the basis of the seven questions posed by the authors in this work. This book was based on the notion that marriage does not have to be a gamble. Most couples tend to mistakenly blame the wrong things for breakups and marital dissatisfaction; therefore, the

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[22] Mels Carbonell, *How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding Personality Patterns* (Blue Ridge, GA: Uniquely You Resources, 2008), 303.

Parrott's directed their book toward the genuine causes of marital conflict. The authors discovered that learning to live "happily ever after" is "less a mystery than the mastery of certain skills." The book was well-rounded and appropriate for those people who are single or dating, in committed relationships, contemplating marriage, or already established in marriage.[23]

Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling by Charles Allen Kollar

Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling was influential to this author as Kollar presented the significance of developing a positive, affirmative, and effective short-term counseling model. In recent years, many pastoral counselors have embraced several forms of brief counseling therapies; however, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling* is a specific form of brief therapy that is motivated by a clear and firm agenda with which solution-focused pastoral counselors move quickly in the very first session of counseling, directing the counselee's focus onto resolutions rather than allowing continued focus on problems. One of the unique features of Kollar's model is that it avoids the difficulty of permitting a problem to become an identifying feature of someone's personality, i.e. "He is an alcoholic" instead of "He struggles with alcoholism."

The Counsel of Heaven and Earth by Ian Jones

Ian Jones's book, *The Counsel of Heaven and Earth,* also provided valuable insight into incorporating the components of integrating biblical counseling with psychotherapy, and connecting spiritual growth to psychological catharsis. According to Jones, biblically based counselors need a clear understanding of the question and

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[23] Les Parrott and L. Parrott, *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

commitment to the call of God upon their lives. In this book, the author stressed that a full and complete understanding of human nature and our world, necessary for an effective biblical counseling ministry, cannot be understood outside the revelation of God. Comparatively, all secular counseling theories have a fundamental flaw. The common denominator of secular counseling is that the individual and society is at the center of all change. Secular counseling has a tendency to focus on the horizontal dimension of relationships but ignores the divine or vertical aspect. As Jones stated, "The motivation for change and the behavioral drives originate somewhere on a continuum between individual freedom to choose and social or biological pressure to conform."[24] Therefore, the implication attached to the secular theories derived from this notion are that counseling must address the self by addressing personal awareness or by reprogramming the cognitive or behavioral dimensions; or, it must reorder the social and biological forces that shape a person's world. In contrast, Jones drew from the example of God's efforts in Genesis to reconcile and restore Adam and Eve and proposed three dimensions that must be addressed in Christian counseling – one's location in relationship to self, to others, and to God. Biblical Christian counselors are to recognize the importance of finding a counselee's spiritual, psychological, and social location. Driven by Christ's example and compelled to compassion by the Great Commandment, Ian Jones encouraged biblical counselors to address the issue of location and lostness, and to develop a process to help a person who has wandered off track find the path home. In this book, Jones placed a high value on the spiritual condition of the counselor.

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[24] Ian F. Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven and Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling* (Nashville, TN: B &H Publishing Group, 2006), 24.

The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg

John Ortberg's, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, was a valuable resource for establishing the learning objectives in chapter two of this thesis project. Ortberg's book provided a practical guide for accomplishing the goal of genuine spiritual transformation. The book described the means for authentic Christianity through the application of ten specific spiritual disciplines. In many ways, the book reflected Dallas Willard's classic work on discipleship, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives;* however, in this writer's opinion, Ortberg's sensible and matter-of-fact approach to the topic brought forward a contemporary relevance for the purposes of this project. Ortberg perceived the sad cry of the human race to be an overwhelming contentment with the status quo, the tendency to say, "I am what I am." Ortberg pointed out, one was originally called to be the person that God had in mind when originally designed by the Heavenly Father; therefore, there existed a struggle between disappointment and hope that could only be satisfied through some sort of process of life transformation. Ortberg concluded the desire for transformation lies deep in every human heart, which is why people entered therapy, joined health clubs, assimilated into recovery groups, read self-help books, attended motivational seminars, and made New Year's resolutions. According to the author, the possibility of transformation provides the essence of hope. Ortberg constructed his book upon the premise that Jesus brought a message that was significantly more than simply conforming to a religious subculture; rather, He brought a message that spoke to the deepest longings of the human heart to be transformed into "new creatures." Ortberg articulated that the goal for every Christian life is to be

conformed and molded into the exact image of Christ.[25]

The Skilled Helper by Gerard Egan

Gerard Eagan's book, *The Skilled Helper: A Problem Management Approach to Helping* provided the framework for the three learning objectives that are part of the first core competency in this thesis project. Egan is Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Organizational Studies at Loyola University of Chicago and is a leading expert in the areas of communication, counseling, business and organization effectiveness, management development, leadership, the management of innovation and change, and organization politics and culture. Eagan's book, *The Skilled Helper*, outlines what counselors can do to assist clients as they develop an action plan leading to valued outcomes while being guided by a counselor through three progressive stages of assistance. This classic book provides a working model that helps one know what to do during client interactions, and proved to be extremely beneficial to this thesis project.[26]

Other Influential Books

In the past forty years, a counseling revolution occurred. Evangelicals are now impactful in the field of counseling as they are presently writing about counseling procedures and counselor education. They have written best sellers and have founded thriving graduate programs and counseling centers. However, two distinct schools of thought emerged in the counseling revolution. One group developed in the footsteps of Dr. Clyde Narramore and was influenced along the lines of Fuller Seminary's Graduate

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[25] John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

[26] Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper,* 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1994).

School of Psychology. The core philosophy of this counseling approach is that wise counseling requires evangelical faith be carefully integrated with the theories, therapeutic methods, and professional roles of modern psychology.[27] The other group developed in the footsteps of Jay Adams and along the lines of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation's pastoral training at Westminster Seminary. This school of thought proposes that wise counseling recognizes biblical mandates and the development of a comprehensive pastoral theology that is distinct from prevailing cultural paradigms.[28] In order to approach this thesis project with a well-rounded philosophy of pastoral counseling from both points of view, this author found the following classic textbooks books very helpful:

> *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* by Howard Clinebell, Abingdon Press, 1984
>
> *Care for the Soul*, edited by Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips, Inter Varsity Press, 2001
>
> *Competent to Counsel* by Jay Adams, Zondervan, 1986
>
> *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* by John MacArthur, W Publishing Group, 1984
>
> *The Psychology of Counseling* by Clyde Narramore, Zondervan, 1960

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[27] Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips, *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, ILL: Inter Varsity Press, 2001), 25.

[28] Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER TWO

CORE COMPETENCY ONE
KNOWING YOURSELF TO GUIDE OTHERS

Introduction

A significant portion of core competency number one was inspired by and crafted from material presented by Dr. Ron Hawkins and Dr. Dwight Rice in the course, *The Growth and Development of the Contemporary Ministry*, offered as part of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. During this course, the Doctor of Ministry students, including this writer, were required to personally utilize a number of assessment tools and to practice a number of defined methods of introspection for the purpose of developing keen self- awareness in order to enhance competency in the area of pastoral care and counseling. As a result of this author's personal experience with the components presented as "Core Competency One, Knowing Yourself to Guide People," information from this author's assessments and evaluations has been contributed to support the presentation of significant core competency number one.

Over fifty years ago, the esteemed pioneer of pastoral counseling, Clyde Narramore, wrote these still relevant words,

> People sometimes ask, "What is the most important thing in counseling?" The answer is, "The Counselor." Naturally the counselor's techniques are very important. He should also have an understanding of human behavior and knowledge of bibliography as well as sources of referral at his command. But the most important element in counseling is the counselor himself. Counseling is, in a sense, a projection of the counselor. You have heard the comment, "We rub off on people." This is especially true in counseling. The counselee subtly learns to consider problems in the same way as does the counselor. As time is spent together, the counselee is greatly influenced." [1]

The previous quotation reflects the significance of the pastoral counselor's personal impact on the counselee in the arena of counseling. Therefore, one must have a keen perspective of self and one must comprehend the strengths and weaknesses of one's temperament in order to assist and lead clients through the process of counseling. No one should be better qualified to counsel than one called to pastoral ministry. The minister has accurate insight into human nature and knows that true wisdom and understanding emanates from God. The pastor personally understands that it is through God's Word that the answers to life's problems are found. Also, one who shepherds realizes the significance of the powerful resource of prayer. To be a good counselor, the minister must be the right kind of person consistently growing in the grace and knowledge of one's Lord and Savior, constantly developing an attractive personality that radiates Jesus Christ. The purpose of this core competency is to provide the pastoral counselor a self-evaluation instrument that can be initially implemented and regularly tweaked throughout one's counseling ministry because personal spiritual growth is such a critical component of being competent to counsel.

It has often been said that one cannot successfully lead someone where one has not already gone, or at least has been willing to go. Therefore, it is befitting for the pastoral counselor to work on changing and improving one's self before trying to

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[1] Clyde Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960), 18.

improve others. That is why John Maxwell proposed, "As a leader, the first person I need to lead is me. The first person I should try to change is me. My standards of excellence should be higher for myself than those I set for others. To remain a credible leader, I must always work first, hardest, and longest on changing myself. This is neither easy nor natural, but it is essential.[2] Christian Psychologist Eric Scalise said, "Only a leader who has followed well knows how to lead others well… Connecting with clients becomes possible because one has walked in their shoes."[3] Competent leadership through counseling requires an understanding of the world in which clients live. Echoing this line of thinking, Dr. Melvin C. Blanchette, an expert in the field of pastoral psychology, stated,

> There is indeed a commonality among those who share the human condition. Growth begins only when one accepts his or her unique starting point and that the greatest struggle in life is not with outside forces but with inside feelings which must be brought to awareness, understood, and hopefully worked through to insight and acceptance; once we have come to such a point in our personal lives, our professional activities as psychologists, pastoral counselors, social workers, or mental health professionals will certainly afford us greater happiness, and better care to our clients.[4]

Therefore, the pastor who is competent to lead others through counseling must be emotionally, physically, and spiritually centered by securely affirming both inwardly and outwardly one's personal identity.

Pastoral counselors, by virtue of their position in ministry, are automatically thrust into the position of leadership and influence. Ministers lead church worshipers

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[2] John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 162.

[3] Eric Scalise, "Leadership Gold - Nuggets Mined From John Maxwell," *Christian Counseling Today,* 17, no. 4 (2011): 41-43.

[4] Melvin C. Blanchette, "Personal and Professional Growth Through Psychological Testing," in *Pastoral Counseling* 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 113.

corporately, they lead church staffs administratively, they lead congregations spiritually, and they lead parishioners exemplarily. Leadership at its most basic level is about influence; and, leading parishioners within the relational context of pastoral counseling is no exception to this rule. Because people do what people see, more often than not, the pastoral counselor will be trusted to authenticate client goals on the basis of personal practice and experience. As Norman Vincent Peale once said, "Nothing is more confusing than people who give good advice but set a bad example."[5] When people trust each other, incredible results are accomplished; however, when a lack of trust exists, a relationship becomes dysfunctional. Trust is a function of two characteristics; one is competence and the other is character. The pastoral caregiver must have the requisite abilities to be effective in the practice of pastoral help; but, ultimately it is about character. When ministers who counsel are authentic, humble, courageous, and effectively self-managed, people will listen.

The Importance of Self-Awareness

Competencies are identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of pastoral counselors. This author proposes that four significant core competencies are basic to the endeavor of appropriating credible pastoral care within the forum of pastoral counseling. The first of these significant core counseling competencies deals with the value of self-awareness as it relates to one's skill to properly evaluate and assess the condition and needs of clients.

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[5] Norman Vincent Peale, quoted in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John Maxwell (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 161.

Self-awareness benefits the pastoral counselor in numerous ways. To name just a few: It unlocks one's understanding to the role of emotion in healthy and unhealthy approaches to counseling. It opens the door to the development of personal skills required for maintaining a healthy relational lifestyle. It promotes the discussion of one's inner private world for the development of successful counseling strategies. Self-awareness identifies the strengths and weaknesses that one brings personally to the counseling context; and, it assists one in understanding how one's present counseling context fits with one's relational style.[6] Therefore, this writer proposes, within the context of core competency number one, three specific learning objectives, for the purpose of promoting self-awareness. The first learning objective directs the pastoral counselor toward unfolding one's current life story by asking the pastoral counselor to develop a personal profile, and to then address the following questions, "who am I right now," "how did I get here," "where am I now," followed by the composition of an overall conclusive summary. The second learning objective focuses on unfolding life as one wishes it to be. The ideal story considers areas in the life of the pastor that need improvement or change. The third learning objective unfolds a plan for change, which involves creating master goals that include the analysis of present realities, the shaping of preferences, structuring for change, and setting up support and accountability. These learning objectives were greatly influenced by "the skilled helper model" originally presented by Gerard Eagan in his textbook, *The Skilled Helper*.[7] Eagan's "helping model," the centerpiece of his book, moves clients through three stages: one's current

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[6] Carl Rogers and Barry Stevens, *Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human, a New Trend in Psychology* (Lafayette, CA: Real People Press, 1967), 85-101.

[7] Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper*, 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1994), 22-24.

scenario, one's preferred scenario, and one's strategy for achieving the preferred scenario. Self-awareness can, and does, enable personal and professional growth in the life and ministry of the pastoral counselor that can be translated into effective counseling techniques. It is important for the pastoral counselor to be aware of one's own needs, wounds, brokenness, and vulnerability as the unique struggle of another person is discovered through assessment and evaluation.

Before beginning the three learning objectives of this core competency, the pastoral counselor must consider two prerequisites. First, the pastoral counselor should receive course instruction in the importance of implementing assessment tools in one's counseling context as well as training in administering and analyzing assessments of a variety of instruments available to the field of Christian counseling. Second, the following suggested reading list ought to be completed before commencing to learning objective one:

Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships by Larry Crabb[8]

A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication by Blake Neff[9]

The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg [10]

Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading by Eugene Peterson[11]

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[8] Larry Crabb, *Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).

[9] B. J. Neff, *A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication* (New York, NY: The Hayworth Pastoral Press, 2006).

[10] John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

[11] Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006).

Learning Objective One: Unfolding Your Life as You Know It

Part A: The Personal Profile

The Method

The overall method for accomplishing the learning objectives associated with core competency number one is journaling; therefore, the pastoral counselor must construct a written document reflecting one's personal profile within the present life story. The initial component of unfolding one's current life, the personal profile, should include four elements. First, the profile should reflect on the pastoral counselor's marriage and family status. Second, it ought to contain the minister's present ministry context. Third, it must explain what drives the minister. Finally, it is necessary for the profile to consider the overarching goal in the life of the pastoral counselor. The length of the personal profile should be approximately four-hundred words and not exceed five-hundred words. As previously stated in the introduction to core competency number one and because this part of the thesis project deals with self-awareness, this author has provided personal samples to demonstrate the three learning objectives.

Sample: This Writer's "Personal Profile"

It is the heartfelt desire of this writer to daily pursue the personal objective of being a committed follower of Jesus Christ. This author has been married to Terri Younce, his high school sweetheart, for thirty-seven years. Terri is the Administrative Coordinator for the Department of Education and Behavioral Studies at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida where this author and his wife have lived for the past thirteen years. This writer and his wife have three adult children, Tara,

Craig (Butch), and Sara. Tara is married to Jeremiah Cody Smith; and, they have one child, Olivia Grace Janelle. Tara is an adjunct Professor of Education and Arts and Sciences at Palm Beach Atlantic University; and, Cody is a licensed mental health therapist who supervises child services counselors for the organization Boys and Girls Town of America. Butch is a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences who is a medical research for Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute; Butch also is an adjunct Professor of Biology at Valencia State College. He is married to Amy, an exceptional student education teacher in the Orlando, Florida public school system. Sara is married to Adam Boyd. Sara is a kindergarten five schoolteacher; she is also an enrichment teacher of dance and theatre at a prestigious private school. Sara has studied with Howard Gardener at Harvard University. She is also a private dance instructor and gives music lessons as well. Adam is retail manager and is completing his master's degree at Southern Seminary. This writer is the Pastor of Palms West Community Church in West Palm Beach, Florida where this writer's family, with the exception of Butch and Amy, are a vital part of his church ministry.

The information presented above is an important part of this author's present story because it is the culmination of what has driven this author's life for the past thirty-eight years. This writer's life priorities respectively revolve around this writer's love and commitment for God, his love and commitment for his wife, his love and commitment for his family, and his love and commitment for ministry; and, this writer believes that those priorities are consistent with his overarching goal in life, which is to be a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ. This author's overarching goal of being a fully-devoted

follower of Christ reflects his love and obedience to his Heavenly Father, and provides an example to others and his family of what it means to imitate Christ.

Part B: Who Am I Now?

The Method

The second element of unfolding one's current story requires the pastoral counselor to use self-assessment tools in order to discover the present reality about self. At least three personality/temperament assessment instruments should be taken and the results, as they influence the pastoral counselor's present context, are to be recorded in a journal. Preferably, the pastoral counselor should use the assessment tools that will normally be implemented within the pastor's own counseling context. After completing, scoring, and analyzing the assessment instruments, the pastoral counselor uses information gleaned from the evaluation tools to probe the issue of, "Who am I right now?" At this point, the pastoral counselor constructs a written self-analysis of his present story containing the following elements: a formal temperament diagnosis, the benefits of one's temperament, the limitations of one's temperament, how one's temperament connects to ministry, and an overall summary of one's temperament. This writer found this part of the exercise to be immensely valuable in discovering one's real-self as opposed to one's perception of self. Because this is the key research segment of learning objective number one, around fifteen hundred words would be expected. For the purpose of demonstrating this portion of learning objective one, this author personally employed three evaluation instruments. They were the MBTI Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument, the ACL Adjective Check List assessment tool, and the DISC

Personality Types and Profiles mechanism. This writer endorses five assessment tools to choose from as part of the first learning objective connected to core competency number one:

The Three Hundred Sixty Degree Feedback Interview:

This assessment permits one to gain insight from the perspective of those who are in one's sphere of influence. This assessment is typically a human resource tool but is quite effective and eye-opening as a self-assessment tool. It takes into consideration how one actually interacts with others. Its purpose is to provide a means to monitor one's personal and professional growth. For the purpose of this learning objective, it requires asking at least three colleagues or friends the following questions. The answers do not have to be long, just concise and legible.

- How does _____ typically interact with other people? Can you think of a recent example?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you saw _____ take on new tasks or roles? Describe this situation and what he or she did?
- What has been a particularly demanding goal for _____ to achieve?
- When you observe _____, which of the following pictures come to mind, a lion, an otter, a beaver, or a golden retriever? (The following web site will explain how these animals describe personality patterns: http://weirdblog.wordpress.com/2007/02/22/ personality-types-lion-beaver-otter-and-golden-retriever/)

Interpersonal Communication Skills Test (Abridged):

Communicating with others is an essential skill in counseling. When it comes to communication, what one says and what one does not say are equally important. Being a good listener is quite crucial. Robert Greenleaf once said, "Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much." The Interpersonal Communication Skills Test – Abridged is a simple online assessment containing ten questions and takes approximately five minutes to complete. This assessment tool is a communication skills index that rates one's ability to get one's point across in a clear, concise way as well as listen to others and understand where they are coming from. After finishing the test, one receives a brief personalized interpretation of one's score that includes a graph and information on the test topic.[12]

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):

Based on one's individual responses, the MBTI instrument produces results to identify which of sixteen different "personality types" best describe a person. One's personality type represents one's preferences in four separate categories, with each category composed of two opposite poles. The four categories describe key areas that combine to form the basis of a person's personality as follows:

Where you focus your attention — Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I)

The way you take in information — Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)

The way you make decisions — Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)

How you deal with the outer world — Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

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[12] Discovery Fit and Health, "Interpersonal Communication Skills Test – Abridged," http://discoveryhealth.queendom.com/communication_short_access.html (accessed August 30, 2011).

One's MBTI type is indicated by the four letters representing one's preferences. One's responses to the MBTI assessment not only indicate preferences, they also indicate the relative clarity of preferences; that is, how clear one is in expressing one's preference for a particular pole over its opposite. This is known as the preference clarity *index*, or pci. Most people find that the MBTI results describe them quite well.[13] The MBTI instrument is one of the most widely used assessment tools in the world.

Uniquely You: DISC Short-Professional Profiler:

The Uniquely You DISC Personality Profiles were developed by Dr. Mels Carbonell in 1987. Dr. Carbonell was first introduced to the DISC Personality Profile while attending Dallas Theological Seminary. Because of his burden to help churches improve effectiveness, plus increase church growth and health, Dr. Carbonell created the first of its kind combination Spiritual Gifts and DISC Personality Profiles. Dr. Carbonell purposely does not refer to personality profiles as personality tests because people pass or fail a test; rather, these DISC profiles are simple personality assessments, and no one fails. The DISC Model of Human Behavior describes the four basic temperament types: (Choleric) D-type, (Sanguine) I-type, (Phlegmatic) S-type, and (Melancholy) C-type. Everyone is a blend of DISC behavior. No normal person has a bad personality; it is what one does with one's DISC personality that may be good or bad. Identifying one's DISC personality blend is vital to effective leadership and relationships.[14]

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[13] Peter B. Myers and Katharine D. Myers, *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Profile Sample*, https://www.cpp.com/Pdfs/smp 261001.pdf – Adobe Reader (accessed August 30, 2011).

[14] "Uniquely You Solving the People Puzzle," under -What is Uniquely You? https://uniquelyyou.com/about.php (accessed September 1, 2011).

The Adjective Check List (ACL):

The Adjective Checklist (ACL) consists of three-hundred adjectives and adjectival phrases commonly used to describe a person's attributes. It may be administered to an individual to elicit a self-evaluation or a characterization of someone else; or it may be used by observers in a clinic, counseling center, research laboratory, or in marketing research as a convenient, standardized method for recording and generating meaning of personal attributes of clients, research subjects, products, or even cultures. The ACL is distinctive in that the number of items checked is unspecified, so that adjectives chosen are ones that are relevant for the person being evaluated. The variation in selections is itself viewed as a personality variable. In addition to a score on the number of items checked, there are twenty-three other scales, all of which the standard scores are adjusted according to the items that are endorsed; this adjustment removes the influence of acquiescence from the twenty-three measures. Administration time varies from ten to fifteen minutes.[15]

Sample: This Writer's "Who Am I Now?"

Diagnostic results of this writer's temperament:

The first diagnostic tool employed by this author was the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, referred to as the MBTI diagnostic tool. According to the MBTI diagnostic tool, this writer is very clearly an "ENFP." The "E_{20}" indicator denotes this writer's extroverted desire to focus on the outer world of people and activity. That is to say, this author directs energy and attention outward and receives energy from interacting with

[15] "The Adjective Check List," Mind Garden, http://www.mindgarden.com/products/acl.htm. (accessed September 1, 2011).

people and from taking action. The "N_{26}" marker signifies that this author is a person that prefers intuition, that enjoys taking in information based on the big picture, and that focuses on the relationships and connections between facts. Grasping patterns and seeing new possibilities is what captures this writer's attentiveness. The "F_{21}" pointer signifies this writer prefers to use decision making in areas of importance. There is a tendency for this writer to place himself within situations to identify with others so that he can make decisions based on their values about honoring people. What energizes this author is appreciating and supporting others as he looks for qualities to praise. The goal of this author is to create harmony and treat each person as a unique individual. The "P_{21}" indicator implies that this author prefers to use the perceiving process in the outer world, and that he likes to live in a flexible spontaneous way, seeking to experience and understand life rather than to control it. Details and final decisions seem confining to this writer, as he prefers to stay open to new information and last-minute options. The MBTI assessment tool indicates that this writer's resourcefulness in adapting to the demands of the moment is what energizes him. The high scores (see subscript numbers) indicate that the "ENFP" preferences were very clear.[16]

The second diagnostic tool that this author used to evaluate "who I am right now" was the *Uniquely You Professional/Leader Profile* diagnostic tool, which this author took in an online format. This diagnostic tool employed the DISC four temperament model of behavior as a basic format of evaluation. *Uniquely You Resources* calculated the assessments of the professional/leader profile then presented them to this writer along with determinative explanations as a client of the organization. According to the DISC

[16] The Myers and Briggs Foundation, MBTI Basics, http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/ (accessed December 6, 2011).

assessment, this writer is an $S_{24}/I_{21}/C_{19.}$ The subscript numbers indicate this author's level within the categories on a numerical scale of one to thirty with fifteen being the median normal. The "S" indicates that this author is passive and is a people oriented. It points out that this writer is steady, stable, shy, security-oriented, servant-based, submissive and a specialist. The "I" category specifies that this author is active and people oriented as well. This category identifies this author's temperament as inspiring, influencing, inducing, impressing, interactive, and interested in people. The "C" category shows that this writer also has a tendency toward being passive and task-oriented. This means that part of this writer's temperament is cautious, competent, calculating, compliant, careful, and contemplative.[17]

The third diagnostic that this author used to evaluate "who I am right now" was the Adjective Checklist commonly referred to as the ACL diagnostic tool. As previously mentioned, the ACL assessment consists of three-hundred adjectives and adjectival phrases commonly used to describe a person's attributes. The ACL diagnostic tool correlates with twenty-four assessment scales. The administering of this diagnostic assessment occurred during the intensive class at Liberty University. The testing organization accounted for the scientific nature of the scoring that revealed the following conclusions. This author perceives himself to be socially acceptable. In the area of achievement, this author strives to be outstanding in pursuits of socially recognized significance, and exhibits the trait of endurance with a willingness to persist in any task undertaken. This writer highly regards neatness, planning, and organization. This writer engages in attempts to understand his own behavior as well as the behavior of others.

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[17] "Uniquely You Solving the People Puzzle," under Professional - Leadership Online Profile, https://www.uniquelyyou.com/details.php?prodId=168&category=16&secondary=&keywords= (accessed December 6, 2011).

The assessment also found this writer to be nurturing, involved in behaviors that provide material or emotional benefits to others along with the tendency to seek and maintain numerous personal friendships. This author also displays the propensity to act independently of others, or of social values and expectations, as well as valuing the novelty of experience and avoidance of routine. This writer scored above average in the following "topical scales," assessing a diverse set of attributes, potentialities, and role characteristics:

- Counseling Readiness – The willingness to accept counseling or professional advice in regard to personal problems, psychological difficulties, and the like
- Self-control – The extent to which self-control is imposed and valued
- Self-confidence – Self-reliance, confidence, poise, and self-assurance
- Personal Adjustment – The ability to cope with situational and interpersonal demands, and a feeling of efficacy
- Ideal Self – Strong sense of personal worth or harmony between what one is and what one wants to be
- Creative Personality – The desire to do and think differently from the norm, and a talent for originality

The ACL assessment disclosed that in the area of ego this writer would be described as a nurturing adult, which indicates one displays attitudes of support, stability, and acceptance associated with the concept of a "nurturing parent," and attitudes of independence, objectivity, and industriousness associated with the concept of a "mature adult."[18]

[18] "The Adjective Check List."

Gerard Eagan asserted in *The Skilled Helper*, that the goal of reviewing one's current story was to identify, explore, and clarify one's strengths and weaknesses as well as one's problem situations and unused opportunities.[19] Therefore, summarizing the overall results from the three previous assessments, this author is warmly enthusiastic and imaginative, and sees life as full of possibilities. This author makes connections between events and information very quickly, and confidently proceeds based on the patterns that this author sees. This author wants a lot of information from others and readily gives appreciation and support. This author is spontaneous and flexible, often relying on this author's ability to improvise and on this author's verbal fluency.

Additionally, this writer tends to be more passive than active, and has strong people skills. This writer has both the ability to be outgoing and reserved. This writer can be the life of the party or a spectator. This writer generally likes to influence and interact with people, but can also withdraw and concentrate on specific projects. People tend to like this writer's friendliness, enthusiasm, and cordiality. There are times this author may rub people the wrong way with a critical and fault-finding attitude. Generally, this author is not pushy or controlling unless people try to get this author to do things that go against this author's plans or beliefs. This author does not always have to be in charge, and prefers peace and harmony as well as organized environments. People often like this author's multifaceted flexibility, but sometimes would like this author to be more decisive and direct.

Further, this writer prefers conventional values and lifestyles, seeking security in the tried and true. This writer dislikes decision-making, and has a tendency toward avoiding conflict. Interpersonally this writer is forbearing and sometimes conciliatory,

[19] Eagan, *The Skilled Helper*, 22-23.

conscientious, unassuming, and patient deferring to others without loss of self-respect. This author generally works hard to achieve the attainment of consensual goals, and is a steadying influence on others. This author is likely to seek power, success, and tangible accomplishments in a world free of subjective concern and worry. This is how "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Benefits of this writer's temperament:

The significant benefits of this author's temperament are that this author is relational and cerebral. In other words, this author is good at caring, thinking, and problem solving. This author tends to show strengths through friendliness and kindness. This author is not concerned about being in charge or being the boss, and is keenly perceptive about people. This author experiences a wide range of feelings and emotions, which show this author to be relationally authentic. This author has exceptional insights into the possibilities of others and eagerly gives appreciation and support. This author feels confident in moving ahead on insights; and, this author's enthusiasm generally inspires people to come along because this author is warm, friendly, caring, cooperative, and supportive.

Because of this writer's temperament, life is viewed as a creative adventure full of possibilities. This writer is discerning about the present and the future and enjoys thinking in depth rather than doing shallow research. This writer is curious, creative, imaginative, energetic, enthusiastic, and spontaneous. This writer tends to show strengths through the ability to solve difficult problems. This writer is good at understanding how people and groups work, and is persuasive and compelling in pursuing what is important to others.

Another benefit of this author's temperament is confidence with people skills; therefore, this author can motivate people to success. This author has the ability to impress a crowd with speech, demeanor, and actions. This author can also make individuals feel comfortable and connected. This can be outgoing and reserved, as well as both active and passive. People usually like this author, especially when thoughts and observations are shared about a task or a problem. As long as this author stays positive, people listen to him.

Limitations of this writer's temperament:

Even though the benefits connected to this writer's temperament are significant, there are a number of weaknesses as well. This writer has a tendency to back off from being commanding or demanding. Unless there is a question about accuracy, this writer is not dominant or challenging. This writer is occasionally intimidated by others to do things that this writer does not really want to do. This writer can be stubborn if asked to do the wrong things, but will back down if what others want from this writer is not very important.

This author's temperament experiences a wide range of feelings and emotions. Often, this author needs affirmation from others. Routine, schedules, and structure drive this author crazy. This author can turn people off with opinions. Sometimes, this author becomes negative or critical. This author does not have to be in charge, but prefers that leaders know where they are going and how to get there without wasting a lot of time, expense, and energy. This author needs to improve in the area of indecisiveness and the need to please people.

Ministry and this writer's temperament:

There are two key areas of ministry in which this writer's temperament plays a critical part. The first area is how this writer relates as a leader. This writer's leadership style is varied and this writer's temperament style is more personable than most other types. This writer loves inspiring crowds and supporting individuals while mapping the future. This writer is not usually very directing or demanding, however, can assume a strong and dominant role when no other leader is present. Being pushy or bossy is not this writer's cup of tea. This writer likes creating enthusiasm through communication skills. This writer prefers to plan and prepare to ensure a job well done.

The second area that this author's temperament plays a critical part is in the way this author handles conflict management. This author does well at resolving and avoiding conflicts because of this author's people skills. This author excels at controlling personal thoughts and opinions unless someone demonstrates continued incompetence. This author has a tendency to overlook the wrongdoing of close friends because of a desire for popularity. This author is generally an astute observer and balances relationships with dedication to the truth and open communication.

Overall summary of this writer's temperament:

Overall, this writer's temperament analysis reveals good leadership skills because of this writer's ability to relate well to most people. This writer is a good follower with the aptitude to listen carefully and follow instructions. This writer tends to be cheerful, submissive, and strives for perfection. This writer works hard at excellence and strives to ensure that everyone is moving together to better accomplish the task. This writer is usually positive, but sometimes personally struggles with moodiness and pessimism.

Part C: "How Did I Get Here?"

The Method

This part of the learning objective continues the process of personal reflection and journaling. As the pastoral counselor constructs this portion of the personal journal, two areas of emphasis are to be ruminated. First, the role of one's temperament in connection to one's pre-conversion life experience; and second, the part one's temperament played in association with one's spiritual conversion and transformation. This part of the learning objective exposes lingering issues that may have been brought forward from pre-conversion life that still influence one's present life story, and scrutinize one's present temperament in light of the cohesion of spiritual resources that result as part of the process of transformation. This section of learning objective one should not exceed one-thousand words.

Sample: This Writer's "How Did I Get Here?"

Pre-Conversion Life and Temperament:

Prior to conversion, this author gave in to the weaknesses of this author's temperament. In this author's pre-conversion life, the foremost desire was to excel in front of people and to inspire them. The "DISC" profile revealed that people viewed this author as being inspirational and influential with crowds as well as individuals. This author's temperament profile presented this author's ability to verbalize exceptionally, and the aptitude to display warmth on an individual basis. People appreciated this author's relational influence. All of this was very important and brought this author great self-satisfaction. Ministry was the platform chosen by this author to naturally engage the

benefits of this temperament, even though this author was not yet a true follower of Christ. This writer employed people skills and the knack to relate in order to convince and persuade others to engage in what was perceived to be true religious activities. In the course of things, this writer naively neglected challenging the spiritual integrity of authority figures. Those who were guiding this writer were theologically inerrant. As a result of this writer's temperament, this writer rarely spoke out against those authority figures practicing bad theology because of their relational proximity. Because of this writer's non-confrontational temperament, truth from colleagues and peers was accepted verbatim. This author struggled with worry, and on many occasions, felt torn about what to do or to not do. This author covered inward melancholy by moving from one enthusiastic event to another. When there was a lull in enthusiasm, true to this author's personality, this author became contemplative and absorbed by the problems of life. Because this caused frustration, this author tended to use caustic and critical words with those whom were relationally the closest. Frequently, this author let emotions take control, verbally expressing those sentiments in a hurtful manner.

The problem was, this writer was not a true believer. Therefore, this writer was not able to genuinely or spiritually employ his God-given temperament, nor was this writer able to experience genuine appreciation for the benefits of this writer's unique personality created by God. This writer was missing the blessing of what God fashioned this writer to be. As a result, this author felt frustrated and failed to follow through on some important decisions. This author eventually became rebellious and shaped a non-conforming heart. In this writer's pre-conversion life, people skills were used for this writer's benefit resulting in perplexity and a double-standard lifestyle.

Transformation Because of Temperament:

A byproduct of this author's temperament is the enjoyment of research and thorough preparation in order to obtain tenable information and facts. This author likes to stand out as one who knows what this author is talking about, and as one who cares for other people's concerns. As previously mentioned this writer enjoys thinking in depth rather than doing shallow research. This writer is curious, creative, and imaginative. This writer tends to show strength through the ability to solve difficult problems. As presented in the previous section, a person with this writer's temperament usually does not like conflict. However, as a result of conversion and spiritual transformation, this author will guard and defend the truth of God to the point of conflict if necessary. This author's temperament causes this author to be passionate about inspiring and supporting others, while providing clear answers that solve problems**.** By His grace, God used the previously mentioned aspects of this author's temperament to bring about a spiritual, life transformation.

Many years ago, the local Christian radio station in this writer's area began airing a new program from California called "Grace to You." The minister, John MacArthur, was preaching a series entitled the "The Road to Heaven;" and, the speaker expounded on Matthew 7:21-23, which stated,

> Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."

The Holy Spirit used that scripture to grip the heart of this author and render life transformation. This moved this author to genuinely repent and receive Jesus Christ as

Lord and Savior. Since that day, this author has set out to accomplish the overarching goal of becoming a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ and to pass that goal onto others. Through this writer's personality and temperament, God used three resources to bring about a life transformation. The first resource was the Word of God, which provided the truth that is to be believed and obeyed. The second resource was the Holy Spirit, who clarified the truth and endowed this writer with the power to extract and enact the principles of truth from God's Word. The third resource was the community of faith, the body of Christ, for the purpose of encouragement, exhortation, and accountability. Sovereignly and graciously, God has provided this writer with the appropriate personal and spiritual resources, which in combination with this writer's temperament, have brought this writer to this writer's present station in life.

Part D: "Where Am I Now?"

The Method

Finally, after creating a personal profile, examining "who am I now," and investigating "how I got here," one is ready to reveal one's station in life at the present moment. This section is to be a concise written wrap up of learning objective number one, and should not exceed two-hundred words. This is to be an honest summary of one's present life story.

Sample: This Writer's "Where Am I Now?"

After examining "who I am right now" and "how I got where I am," it is fitting to discuss spiritually where this writer is right now. With this writer's temperament, this

writer must guard against withdrawing and becoming too contemplative about life and its problems. This writer has entered this zone and has ended up spiritually on a plateau. This is a concern for this writer. The Bible says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18); this scripture states that life for the fully-devoted follower of Christ is a continual process of transformation. Therefore, this author should be continually moving from one level of faith to another. It is from this plateau that this author must relocate to experience the "Shalom" that this author was created to enjoy. Having accessed this author's personality and temperament through three assessment devices, the MBTI, ACL, and DISC diagnostic tools, the pragmatic results from these assessments have provided a relatively consistent analysis describing who this author is right now and how this author got to this place in life.

Learning Objective Two: Unfolding Your Life As You Want It to Be

The Method

As stated at the onset of this core competency, journaling is the process by which learning objective number two is accomplished. Developing a preferred scenario helps one identify what is wanted in terms of goals and objectives that are based on an understanding of the problem situations and unused opportunities that are part of one's personal story.[20] This learning objective requires the pastoral counselor to employ a therapeutic technique called the "miracle question." This technique was pioneered by

[20] Egan, *The Skilled Helper*, 22-23.

Steve de Shazer, an influential figure in the development of *Brief Therapy*, and *Solution Focused Therapy*. The previously mentioned theories or hybrids of these theories are implemented in most modern pastoral counseling contexts. These theories do not focus on past problems, but on what clients want to achieve today and in the future. By making conscious the many ways the client is creating their ideal future and encouraging forward progress, pastoral counselors point clients toward goals rather than the problems that drove them to therapy. The "miracle question" sparks images about the future by asking one, "If you were to wake up tomorrow morning and a miracle occurred, and your problems were gone, your world was exactly as you wanted it to be; what would that world look like?" In other words, what is one's preferred story, what is it that would bring calm to one's life? The answer to the "miracle question" opens many avenues through which the counselor can track options for client change. Since this technique has been proven so successful, what better question for the pastoral counselor to self-administer for the purpose of self-awareness and establishing future goals for personal change. After the preferred story has been developed, the pastoral counselor should impose a time frame for initiating the desired personal changes. Around five-hundred words should be sufficient for undertaking learning objective number two.

Sample: This Writer's Life as I Want It to Be

After a thorough self-analysis, this writer's preferred story is that the spiritual disciplines of personal joy, prayer, and scripture reading would become second nature and optimally practiced. This author's preferred life story requires an enthusiastic transformation in the spiritual discipline of personal joy, a positive renovation in the spiritual discipline of prayer, and a progressive revolution in the area of how this writer

approaches the Holy Scriptures. Dallas Willard wrote, "A discipline is an activity within our power, something we can do, which brings us to a point where we can do what we at present cannot do by direct effort."[21] Everything from learning a language to sports depends upon discipline; and, the availability of discipline in the human makeup is what makes the individual human be responsible for the kind of person one becomes. A spiritual discipline is an activity that can help one gain power to live life as Jesus taught and modeled it. A spiritually disciplined person is someone who can do the right thing at the right time in the right way with the right Spirit. To this author, this is the epitome of who Jesus really was. Rick Warren once said that the best way to study Jesus was to study how He handled his interruptions. Jesus could do whatever was called for at any given moment because He was fluent in the spiritual disciplines. It is this author's desire, as a fully-devoted follower of Christ, to achieve peak performance in ministry; therefore, this author's weaknesses must be strengthened in the spiritual disciplines of joy, prayer, and scripture reading.

It is important to note what a disciplined person is not in order to appreciate the life of a disciplined person. A disciplined person is not someone who simply exercises spiritual disciplines just for the sake of doing them. Also, a spiritually disciplined person is not just a highly-systematic, rigidly-scheduled, chart-making, early-rising person. This type of person definitely would not work well with this author's personality, which struggles with organization and structure. Rather, a disciplined follower of Christ is one who has the heart and insight to see another's needs, and accepts the responsibility of appropriately meeting those needs as if it were one's "second nature" to do so. As John

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[21] Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Disciplines - Spiritual Formation and the Restoration of the Soul," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26.1 (Spring 1998): 101-109.

Ortberg stated, "A disciplined follower of Jesus is someone who discerns when laughter, gentleness, silences, healing words, or prophetic indignation is called for, and offers it promptly, effectively, and lovingly"[22] Over the next thirty days, this writer commits to developing a proficiency in the spiritual disciplines: joy, prayer, reading, and meditating on the Holy Scriptures. Improving these three areas of this writer's life will create calm where there has previously been an elevated level of spiritual uneasiness.

Learning Objective Three: Unfolding Your Plan for Change

The Method

Most modern pastoral counseling flows through stages. Initially, a brief orientation occurs; the client is evaluated and assessed; the establishment of an empathetic relationship occurs; a preferred story is created; finally, therapeutic interventions or solution-focused master goals are presented to the client.[23] Thus far, this has been the ebb and flow of core competency number one. The pastoral counselor completes core competency number one by contemplating the previous "preferred story," and delineating master goals for positive spiritual growth and change as they align with one's overarching goal in life. Therefore, in the counseling context, the pastoral counselor will lead the client through a process the pastor has already personally experienced. Journaling learning objective three begins with revisiting the pastoral counselors overarching goal in life; at that point, at least three master goals for change are constructed. Each master goal is charted by presenting three components: a scrutiny of

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[22] Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, 50.

[23] Egan, *The Skilled Helper*, 24.

the present reality within the context of the goal, the shaping of preferences based on the truth in the scriptures, and the proposed structure for change including a supporting person for the purpose of accountability. Learning object three of core competency number one should be around twenty-five hundred words.

Sample: This Writer's Plan for Change

This writer's overarching goal in life is to be a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ by emulating the Apostle Paul's directive to the early Christians at Ephesus to "Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ" (Eph. 5:1-2). Within the context of this overarching goal, this writer has a passion to follow in the footsteps of Christ, to love as Jesus loved, and to serve as Jesus served. Like the early Christians in Acts chapter two, this writer is compelled to pursue full devotion to God in a Christ-centered community with others who are on this same spiritual journey. This author is committed to serving sacrificially, growing intentionally, and relating authentically to other people. As a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ, this author is dedicated to the following: This author is devoted to Christ as the Savior and leader of this author's life. This author is committed to continual development of Christ-like servanthood. This author is committed to taking ongoing steps toward spiritual growth in this author's relationship with Christ. This writer is committed to pursuing Christ-honoring relationships. This writer is committed to participating membership in full support with the vision and leadership of a local church. Therefore, implementing the following three master goals for change in order to achieve spiritual growth in areas of personal joy, personal prayer,

and scripture reading is consistent with the purpose of this writer's overarching goal in life.

Master Goal One - An enthusiastic transformation in the spiritual discipline of joy

The analysis of this writer's current life story as it relates to joy is that this writer could express happiness more often rather than approaching life with an unbalanced bent toward seriousness. In fact, this writer would like to be more joyful on a consistent basis. It is not that there is anything in particular that this writer is unhappy about, there is just something missing that this writer cannot quite grasp. The goal is to remove the melancholy attitude that is sometimes a negative part of this writer's temperament.

This author's preferred new life story is rooted in the scripture truth that joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the joy of the Lord is strength (Neh. 8:10). Because joy is strength, conversely, its absence will create weakness; and, as a fruit of the Spirit, should not joy be a natural byproduct of salvation? So what impedes one from being joyful? In his book, *Laugh Again*, Charles Swindoll proposed three common joy inhibiters: worry, stress, and fear. Swindoll defined worry as "an inordinate anxiety about something that may or may not occur." According to Swindoll, stress is "intense strain over a situation one can't change or control," and fear, according to Swindoll, is a "dreadful uneasiness over danger, evil, or pain," that magnifies our problems. This author's personality lends itself toward worry and stress, two of three things previously mentioned that impede one's capability for joy. In order to resist these "joy stealers," one must embrace the same confidence that Paul expressed in his letter to the Philippians. After giving thanks for the believers (Phil 1:3-5), the Apostle Paul assured them "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (v.6).

Whatever causes worry, stress, and fear cannot ultimately keep God from continuing His work. With this confidence, one can begin each day knowing that God is in control. One can leave everything in His hands.[24]

This writer's structure for change will begin with the following measures to be implemented Monday through Friday during the first week of this writer's thirty-day commitment to change. Monday morning, during a designated prayer time, this writer will confess any previous melancholy attitudes and ask the Lord to open this writer's eyes to His goodness. This writer will memorize and repeat, throughout the day, the following scripture, "Nehemiah said, Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10 NIV). This writer will use the previous scripture to provide an impetus to allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a joyful experience to remember, and repeat that experience to two people throughout the day.

Tuesday morning, this author will memorize and repeat, throughout the day, "A friendly smile makes you happy…" (Proverbs 15:30 CEV), then intentionally find a happy person to be around sometime during the day. After spending time with that person, this author will thank them for their happiness and move on. This is important because, every day, people who have rejected happiness in their lives and who have become victims in their stories surround me.

Wednesday, throughout the day, this author will reflect on the following memory verse, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17 NIV). This is

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[24] Joanie Yoder, "Joy Stealers," *Our Daily Bread* (February 17, 2003), http://odb.org/2003/02/17/joy-stealers/ (accessed September 16, 2011).

officially designated "joy day." Today this author will intentionally listen to music that moves the soul, wear clothes that this author particularly likes, and eat food that this author enjoys. This author will take time to experience and savor the joy. Throughout the day, this author will offer thanks to God for His good and perfect gifts.
Thursday, all day, this author will unplug and give up television. Some fun activity will be planned with this author's wife for the evening. This author has taken note that it is not coincidental that the Amish are the least depressed group of people in America.

Friday, this writer will find a time in the morning to reflect on the past week of intentional joy. This writer will make a commitment to God to view life from a biblical perspective; because, to a certain extent, joy flows from a certain kind of biblical thinking. John Ortberg wrote, "Cognitive psychologists remind us that always between the events that happen to us and our responses to them lay our beliefs or interpretations to those events"[25] As a minister and pastoral counselor, this writer is compelled to view all events in the light of the resurrection and the ultimate triumph of the risen Christ. This writer's support partner for master goal one will be his wife. This author's resources for this master goal will be a joke book, along with some humorous and appropriate internet/u-tube videos.

Master Goal Two – A positive renovation in the spiritual discipline of prayer

Prayer synchronizes with this writer's overarching goal of imitating Christ because prayer was demonstrated by Jesus to be an important component of serving God. The analysis of this writer's current story is that this writer consistently and consciously prays spontaneously throughout each day; however, this writer needs to develop a

[25] Ortberg, *The Life You Always Wanted*, 73.

designated time for specific or focused prayer. It is the sincere desire of this writer that this writer's prayers are significant, impactful and align with God's will. This writer's concern is that spontaneous praying, even though being an admirable discipline, does not complete this writer's opportunity to be totally effective in the area of powerful and obedient prayer.

The shaping preferences for this author's new story about prayer are rooted in the lessons and examples of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Luke presented to the church the picture of Jesus praying, and the importance of a designated time for focused prayer when it recorded, "Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray," (Luke 11:1 NLT). Jesus responded to His disciple's request with the words, "This is how you should pray," emphasizing not only a structure for prayer with his words, but also the importance of time and venue as part of the equation. This author derived two lessons from Luke's text on prayer. First, even though prayer is to be part of one's daily consciousness resulting in continuous prayers throughout one's daily experience (I Thess. 3:10), Jesus additionally demonstrated the importance of designating a time and place for formal prayer. Also, Jesus' presentation of a model for prayer, even though it is not to be verbatim and repetitious (Matt. 6:7), highlighted an emphasis on the protocol and formality of focused prayer. It is important to remember, more than any other activity, prayer is the concrete expression that invites a person to a relationship with God. Dallas Willard expressed the notion that prayer is the discipline of talking to God about what we are doing together, and is to be, at times, a serious endeavor.[26] This author initially commits to

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[26] Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy - Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1998), 323.

implementing the following guidelines to establish a time for specific and focused prayer each day at five in the morning for a period of thirty days.

This writer's structure for implementing change and establishing a system of focused prayer revolves around two criteria, the prayer itself and a review of the prayer. This writer's guidelines for the formal prayer are as follows: This writer realizes it is best to choose the same time each day to have a focused time of prayer. This writer also grasps the importance of paying attention to the setting where prayer occurs to avoid disturbance. Jesus generally took care to find places that would be free of distractions. Mostly, Jesus prayed outdoors in places of beauty. Mark said, "Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray." (Mark 1:35 NLT). This writer has chosen an optimum time of day for focused prayer, and has committed to deliberate intellectual and heart preparation before beginning to prayer. This author will exercise the discipline of sincerely praying what is really on this author's heart as moved by the leading of the Holy Spirit. If this author's mind wanders, this author will let that be a stepping-stone for further prayer. This author will include intercessory prayer as part of his prayer. This author will use a variety of models for focused prayers including Jesus' model prayer, the prayers of the Apostle Paul throughout the New Testament, and prayers that are expressed in the Psalms.

To assist in developing a permanent pattern for focused prayer, this writer has constructed, as a separate exercise guideline, a prayer review. To get the most out of focused prayer, this writer will take three or four minutes, after every focused time of prayer, to reflect on the dynamics of the prayer. This writer will follow the reflection with a series of questions:

- How did the prayer get started?
- Was there an awareness of God's presence?
- During the prayer, did any parts of the prayer seem especially "alive?"
- Were there times of strong convictions or emotions?
- Was there recognition of moving closer to God or farther away?
- Was there a sense of calling to respond to carry out some action?

This author's support on this project will be a close personal friend from this author's church. This person will sign off on the prayer review sheets weekly, keep them for this author, and return them at the end of the time period in which this author has committed to establish his master goal for personal change.

Master Goal Three -- A progressive revolution in the area of scripture reading

So much of this writer's reading is specifically for Bible study and for sermon preparation. It seems, even though this writer is reading large portions of the Holy Scriptures on a daily basis, something is still missing. After reading Eugene Peterson's book, *Eat This Book*, there is a deep conviction relevant to this writer's manner of reading the Holy Scriptures. The element of scripture meditation and reflection is missing from this author's scripture reading method. As one seeking to be a fully-devoted follower of Christ, this author is committed to reading the Bible meditatively the next thirty days. Because of this writer's responsibilities for sermon preparation, this writer will still employ the Bible study format for sermon preparation; however, this writer will schedule significant blocks of time for personal reading of the scriptures in a meditative format.

The scriptural truths reframing this author's new story for scripture reading and the importance of meditation are rooted in the cooperative work between the enlightenment and teaching ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the power of the living Word of God. The Holy Spirit generates wisdom, patience, and power for change in the core self. The Holy Spirit contributes to the restoration of the image of God in the core self and makes Christ visible in the words and works of those who follow Him. However, it is the revelation of truth in the scripture that activates the work of the Holy Spirit. There is an interesting correlation between two passages of scripture. Ephesians 3:18-19 states, "Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs;" whereas, Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." Being Spirit-filled and letting the Word dwell in you, yield the same result indicating an important connection.

Because of this writer's busy and eclectic schedule, this writer finds it best to block out forty minutes to read and meditate on the scriptures immediately following this writer's time of prayer in the morning. This author has constructed a scripture reading program in which this author will read the first thirty chapters of the Psalms, one chapter correlating with each of the next thirty days. This author's reading and meditating strategy will be as follows:

1. After this writer's time of focused prayer in the morning, this writer will read a commentary on the Psalms relevant to the text that this writer will be reading. That exercise will prepare this writer with some background information about the text, which will make the reading richer for this writer.
2. Before this author engages a passage of scripture text, this author will ask God to meet him in the text; and, this author will read the text expecting to see God in it.
3. This writer will prepare his attitude toward reading to be subservient, obedient, repentant, rather than simply searching for information.
4. This author will determine to concentrate and to meditate on smaller portions of the text.
5. Through memorization, this writer will take one thought or verse personally throughout the rest of the day.

As a result of accomplishing these three master goals, this author envisions his life to be expressed in joy, laughter, fun, and blessing. In fact, it is exciting just to contemplate the first week of the thirty day commitment that has been created to infuse joy into this author's world. This writer can also envision being close to God in reflective focused prayer. This writer is looking forward to getting alone with God in a quiet place and even more so, anticipating what God will say during those conversations. Finally, this author foresees the peace that will reverberate through this author's life as the Holy Spirit takes the words that this author digests from the Holy Scriptures and accelerates the transformation process in this author's core being. This writer can exuberantly anticipate thirty days of joy, meditative prayer, and cleansing from the Word

of God. Therefore, this writer can pledge fully to commit to administering the features of the three master goals for spiritual growth contained in this paper.

Conclusion

The purpose of core competency number one is to promote self-awareness for the purpose of knowing how to guide people through the evaluative and constructive processes of pastoral counseling. Chris Widener subtitled his inspirational little book, *Persuading Others Begins with You,* and nothing could be more accurate. For this reason, the three learning objectives that are part of this core competency are so critical. This competency has dealt primarily with one's personality as it plays out through a spiritual context; however, influencing people through pastoral counseling involves more than self-awareness, it encompasses a life of undivided integrity, always demonstrating a positive attitude, considering other people's interests as more important than one's own interests and not settling for anything less than excellence.[27]

[27] Chris Widener, *Persuading Others Begins with You* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE

CORE COMPETENCY TWO
DEVELOPING YOUR STYLE TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Introduction

It is important to understand that one's temperament determines how one relates to others. That is why, core competency number one, "knowing yourself to guide others" is so important. Some pastoral counselors are dominant, directing the activities of those whom they guide. Others are careful planners, therefore, more reserved in their counseling behaviors. Still, others are people oriented, personally involving those whom they counsel in their plans and actions. Additionally, some pastoral counselors are motivational, inspiring their clients to change while others are passively assertive causing their clients to assume the role of follower in order to accomplish goals. Andrew Seidel, in his book, *Charting a Bold Course*, presented the following excellent observation about the significance of diverse temperaments in the area of pastoral care and leadership,

> What is true of us inside is expressed to others through our temperament and our spiritual gifts as well as our strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and flaws. Our temperament is a unique God-given part of our identity. It is the characteristic way in which we relate to people and events or tasks. There is no "best" temperament or spiritual gift.[1]

Each temperament has its own strengths and weaknesses. Much like spiritual gifts, God gave all the temperaments because all of them are needed. Therefore, God utilizes all

[1] Andrew Seidel, *Charting a Bold Course: Training Leaders for a Twenty-first Century Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 75-76.

types of temperaments and personalities in the pastoral leaders and counselors He has chosen.

It must also be noted that the core of one's personal identity is found in one's relationship to God through Jesus Christ. When one's relationship with God has been consciously authenticated, and the awareness of the faithfulness of God's love and acceptance has been established, and the security of one's position in Christ has been validated, one has the freedom and strength to give, serve, lead, and counsel in a godly manner. No longer does one need to use others to fulfill personal needs.

Core competency number two, "developing your style to connect with people," establishes four best practices for pastoral counselors who uniquely engage clients in today's church. These best practices include learning concepts, skills, and resources necessary to effectively, ethically, and safely approach parishioners within the context of pastoral counseling. In order to master core competency number two, pastoral care-givers must address the following best practices. First, the pastoral counselor must judge the importance of integrating the Bible into the counseling model. Second, the pastoral counselor must consider the proper relational style for creating a context of change and relocation for the client, as well as construct an ethical and safe environment for counseling. Third, the pastoral therapist must resolve to address the counseling setting, bearing in mind matters of cultural diversity and how one will influence change within that context. Finally, pastoral counselors must be astute strategists, especially in the area of "Solution-Based Brief Pastoral Counseling" (SBBFC).

Best Practice One: Integrating the Bible into the Counseling Model

The Bible and Counseling

One of the most important thought processes to be considered in the area of pastoral counseling pertains to the matter of the pastoral counselor's modality of treatment relevant to the patient's spiritual and mental catharsis. Because of the spiritual and theological nature of the pastoral position, the pastoral counselor must decide how biblical truth, along with theories and practices of psychology will be incorporated into the personal counseling model. In the past, Christian counselors generally embraced one of two treatment philosophies; in one camp were the biblical integration therapists, "the Bible and psychology" counselors; in the other camp were the nouthetic or "purely "biblical" counselors. By the nineteen seventies, many of the integration therapists had become enchanted with the many forms of anti-Christian psychobabble and secular psychoanalytical theories to the degree that Christian counseling had become Christian in name only. However, during that same era, Jay Adams orchestrated a counseling insurgency challenging the fields of Christian counseling and pastoral care as he trumpeted the call for Christian counselors to maintain theological orthodoxy and adherence to the centrality of the scriptures. Adams also championed the cause of holy living by dealing bluntly with sin and establishing biblical interventions for overcoming evil. Adams' strict model found limited acclaim among evangelical counselors, yet, served the purpose of influencing the field of Christian counseling to at least reconsider essential biblical principles as foundational.

The field of Christian counseling has come a long way from the nineteen seventies when its theoretical development reflected secular models that were blended

with an assortment of scriptural precepts and biblical models absorbed in narrow exegetical structures of theological terms and phrases lacking rigorous hermeneutical examination or empirical validation. Since those days, the robust character of pastoral and Christian counseling has yielded numerous approaches to care-giving with an assortment of techniques and interventions. According to Tim Clinton and George Ohlschlager, editors of the book *Competent Christian Counseling*, there has been a progressive shift in the field of Christian counseling as a whole. These men recently uncovered at least ten distinctive counseling theories or identities across the nearly fifty thousand members of the *American Association of Christian Counselors*, suggesting a broader eclectic approach to Christian counseling has evolved.[2] So, how does the pastoral counselor, for his own purposes, evaluate the biblical legitimacy of the varied assortment of counseling practices and theories that assert they are derived from a Christian or biblical foundation; or, should the pastoral counselor abort the use of the science of psychology altogether and practice Bible only techniques in counseling?

This writer asserts that pastoral counselors would do well to take their lead from the Reformers of the sixteenth century; for them, all claims of truth and authority, whether from philosophy, science, or church leadership, were to be placed against the Bible and judged as beneficial according to biblical criterion. The Reformers considered the Bible to be the ultimate authority over God's natural revelation. They were not alienated from the world to the extent that they discounted the beneficial elements of secular human reason. Even though the renowned Reformers Luther and Calvin did not seek to deny the value of secular human reason, it should be noted they did not exalt it

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[2] Tim Clinton and G. Ohlschlager, *Competent Christian Counseling, Volume One: Foundations and Practice of Compassionate Soul Care* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2002), 69-93.

either. For example, they did not deny that the church had authority; but, they did reject the notion that the church's authority should supplant the Word of God. The Reformers realized, in the natural world, there was truth revealed that both Christians and non-Christians could discover. But, they were clear that such truth could never lead to salvation and ultimate spiritual healing. They comprehended the limits of natural revelation and the mind of man to understand it; but, they did not deny the plausibility of scientific discovery due to natural revelation. However, the Reformers did demand that the Bible be placed in authority over all truth, all practice, and all matters of faith and worship.

The Reformers comprehended that divine revelation had been presented to man in two different ways, through natural revelation and special revelation. They implicitly understood that God visibly makes Himself known through natural revelation, which is the world He created and all of His creatures, including human beings. God has also revealed Himself through special revelation, His Word, both incarnate in Jesus Christ and written in the Bible. Thus, human beings learn and reason from those two realms of revelation. Through reason, humans inquire into the natural order through a process of study that is called science; and, humans explore the realm of special revelation through study and illumination of the Holy Spirit, a process that is called theology. Although truth is discovered in either sphere, theological study in the Bible is given the greatest authority because by it one can determine the parameters of an accurate worldview and the means to a right relationship with God. Theology can affirm what ought to be; whereas, science can only state what is. All of that being said, particular theories and practices from the science of psychology can be useful to the pastoral counselor; yet, they

must stand up to certain biblical criterion. Homiletically, a pastor may confer with certain trusted commentaries derived from human reason to prepare the sermon; but, the definitive source of validation of truth for the sermon is always the Word of God, studied and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. In the same manner, for counseling purposes, the pastoral counselor may approach a client problem with the help of a particular theory or practice, again originating through human reason; but, the source of truth for genuine soul care and theory corroboration is ultimately derived from the Bible along with help from the Holy Spirit.

The ensuing question may be asked, "What guidelines are helpful when determining which theories and practices of psychology are useful to the pastoral counselor?" Harry Shields and Gary Bredfeldt, authors of *Caring for Souls*, presented five practical questions helpful in guiding pastoral counselors in considering ideas drawn from the field of psychology. First, is the proposed psychological concept directly supported by the scriptures? Second, is the psychological notion theologically consistent with the scriptures? Some psychology concepts are not taught explicitly in the scriptures; yet, they are in keeping with biblical concepts and are found implicitly in the overall teachings of God's Word. Third, is the psychological conclusion addressed in the Bible? It is possible that a particular psychological conclusion may not be addressed in the Bible at all. When a psychological practice is not biblically addressed, extreme caution must be exercised when implementing the procedure into the counseling setting. It is best to make sure the practice is scientifically supported. Also, one must apply the biblical principles of profitable benefit and weaker brother. In other words, although a method or technique may be lawful for a believer to practice, it may not be to the person's spiritual

benefit (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23); and, the pastoral counselor must be extremely careful not to cause the weaker brother or sister in the faith to fall (Rom. 14:13-21; 1 Cor. 8:13). Fourth, is the psychological idea denied by the scriptures? Some concepts practiced by psychologists are blatantly in conflict with the Holy Scriptures. Finally, is the proposed psychological theory doubtful? A number of practices may not seem to be congruent with biblical norms. They may be derived from faulty biblical teaching and subsequently result in ungodly actions. Therefore, when there is any doubt at all, it is best to bypass the action in favor of prudence.[3] Asking theses five questions will assist the pastoral counselor in determining spiritual credibility of certain theories and practices in the field of psychology. When the Word of God is central in one's thinking, one can appropriately import truth from all potential sources into the area of pastoral counseling.

The Bible and the Counselor

The Bible states, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus, it may be theologically assumed that the basis for truth by which everything else is appraised is the Word of God; and, within the scriptures, there is an overabundance of information guiding one on how to live a proper life.[4] Henry Cloud and John Townsend, in *How People Grow*, go so far as to posit "the Bible stands alone as God's only perfect guide to

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[3] Harry Shields and G. Bredfeldt, *Caring for Souls: Counseling Under the Authority of Scripture* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2001), 50-52.

[4] Timothy Clinton, A. Hart, and G. Ohlschlager, *Caring for People God's Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 53.

life and growth."[5] Who can argue against the miracle that with over forty different authors and over fifteen-hundred years, the Bible stands alone as a book with a magnificently consistent set of precepts, ideas, and stories? Only divine inspiration could achieve such a cohesive masterpiece. Since the Bible is in written form, it can be scrutinized and checked objectively; therefore, the pastoral counselor may align with the psalmist and confidently proclaim, "The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy" (Ps. 119:138 NIV).

Because ultimately the Bible is the first and final authority in Christian counseling, the pastoral counselor must become a capable biblical practitioner. According to the journal article, *The Use of Scripture in Counseling*, by Eric Johnson and Ian Jones, effective Christian counselors need to be competent in the use of the scriptures for teaching, training, correcting, and growing in wisdom and knowledge (2 Tim. 3:16). These two experts asserted that competency necessitates more than simply knowing the scriptures, it also requires an awareness of hermeneutical principles of biblical interpretation, the ability to access the counseling situation from a biblical perspective, the application of appropriate skills and techniques found in the scriptures, an adherence to the biblical boundaries and ethical standards that reflect a fear of God and selfless love for the client, and an ongoing, energetic, maturing spiritual life involving such disciplines as prayer and biblical meditation.[6]

Becoming a proficient biblical practitioner also entails understanding the biblical truth about God's grace. Biblical truth without the proper application of God's grace can

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[5] Henry Cloud and J. Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 193.

[6] Eric Johnson and I. Jones, "The Use of Scripture in Counseling," *Christian Counseling Tod*ay, vol.16.4 (2008): 46-50.

lead to legalism and harshness in counseling. On the other hand, a lopsided perspective pertaining to God's grace without the proper application of biblical truth can lead to license. The Bible states that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), indicating that both realities are complimentary. Truth does not minimize grace, it magnifies it. Truth provides the message, grace provides the method. Grace does not provide freedom to sin, it provides forgiveness from sin. Grace never supersedes or compromises truth. Grace does not replace truth, it reflects it. Pastoral counselors must be specialist at truth-telling and grace-giving just like Jesus Christ.[7]

Further, Clinton, Hart, and Ohlschlager, in *Caring for People God's Way*, proposed that the Bible provides the singular authoritative standard for both generating and evaluating a care-giving ministry. They go on to stress that the essential traits of a complete Christian counseling theory and practice should incorporate creation in the image of God, the model of Jesus Christ, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Also, the components necessary for an adequate model of personality and counseling must include a clarification of one's origin, one's essential nature or the things that mankind shares in common, one's current condition or a diagnosis of what is basically wrong with humanity, and a prescription for remedying one's problems based on a sufficient understanding of human motivation, development, and the processes of change.[8] Comparatively, secular counseling theories tend to present an incomplete picture of human nature by placing the individual self, social forces, or biological drives at the center of all change, and by seeking resolution of human dilemmas in some expression of

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[7] Johnson, *Christian Counseling Tod*ay, 46-50.

[8] Clinton, *Caring for People God's Way*, 54.

personal or social power. Secular psychology views mankind as central while God is relegated to a peripheral function. The pastoral counselor recognizes that all biblical care-giving and support falls within the larger plans and purposes of God; and, Christian counseling should begin with God and His Word.

Finally, the capable pastoral counselor will carefully consider how to communicate the Word of God, and will allow the Spirit of God to work in His own time within the counseling context. It is important that the pastoral counselor attempt to convey the Word of God in a meaningful, natural way during a counseling session not forcing theological jargon and scripture into the dialogue. Ian Jones, in *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, believes that any assistance the pastoral counselor is able to give a person in need can be used by God to reveal His active plan of salvation. Consequently, the pastoral counselor's genuine concern, commitment to the truths of the scriptures, and openness to the Spirit of God will lead to a client's eventual willingness to explore issues of faith and biblical hope.[9]

The goal of the pastoral counselor is to be a thoroughly biblical caregiver. If that goal is to be achieved, one must always keep the Word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. As Harry Shields and Gary J. Bredfeldt stated, "Without that sure Word as our standard and rule, we would be lost on a sea of modern thought, scientific claims, and theoretical proliferation."[10] Pastoral counselors facilitate people in finding their location in relationship to God, self, and others. They accept the authority of the Bible and identify the uniqueness of human creation in the image of God. They

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[9] Ian Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth; Foundations for Biblical Counseling* (Nashville, TN: B and H Publishing Group, 2006), 111-112.

[10] Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 52.

comprehend the effects of sin and accept the redemptive program of God, while helping people to find and follow a godly plan for healing. The pastoral counselor is greatly influenced by "The Great Commandment" in communication and service to others, as the counselor seeks to discover the provision and goodness of God in every situation. It is the goal of such counselors to model the example of Christ the Savior and Master Counselor in wisdom and understanding, in planning and power, and in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, as they engage in the theory and practice of care giving.[11]

Best Practice Two: Proper Relational Style & Safety

The Counselor's Relational Style

What does the pastoral counselor normally bring to the counseling context?

Every pastoral counselor brings a unique relational style to the counseling context. The relational style of the pastoral counselor is not as much about how one does counseling but how one thinks, feels, chooses, and relates to God, self, and others.[12] Each pastoral counselor brings a distinctive blend of these thoughts, feelings, choices, and relationships to the table, which dramatically affects the manner in which the pastoral counselor relates to the client. For example, a pastoral counselor comes to the table with a temperament, fixed paradigms, cultural postures, and relationship to God. There are other traits that affect the relational style of the pastoral counselor; but, the previously mentioned four are paramount to the purposes of this paper. Knowing one's relational

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[11] Clinton, *Caring for People God's Way*, 54.

[12] Dwight Rice, *The Counselor's Relational Style*, PowerPoint slide 2.2 - COUN 801 Intensive, January, 2011.

style and learning how to check and control it is critical in order to effectively enter the world, natural attitudes, and actions in the everyday life of the counselee. This check and control process is for the purpose of attending to or aligning with the counselee's thoughts, feelings, and actions.[13]

As previously discussed in core competency number one, the first trait that pastoral counselors naturally bring to the table is temperament. A keen self-awareness of one's unique personality traits is essential as this will directly impact communication with counselees. For example, someone with a dominant temperament can be highly effective because normally that person will be direct, self-assured, and get results; however, when exaggerated, that personality can also appear to others as being dictatorial, demanding, or sarcastic. It is this author's opinion that the pastoral counselor should periodically take professional self-assessments within the context of one's present story. There are numerous assessment tools available to accomplish this task. This author recommends that the pastoral counselor periodically take a spiritual gift analysis as well. There are many benefits of knowing one's temperament such as becoming aware of one's strengths and weaknesses, understanding how one's temperament is useful in following Christ, and recognizing how it is relevant to connecting with a client.

A second element that the pastoral counselor naturally brings to the counseling context is fixed paradigms. A paradigm is a model that serves as a pattern for something that forms the basis of a methodology or theory; and, pastoral counselors are notorious for locking into a favorite method, theory, therapeutic model or therapist. Ian Jones supports this notion as he suggests that each counselor brings prior beliefs, training, and a repertoire of gifts and techniques into the counseling encounter; also, he asserts that at the

[13] Rice, *The Counselor's Relational Style,* PowerPoint 2.3.

heart of the counseling relationship is a set of assumptions about healing and human nature.[14] The problem with fixed paradigms is that having them will cause the pastoral counselor to miss out on future possibilities because unexpected information is ignored or twisted to fit old notions which blinds one to creative solutions.

Fixed paradigms have the power to keep one from hearing and seeing what could happen resulting in personal limitations, causing a sort of intellectual myopia. Consider the Swiss watchmakers. Many years ago, Swiss watches were the hallmark of excellence throughout the world. At one time, almost eighty percent of watches sold world-wide were made by Swiss watchmakers. Today, fewer than ten percent of watches are made by the Swiss watchmakers; and, thousands of expert craftsman have subsequently lost their jobs. They were blinded by the incredible achievement and success of their antiquated fixed paradigm. Meanwhile, a Swiss technician in their midst developed quartz technology, which was resolutely rejected by the Swiss watchmakers. With this new concept, the technician had reached beyond the fixed paradigm that watches must have springs and gears; however, his superiors, still blinded by their old paradigm, refused to embrace this new apparatus. Several years later, the quartz technology was revealed by its creator at the World Fair where it drew the interest of two companies, Seiko and Texas Instrument, and the rest is history.

According to Charles Kollar, a proponent for "Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling," many pastoral counselors within the local church have fallen into the same trap concerning counseling; counseling must be done a certain way or it just is not

[14] Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, 15.

counseling.[15] Therefore, the pastoral counselor must be careful not to get stuck in certain fixed-counseling paradigms just because it has always been done that way in the past.

A third ingredient that the pastoral counselor brings into the counseling context is cultural posture. Andy Crouch, in his book *Culture Making*, suggested that people respond to their surrounding culture by assuming a cultural posture that he asserted was basically one's attitudes toward life. He defined one's cultural posture as one's learned but unconscious default position, one's natural stance in the world. The author went on to propose that people practice certain cultural gestures which are their responses to particular challenges and opportunities in life. These gestures include such subjects as condemning culture, critiquing culture, consuming culture, and copying culture. There is nothing wrong with these cultural gestures; at times, each of these responses may be the only appropriate response to a particular scenario. The problem comes when these gestures become too familiar, when they become the only way one responds to culture, when they become etched into one's unconscious stance to the world and become postures.[16] While there is much to be condemned in human culture such as violence, lawlessness, and hate crimes, if one's overall posture is cultural condemnation, one will be closed off from the beauty and possibility, as well as the grace and mercy, that are found in many other forms of culture. The pastoral counselor's posture must be balanced and must embrace the optimism and compassion of God. Crouch stated, "If we are

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[15] Charles Kollar, *Solution Focused Pastoral Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1997), 16.

[16] Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 90-93.

known mostly for our ability to poke holes in every human project, we will probably not be known as people who bear the hope and mercy of God."[17]

A fourth component that is brought by the pastoral counselor into the counseling context is one's relationship to God through Jesus Christ. Everett L. Worthington Jr. stated, in *Hope Focused Marriage Counseling*, one will have the most success with counseling and life in general to the extent that one develops a healing character. He goes on to say that the healing character is the character of Christ bursting through one's personality and is manifested in one's relationships with clients, coworkers, family members, and peers. Christ's character in the counselor is the result of a permanent, loving, and committed bond with the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, Christ's love and care shows up in the counselor's interactions with everyone. Christ's love and care demonstrated through the counselor produces faith and work, which provides the basis for hope.[18] When the pastoral counselor relates to a client, it must be on the premise of knowing one's self completely, having an open mind, approaching life with a balanced cultural posture, and permeating the counselor client relationship with one's genuine love for Jesus Christ.

What does a pastoral counselor need to bring to the counseling context?

A pastoral counselor should bring a greater awareness of the humanness of Christ to the context of Christian counseling. As previously discussed in this paper, at the heart of the counseling relationship there lies a set of assumptions about healing and human nature. How does one describe the essential nature of human beings; who are we; are

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[17] Crouch, *Culture Making*, 93.

[18] Everett L. Worthington Jr., *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 17.

human beings simply biological machines designed to respond to behavioral stimuli; are humans simply reactors to external social pressures driving feelings, attitudes, and actions? Secular counseling theories extract their foundation on variations of these concepts. However, the Bible presents a different picture of who we are. According to Ian Jones, human identity is unique among creation. Humans were created in the image of God; but, sin brought separation and condemnation from God leading to physical and spiritual death. Sin also distorted the image of the Creator in humans and made it impossible for humans to realize their full potential in creation without a new spirit and a new body. Sin not only resulted in disconnection from God, but, also caused dissonance in relationships with other humans. All people have an inherited predisposition to sin as soon as they are aware of moral actions and personal responsibility; and, the effects of sin have continued through the generations. The only true hope for people who are dead in their trespasses and sins is a new birth in the Holy Spirit. God alone has the power to restore one's relationship with Him and has cleared a path for reconciliation. A failure of secular counseling theories lies in the ability to truly comprehend the biblical nature of human beings, and their default reliance to social forces or individuals for the definitions and causes of problems and the interventions for solutions.[19]

Even though the fall created a separation between humanity and God, the incarnation affirmed that human bodies are not intrinsically evil. Jesus was God and also fully human with a physical body; for that reason, He was qualified to become the new Adam who brings new life (2 Cor. 5:17). Because the pastoral counselor comprehends the previously stated truth, the counselor may encourage clients with the authority that one's identity in Christ enables one to look at situations in an entirely new light. If one

[19] Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, 20-21, 27.

comes to understand their humanness in view of Christ Jesus as the God-man, one will find that all of their needs will be met in Him (Phil. 4:19); one will discover a peace that soothes the soul and unites one in fellowship with God and with one another. Realizing one's identity with Christ, enables one to share the Lord's likeness, attitudes, loving-kindness, and encourages holy living.[20]

A pastoral counselor must also bring a working knowledge of methods, styles, and skills to the context of Christian counseling. Everett Worthington stated, "There is no simple way to build hope." One must match one's methods to the client's level of disturbance, personal style, and willingness to accept the challenge of a rebirth of hope.[21] Charles Kollar shared that there needs to be a working knowledge of relational styles and skills enabling the counselor to identify with and understand the counseling concerns of the client.[22] Each pastoral care-giver has a particular style that influences every situation that is encountered, especially the interpersonal arena of pastoral counseling; therefore, the pastoral counselor needs to establish a common language with the counselee for discussing issues and encouraging the client in the various contexts of life. According to Kollar, "identifying with and understanding the concerns of the counselee demonstrates fit, builds rapport, and encourages a willingness to change in order to experience relocation — a collaborative process of moving away from a problematic present into the reality of a future without a specific problem."[23] One demonstrates what Kollar calls fit by connecting with the counselee and being there totally for the counselee. In the

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[20] Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, 141-142.

[21] Worthington, *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling*, 58.

[22] Kollar, *Solution Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 112.

[23] Ibid., 112-113.

counseling process, the goal of the counselor is to walk together with the counselee as he or she proceeds toward solutions.

A skill that is being increasingly recognized for its importance in the area of pastoral counseling is attending to client narrative, listening to the stories patients tell during their time in sessions. Carrie Doehring, in her work, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, encouraged pastoral caregivers to "immerse themselves in the details of the narratives that unfold in pastoral care."[24] She believed that narratives reveal how the care-seeker found meaning in the midst of life. As deep stories begin to surface, they often reveal unresolved conflicts that lead to what sociologist, Arthur Frank, referred to as narrative wreckage. Frank reasoned that times of illness, when deeply felt emotions are surfacing, call for stories.[25] There is a need for persons to continue narrating their current experience even in the midst of confusion, and to connect the present with meaningful stories from the past.[26] As Doehring detailed in her work, the existence of narrative threads help capture the complexity of life and profound experiences of suffering and struggle that present during times of extreme crisis.[27]

According to Kollar, in the counseling process, the pastoral counselor has the unique opportunity to enter the world of the counselee. Through attentive listening, the pastoral counselor is able to show the counselee that he identifies with and understands

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[24] Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2006), 166.

[25] Arthur Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 53.

[26] Scott D. Landis, "Practicing Discernment: Pastoral Care in Crisis Situations." *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Vol.64 no. 1 (2010): 2.

[27] Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, 68.

the counselee's concerns.[28] By identifying with the counselee's emotions, the pastoral counselor is able to walk with the client during times of rejoicing or morning (Rom. 12:15). Further, by attending to verbal and nonverbal clues and with proper eye contact, the pastoral counselor can let the counselee know that the pastoral counselor is with that person through the process of relocation. With the proper methods, style, and skills in place, the pastoral counselor has the opportunity to enter into the client's world long enough to co-create a solution and experience walking together with the patient out from under the weight of the problem.

The Counselor's Safety

There are five important considerations about personal safety that should capture the pastoral counselor's attention. These concerns are instituting a perpetual membership in a professional partnership, setting personal and ethical boundaries, enlisting client consent, allowing time for debriefing, and determining professional competency. First, a look at connecting with professional partnerships reveals several types of products that assist the pastoral counselor in forming a safety net around one's self and one's ministry. For example, partnering with professional organizations, like the *American Association of Christian Counselors*, provides accessibility to a number of professional benefits such as a universal code of ethics, licensure, continuing education, legal advocacy, professional liability insurance, peer written journals, and conferences. Connecting with an organization such as *AACC* reduces counselor vulnerability by affirmatively exposing pastoral counselors to professional services related to moving professional helpers toward

[28] Kollar, *Solution Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 112-113.

excellence, and helping them increase their capability of more consistently securing the best counseling outcomes.

Second, pastoral counselors should set boundaries in counseling relationships. Boundaries help to provide safety and structure in counseling by creating a border around the professional relationship that defines the roles and responsibilities of each member of the therapeutic dyad. A border is a limit that promotes integrity.[29] For example, the pastoral counselor may be confronted with the conflict of dual relationships. A dual relationship is created whenever the role of pastoral counselor is combined with another relationship, which could be professional (e.g., professor, supervisor, or employee) or personal (e.g., friend, close relative, past intimate partner). Counselors generally are advised to make every effort to avoid these types of relationships because of the potential harm to clients.

Third, for liability protection and client protection, the pastoral counselor should offer full disclosure for all counseling and related services that will be offered to the client. The likelihood of attaining successful counseling outcomes is enhanced when clients are actively involved in their therapeutic journeys, making informed decisions throughout the process. The first decision that prospective clients must make is whether to enter into counseling and with whom. To make this decision prudently, clients have a right to know what counseling entails. They might have many questions and uncertainties when they first come for counseling. Therefore, the pastoral counselor has an ethical obligation to provide clients with a full explanation of the counseling process. Near the beginning of the counseling process, the pastoral counselor and client should

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[29] Anne Katherine, *Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 4.

discuss and agree upon the following matters: the nature of and course of therapy; client issues and goals; potential problems and reasonable alternatives to counseling; counselor status and credentials; confidentiality and its limits; fees and financial procedures; limitations about time and access to the counselor, including directions in emergency situations; and procedures for resolution of disputes and misunderstandings. If the pastoral counselor is supervised, this fact shall be disclosed and the supervisor's name and role indicated to the client. This disclosure also includes video or audio-taping of client sessions, the use of supervisory and consultative help, the application of special procedures and evaluations, and the communication of client data with other professionals and institutions. According to the code of ethics set forth by the *American Association of Christian Counselors*, pastoral caregivers and counselors should respect the need for informed consent regarding the structure and process of counseling. The pastoral counselor should be extremely cautious that the client has the capacity to give consent; and after having discussed counseling together, the client reasonably understands the nature and process of counseling; the costs, time, and work required; the limits of counseling; and any appropriate alternatives. The client must freely give consent to counseling without coercion or undue influence. The pastoral counselor should also obtain consent from parents or the client's legally authorized representative when clients are minors, or for adults who are legally incapable of giving consent.[30]

Fourth, the pastoral counselor should leave time for debriefing. Every pastoral counselor needs to debrief with a friend or peer. The intentional, interpersonal mutual

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[30] George Ohlschlager, "The Y2004 Final Code," *American Association of Christian Counselors' Code of Ethics*, (2004): 9, http://www.aacc.net/about-us/code-of-ethics/ (accessed April 25, 2011).

support of debriefing can compensate for the draining work of pastoral counseling.[31] Debriefing can address the following aspects of the pastoral counselor's overall mental, physical, and spiritual state: one's mindset and motivation, vulnerabilities and temptations, ethical dilemmas and dangers, spiritual status, family relationships, physical health, and professional effectiveness. In line with the proverbial biblical thinking "iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17), it would be a recommended practice that pastoral counselors enlist a personal mentor or colleague for the purposes of debriefing, encouragement, and support.

Fifth, the pastoral counselor should continually evaluate areas of competency. Once the pastoral counselor has completed the required training, and if necessary, is licensed or certified to practice, the pastoral counselor is responsible for determining personal competence. The pastoral counselor is an autonomous professional who is granted the privilege and responsibility for monitoring personal effectiveness. It is not easy for the pastoral counselor to determine where boundaries of competence lie. It is important that individual limitations be recognized; however, if the pastoral counselor is too modest about personal competencies, the scope of practice could be unnecessarily restricted. The task for the pastoral counselor is to recognize when one is unable to serve prospective clients due to a lack of the needed skills or knowledge; nevertheless, the pastoral counselor must be willing to accept clients who will challenge growth and who will stretch boundaries of competence. The *American Counseling Association* code of ethics (standard C.2. d.) recommends that the pastoral counselors regularly engage in peer consultation or participate in peer supervision groups as a means for maintaining professional competence. Peer groups can provide objective feedback in dealing with

[31] Rice, *The Counselor's Relational Style,* PowerPoint 2.8.

counter-transference issues, information on new techniques and research, assistance in dealing with difficult clients, and support and help in dealing with the stress and isolation sometimes experienced by pastoral counselors.[32]

Best Practice Three: The Counseling Setting and Culture

Who are you counseling?

In today's world, it is particularly important for the pastoral counselor to develop intercultural and generational counseling competencies. The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse both generationally and culturally; and, pastoral counselors are coming across more clients who are different from themselves. It is increasingly recognized that the counseling theories commonly used by counselor educators and practitioners during the twentieth century are embedded in Eurocentric beliefs about mental health and human development. Although such theories are useful when implemented among persons from non-Hispanic, white European backgrounds, they often are less effective, and can even be harmful, when used among persons from non-white, non-European groups.[33] It would be unethical for the pastoral counselor to attempt to provide services to culturally diverse clients without appropriate training and experience. Therefore, the pastoral counselor should strive actively to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of clients, and to gain skills and current knowledge in working with diverse and special client populations. Because counseling is not a static science, the pastoral counselor must avail oneself to continuing education for the purpose

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[32] *American Counseling Association*, "ACA Code of Ethics," (2005): 9.

[33] D. Locke, J. Myers, and E. Herr, *The Handbook of Counseling* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 536.

of maintaining competence to practice. As previously stated, regularly engaging in peer consultation sessions or participating in peer supervision groups can be an important factor in maintaining competence in this area as well.

What is your Counseling Mandate?

It is recommended that the pastoral counselor create a personal counseling mandate that establishes the current counseling paradigm in which the pastoral counselor will function. This information centers the pastoral counselor's mission and therapy, and can be beneficial for pending clients as well. The personal counseling mandate should be revisited and updated periodically. The pastoral counselor's counseling mandate should include the pastoral counselor's basis for care-giving and guiding assumptions.
The basis for this writer's care-giving is biblical Christian counseling. Biblical Christian counseling is the dynamic process of communication between a representative of God and a person, family, or group in need designed to achieve healing in the relationship of that person, family, or group to God, to self, and to others. Because people are relational beings, the process of biblical Christian counseling addresses the scope of influential interdependent relationships and draws attention to roles, needs, and God's calling of service to others. It looks for progress and development toward health and wholeness in the will of God.[34]

Biblical Christian counseling is a process, a procedure or course of action involving particular techniques and schemes. The process is not random; rather, the steps or stages of change are carefully selected with a course, a plan, and specific goals in mind. The process is structured within the parameters of a definite time frame; and, the

[34] Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, 59.

counseling encounter is typically a short duration as determined by the pastoral counselor and the person(s) in need. This distinguishes the counseling process from the perpetual ministries of evangelism and discipleship. The value of biblical Christian counseling is that it attempts to raise an awareness of the specifics of a counselee's current condition that permits the person to move from guilt to the means of forgiveness, from separation to the possibilities of restoration of home and family, from hurt to ultimate justice, from feelings of worthlessness to incalculable value in the Lord.[35]

This author's guiding assumptions for biblical Christian counseling are: God is sovereign and already at work before the counseling process begins; complex problems do not always demand complex solutions; all people are created in the image of God and as His image bearers, have infinite worth and value; "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," but hope is found in one's choice of Jesus Christ as "all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-24); different approaches can be helpful with different people; the counselee is the expert regarding his or her problem and the best person to describe his or her preferred story; change is best consolidated, supported, and secured under the authority of God's Word, under the control of the Holy Spirit, and within the community and connection offered by responsible members and ministries.[36]

Best Practice Four: Solution-Based Brief Pastoral Counseling

The "Solution-Based Brief Pastoral Counseling" approach moves the client through four phases of therapy and is enhanced by the skill-set of the pastoral counselor.

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[35] Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth*, 60.

[36] Rice, *The Counselor's Relational Style*, PowerPoint 4.6.

The skill-set of the pastoral counselor includes such things as education, personality, competencies, spirituality, biblical knowledge, ability to communicate, aptitude to listen, capacity to observe, command of counseling sessions, awareness of limitations, and repertoire of techniques and interventions. With an array of skills, the goal of the pastoral counselor is to deliberately move the client through these four specific phases of counseling in a minimal amount of counseling sessions.

Phase one asks the question, "What is the presenting story or problem?" The goal of this phase is problem description; therefore, the counselee talks while the pastoral counselor listens for understanding and demonstrates connection through relational style alignment and active listening skills reflecting empathy, respect, and authenticity. The chief aim of this phase is listening well; this is not the time to focus on assessment, but to acquire understanding about what is happening and who and what are important to the counselee.

The second phase poses the inquiry, "What is the future preferred story or solution look like?" During this phase, the pastoral counselor's objective is goal formulation; therefore, the pastoral counselor seeks to renew and maintain rapport while anticipating an invitation to enter the care-seeker's world. Here, the pastoral counselor uses solution-focused questions to find out what the counselee considers the preferred story or solution to be. During this part of the process, the pastoral counselor tests the feasibility of the picture and generates possible ideas or alternatives if necessary. A covert pastoral counselor's assessment is conducted during this phase. The pastoral counselor's chief aim during this phase is collaborating well, and establishing a method for tracking the client's move toward change.

The third phase queries how the pastoral counselor and counselee will proceed and partner toward the solution. The pastoral counselor's goal during this phase is vision clarification. At this point, the pastoral counselor and counselee must actively participate together in the description and development of a strategy and solution to pursue a future without the problematic pattern. A number of techniques or interventions such as asking the miracle question and journaling can help with this part of the process.

The final phase addresses the issue of, "Who are the people that can best support and secure the counselee in the process of change?" Here, the pastoral counselor's goal is promoting and supporting change; and, the counselee commits to a community of accountability. During pattern dehabituation and rehabituation leading to changes directed at the overarching goal, the pastoral counselor reinforces commitment for change through supportive feedback, and by arranging accountability through the small-group ministries of a local church.

It is important to note that these phases may not correlate to sessions. The possibility exists of accomplishing all phases in one or two sessions; or, the phases may stretch over numerous sessions. However, keep in mind that even though, in many cases, solutions may be achieved through brief therapy, there may be cases in which the plausibility of referral for specialization or extended treatment may be in order. It is important to remember that pastoral counseling must be flexible and develop sensitivity to the third ear, listening to the Holy Spirit in order to tailor counseling to each individual.[37]

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[37] Rice, *The Counselor's Relational Style*, PowerPoint 4.14-20.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORE COMPETENCY THREE
CONSTRUCTING YOUR STRATEGY TO MEND MARRIAGES

Introduction

The concept of matrimony and even the definition of marriage progressively are eroding toward chaos as the once revered institution of marriage continues to be a subject of debate and controversy within American culture today. Modern American couples not only contend with the normal tests and obstacles intrinsic to any human relationship, but also face philosophical challenges as well as spiritual forces of darkness seeking to rescind the biblical ideal. However, the Bible, which portrays marriage as a beautiful metaphor of the union between Christ and His bride, the church, represents the most dependable foundation upon which to construct a highly functional marriage. Because confusion, dissonance, pain, misunderstanding, and hurt are unavoidable for couples, pastoral counselors, when called upon, must have the ability to offer a solid integration of biblical principles and counseling skills, along with the appropriate clinical therapy in order to foster relational wholeness.

The information provided in core competency number three renders general psychological therapeutic knowledge that directs pastoral counselors toward an area of psychotherapy that can be correlated with spiritual applications in order to provide homeostasis for marriages or couples in distress. Core competency number three addresses the critical task of developing a strategic approach to counseling couples. The

information presented in core competency number three exposes the pastoral counselor to seven of the prevailing psychological theories that have formed the basis for strategic therapies used in couples and marriage counseling today. The goal of this information is to provide the pastoral counselor with basic information prodding the critical task of developing a personal strategy for counseling couples in distress. Core competency number three assumes that pastoral counselors are already astute in the techniques of spiritual and biblical counseling, therefore, directs most of its material toward the area of psychology. The collected facts will provide information to assist pastoral counselors in partnering spiritual and psychological concepts through the basic knowledge of these selected psychological therapies.

The Spiritual Implications

Even though the primary content of core competency number three addresses the psychological concerns that are to be integrated with biblical counseling, it is still noteworthy to mention the spiritual implications. Similar to the tentativeness of spiritual counselors to assimilate psychology with biblical precepts, there has been a guarded hesitancy by psychology professionals to address spiritual issues in counseling, even though there are many advantages.

When comparing psychological counseling with biblical counseling, one becomes conscious that both are attempting to help the client to learn to accept self, forgive others and self, acknowledge his or her shortcomings, accept personal responsibility, let go of hurts and resentments, deal with guilt, and modify self-destructive patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. These are the issues that clients bring to counselors; and, all have

emotional, spiritual and/or religious dimensions to them.[1] A majority of Americans reported in a poll that active religious beliefs and/or spiritual awareness are integral to their lives.[2] The data from the poll suggests the possibility that many of these individuals will seek counseling to resolve their deep spiritual and religious issues. The common denominator of spirituality and counseling is human suffering; therefore, many will initially turn to their spiritual and religious beliefs when things go wrong.

As a result, the opportunity for pastoral care and counseling in the twenty-first century is optimal, especially in the areas of family counseling and couples' therapy. Therefore, it is important that pastoral counselors recognize not only the significance of providing spiritual help for their clients, but also have the ability to corroborate appropriate psychological therapies for the purpose of achieving the holistic wellbeing of a client. The information presented in this paper discusses the major tenets and techniques associated with an eclectic group of family therapies for the purpose of exposing a cross section of relevant psychological therapies for implementation when counseling couples or families in distress.

The Evolution of Psychology into the Twenty-First Century

When considering the presentation of various therapeutic approaches to counseling couples in distress, one must comprehend the evolution of psychology into the twenty-first century. Several modern trends have greatly impacted the science of psychology in modern culture in relation to pastoral counseling. These trends must be

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[1] Mary Burke and J. Miranti, "The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of Counseling," in the *Handbook of Counseling*, ed. D. Locke (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 607-618.

[2] G. H. Gallup and R. Begilla, Jr., "More Find Religion Important," *The Washington Post*, January 20, 1994, G10.

considered in order to contemporize the elements of dated theorists and open the intellect of pastoral counselors to the notion of psychology as a rapidly evolving and progressive science.

The first trend impacting modern psychology has been the shift to cognitive viewpoints. As the old millennium ended, there was a shift from behavioral perspectives in psychology to cognitive perspectives,[3] in other words, a shift from solely empirical sources for knowledge to an acceptance of rationality as a source for knowledge. Media is replete with words such as intuition and faith; and, many bestselling books now place a premium value on intuitive and spiritual thinking. As a contributing expert in the area of the history of psychology, J.C. Brown stated, "In the first decade of the new millennium, psychology is taking on another new look… Psychology, and in fact, all of society, is embracing spirituality, accepting faith as a once again source of legitimate knowledge."[4] In the view of this new cognitive openness to religion, the American Psychological Association has allowed for a credible marriage between the values of biblically-based counseling and the principles of psychology resulting in Division Thirty-six, "The Society of Religious Psychology,"[5] and the acceptance of well-trained pastoral counselors as valid practitioners.

Another trend evolving throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century that is significantly reshaping the landscape of modern psychology is the advancement of information technology. Internet venues and the twenty-four hour news networks have

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[3] C. J. Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology* (Hoboken NJ: Wiley, 2004), 172.

[4] Jay C. Brown, *Twenty-First Century Psychology: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 21.

[5] Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, http:// http://www.division36.org/ (accessed October 12, 2011).

made psychology, in all of its forms, accessible to everyone. The increased globalization of psychology means that mental health practitioners in all fields, including pastoral care, must now be aware of cultural issues when diagnosing and treating mental illness or addressing interpersonal relationship issues.

An additional trend to be noted is the rapidly developing advancements in neuroscience. These advancements are now connecting precise parts of the human brain with specific human behaviors. Currently, MRI scans of the brain can predict some psychological behaviors. Brown stated that neuroscience may be the avenue that will allow psychology to finally fully advance beyond the realm of social science, where predictors are probabilistic, and into the realm of the natural sciences, where prediction is more of an absolute.[6] Rather than merely predicting behaviors of average individuals, neuroscience may allow the prediction of specific behaviors of individuals.

Further, over the last decade there has been a trend toward the systemic notion that all family members influence the aggravation or abatement of a problem, and the movement away from individual therapy, which saddled only the client with the responsibility for change. Several social dynamics occurred during the first half of the twentieth century setting the stage for the emergence of systemic family counseling or "Family Systems Therapy." These included the child guidance movement, the emergence of marriage counseling, research on schizophrenia within families, the involvement of social workers with families, and studies on small group dynamics. These and many other measures, both in society and in the field of psychotherapy, intertwined to encourage the development of family counseling, and ultimately led to the

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[6] Brown, *Twenty-First Century Psychology*, 22.

dramatic paradigm shift toward systemic theory. This movement toward the use of systems theory to explain family functioning was a radical departure from the traditional linear model for behavior.[7]

One more important trend is the fragmentation of psychology. The American Psychological Association currently has fifty-six divisions, each specializing in its own slice of psychology, and with its own specialized terminology. Each specialization is often limited to its own research and specific schools of education and training. As previously mentioned, the American Psychological Association now includes a society for the psychology of religion.

Other trends, such as psychology's usefulness and acceptance by the general public into everyday life, its connection to the human genome, consumer behavior, politics, industry, sports, and crime, remind one that humans are complex beings who now live in a multifaceted world. All of these trends emphasize the importance of the need for specialized training for pastoral counselors. Understanding certain theories of psychology along with their corresponding interventions and therapies, in addition to appropriate biblical counsel, can provide a holistic healing to a person or couple in distress.

Family Systems Therapy

During the middle of the last century, four key theoretical orientations were developed in the family systems field. Still today, these four influential therapies provide the framework for training in marriage and couple's counseling. These four

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[7] M. P. Nichols and R. C. Schwartz, *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995).

psychological remedies are Transgenerational Family Therapy, Structural Family Therapy, Strategic Family Therapy, and Experiential Family Therapy. Each therapy is connected with a particular individual who was instrumental in the conception of the theory, and is known for demonstration of work with it. These theories all focus on family systems and are differentiated by what the therapist emphasized when working within the family system.

Transgenerational Therapy

During the middle of the twentieth century, Murray Bowen began studying families as a unit of analysis that required observation of the interaction and interdependence between individual family members. From his studies, Bowen developed a theory of the family emotional system and a method of therapy. The foundation of Bowen's theory is the concept of differentiation of self. According to Bowen, the differentiation of self is the degree of emotional separation or autonomy a family member has while still experiencing intimacy within the family system. Bowen discovered that differentiation is most often affected by family stress or anxiety. When anxiety is low, most families appear to be normal. As anxiety increases, the dysfunctional or impaired family experiences increased tensions among relationships interfering with normal differentiation and resulting in escalating problems. Bowen detected that families with well-differentiated members could be stressed into dysfunction; however, they had a flexibility of coping mechanisms and tended to recover rapidly. This led Bowen to conclude there was a continuum from the most impaired to optimally functioning families. Thus, all families and individuals have stressors; however, they differ in their ability to implement healthy coping strategies.

Transgenerational Therapy puts forth the notion that the characteristic of self-differentiation is a product of emotional development that could be grasped by the degree of fusion between emotional and intellectual functioning. This characteristic is so universal it can be used as a way of categorizing all people on a single continuum. At early stages of development, and at the low extreme of the continuum, people are dominated by automatic emotional processes and reactivity. These are people who are easily stressed into dysfunction and have difficulty recovering. At the high end of the continuum, intellectual functionality remains autonomous under stress. These people are more adaptable, flexible, and independent of emotionality. They are able to better cope with life's stresses.[8]

To further interpret family functions, several other factors are employed by Transgenerational Therapy. One of these is the "nuclear family emotional system." These are the emotional patterns in a family that are replicated patterns of past generations. Hypothetically, this is a mother who lived through The Great Depression and taught her daughter to always prepare for the worst case scenario and to be happy simply if things "are not that bad." The daughter thinks her mother is wise and adopts this way of thinking. She grows up and has a son; without realizing it, she models this way of thinking. He may follow or reject it; and, whether he has a happy or distressed relationship depends on the kind of partner he finds.[9]

Another element to interpret family functions is triangulation. Triangulation is a three-person configuration in an emotional system that is formed when a two-person

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[8] Frank B. Wichern, "Family Systems Therapy," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling*, 2nd ed., David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 444.

[9] *Psychpage.com*, "Bowen Family Therapy," http://www.psychpage.com/learning/library/counseling/bowen.html (accessed May 12, 2010).

system becomes overloaded and anxious under stress, and involves a vulnerable third person. A triangle can contain much more tension because the tension can shift around three relationships. Often, if the tension is too high for one triangle to contain, it spreads to a series of interlocking triangles. Spreading the tension can stabilize a system; however, the downside is that nothing gets resolved.[10]

One more component to interpret family functions is emotional cutoff. Emotional cutoff describes people managing their unresolved emotional issues with parents, siblings, and other family members by reducing or totally cutting off emotional contact with them. Emotional contact can be reduced by people moving away from their families and rarely going home; or, it can be reduced by people staying in physical contact with their families but avoiding sensitive issues. Relationships may look better if people cutoff to manage them; but, the problems are only put into hibernation, not resolved.[11] The goal of Transgenerational Therapy is to understand the influence of multigenerational patterns of behavior on couple's relationships, and to gain insight into the patterns that have affected how they now function. In other words, the aim is to explore the influence of historic family systems on the dynamics of the present family system. When applied to pre-marriage counseling, the goal of the therapy is to assist both individuals in modifying their relationships with their family of origin, to achieve less emotional reactivity and fusion, and to attain greater cognitive control of feelings and autonomy.

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[10] Bowen Center for the Study of the Family: Georgetown Family Center, "Triangles" under Bowen Theory, http://www.the bowencenter.org/pages/concepttri.html (accessed April 29, 2010).

[11] Ibid.

The pastoral counselor should begin the process of this therapy by constructing a genogram. A genogram is a tool that provides a visualization of three to four generations of the family, complete with relational patterns. Application of this therapy by the pastoral counselor is with the most differentiated family member or with the couple. Rarely is the whole family seen in therapy; the pastoral counselor implementing this therapy is to be calm and differentiated from the family system, and objectivity and neutrality are of utmost importance.[12] When implicating this therapy, the pastoral counselor assumes the role of coach or consultant, guiding each individual through carefully planned steps of intervention. The Bowen model is growth-oriented, and mandates exploration and change beyond the reduction of symptoms toward increased self-differentiation.[13] Understanding the dynamics of each family system from which the husband and wife originated, can be instrumental in accessing and constructing interventions for the crisis occurring within a couple's current family system. The process could include redeveloping personal relationships with key family members, repairing cutoffs, detriangling from conflicts, and changing the part played in emotionally reactive vicious cycles. It is imperative, in this approach, that the pastoral counselor maintains autonomy and does not become emotionally engaged or triangulated.

Structural Family Therapy

Structural Family Therapy is another therapy derived from the family systems' schools birthed in the middle nineteen sixties. This therapy asserts that individual symptoms are best understood in the context of family transaction patterns. Structural

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[12] Patricia W. Stevens, "Systems Theories," *The Handbook of Counseling*, Don Locke, J. Myers and et al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 193.

[13] Wichern, "Family Systems Therapy," 444.

Family Therapy perceives family structure to be the invisible set of functional demands that organizes how family members relate to one another. This structure represents the sum of a family's rules and procedures. Structural Family Therapy asserts that families are arranged and organized into elementary subunits and subsystems, which regulate the family's day-to-day functioning. Structural Family Therapy proposes that subsystems are an important component of family structure. The partner dyad provides the basis of family functioning; thus, couples form the marriage subunit, parents comprise the managerial subunit, and the children compose the sibling subunits.

Pastoral counselors applying Structural Family Therapy focus on learning clear boundaries, on having overt role expectations and family rules, as well as determining the family hierarchical system and the interdependent functioning of its subsystems. These observations are critical because change in family organization or structure is necessary in order for symptoms to be relieved. The assumption of this theory is that changes and symptom reduction will follow change in the structure; that is, as the structure is transformed, positions of individual members are altered and personal experience changes, thereby creating symptom relief.[14] When employing Structural Family Therapy, the pastoral counselor strives to change dysfunctional family transaction patterns and to realign the family structure. The goal of therapy, in addition to symptom reduction, is to assist family members in learning alternate and more satisfying ways of dealing with one another, to have appropriate boundaries, and to replace outgrown rules.[15]

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[14] Stevens, "Systems Theories," 191.

[15] Ibid.

Strategic Family Therapy

Strategic family therapy is any type of therapy where the pastoral counselor initiates what happens during therapy and designs a particular approach for each problem.[16] This type of therapy requires the pastoral counselor take responsibility for directly influencing people. Strategic family therapy is concise, imaginative, directive, and positive. As a therapy, it focuses on the presenting problem rather than delving deeply into past issues. Primarily, strategic therapy centers on family communication patterns and the sequential ordering of interactions involved in the presenting problem. The goal of therapy is to replace these non-conducive sequences of behavior with more satisfying sequences.

There are two forms of strategic family therapy, problem-focused therapy and solution- focused therapy. The goal of problem-focused therapy is to solve the presenting problems on which the family has agreed to work rather than providing insight and understanding. To achieve this goal, the pastoral counselor must create unique interventions that fit the presenting problems. Homework sessions or directives are often given in addition to therapy sessions. The goals of the directives are to initiate a change in behavior, involve the pastoral counselor in the family, and gather information.[17] Directives are the key tool of the approach to problem-focused strategic family counseling. On the other hand, solution-focused therapy examines the exception to the problem during the times when the problem is nonexistent.

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[16] Jay Haley, "Jay Haley: The Strategic Therapist," http://www.jay-haley-on-therapy.com/html/family_therapy.html (accessed May 9, 2010).

[17] Alan E. Kazdin, "Strategic Family Therapy," *Encyclopedia of Psychology,* vol. 3 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 320-325.

Overall, strategic family therapy focuses on a family's state of equilibrium, on how family rules are upheld, on symmetrical and complimentary relationships within the family, and on the reciprocation of family member interactions. Another important component of strategic family therapy is the focus on the importance of power in relationships within the family. The pastoral counselor can use pretending, positioning, and paradoxical interventions as a means of creatively defining the problem for the client. A major advantage of Structural Family Therapy as a viable therapy option for pastoral counselors is the versatility of this therapy for a wide variety of family constructs.[18]

Experiential Family Therapy

Experiential Family Therapy is distinct from the other therapies in the family systems field because it does not rely on therapy. The key to Experiential Family Therapy is that it relies on the relationship or involvement of the therapist with the family. When embracing this therapy, the pastoral counselor attempts to understand the client by comprehending the client's perception of a situation, not just the reality of it. This therapy is to be applied when the pastoral counselor perceives that the behavior of the client has been driven by the client's personal experience and individual perception rather than by external reality; in other words, the perception is the reality. The tenets of this therapy emphasize free will, choice, and the human capacity for self-determination and self-fulfillment. Experience is esteemed over rational thought or intellectualizing. There are as many ways to provide change as there are dysfunctions. Pastoral counselors who will be effective with this type of therapy will be active, self-disclosing, implementing a variety of evocative directive techniques, and will focus on the present

[18] Stevens, "Systems Theories," 192.

experiences of families. Pastoral counselors executing techniques fundamental to this type of therapy will be authentic people who are spontaneous, challenging, and idiosyncratic[19].

The pastoral counselor's goal for this type of therapy is to promote growth and to support the family in constructing creative methods of coping. The goal of this therapy does not automatically entail the reduction or elimination of dysfunctional symptoms. One technique relevant to Experiential Family Therapy is taking a situation to its most ludicrous outcome in order to accelerate change in the family system. At this point, change produces growth in the system and in the individuals within the system.

Family Systems Therapy Techniques

Pastoral counselors have a number of options for therapy techniques within the four major Family Systems Therapies. Most of the family systems therapeutic techniques presented in this thesis project correlate with all four major theories. However, one must realize that the reason or theoretical explanation for the use of the techniques will vary depending on which theory employs the technique. The primary therapeutic techniques that can be practically implemented when counseling couples in distress are:

Reframing

Reframing is the attribution of a different meaning to a behavior in order that the behavior will be perceived in a different manner by the couples or family members in therapy. This action alters the original perception of an episode or situation and creates a new framework that has an equally plausible explanation. One of the primary benefits of

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[19] Irene Goldenberg and H. Goldenberg, *Family therapy: An overview* (Florence, KY: Cengage Learning, 2007), 207.

reframing is that it places an event or circumstance in a more positive or constructive light, allowing couples or family members to shift their perception from negative to positive. This technique permits couples or family members who have previously interpreted behavior as unchangeable to see it as voluntary and open to change. For example, reframing a spouse's behavior as "loving" rather than "manipulative" could reduce significant tension in a relationship.

The Genogram

Genograms are visual representations of generational family trees that identify family patterns and themes as well as highlight connections between present family events and prior experiences. Through the use of symbols, a genogram tells the family story. Names, dates, marriages, divorces, mental illness, substance abuse, and other relevant facts are included. In addition, symbols that represent the relationship among and between family members are presented. Douglas Rait, Ph.D. and Ira Glick, M.D., in an article for *Academic Psychiatry*, propose the genogram to be a useful tool because "a picture is worth a thousand words;" and, they assert that those who utilize genograms soon recognize the value in efficiently gathering family historical information visually rather than in the traditional narrative form.[20] Genograms are a practical technique because most couples and families enjoy the process of generating a genogram as they see patterns emerge in their family histories in a way that is accessible and clarifying.

[20] Douglas Rait and I. Glick, "A Model for Reintegrating Couples and Family Therapy Training in Psychiatric Residency Programs," *Academic Psychiatry* 32 (March-April 2008): 81 - 86.

The Empty Chair

The empty chair technique has been frequently used in family therapy. It is particularly effective for expressing thoughts and feelings to absent family members. The purpose of the technique is to allow a family member to express thoughts or feelings to another family member, represented by the empty chair, that are difficult to express directly to that person. In family therapy, this intervention would be used with both members present in the session whenever possible.

Family Rituals

Family rituals can be used by pastoral counselors for the purpose of improving family structure. These rituals could include eating family dinner together, having couples spend specific time alone or apart. Allowing couples or families to develop their own rituals can be therapeutic as well. Specific rules and roles would be defined for the prescribed rituals, such as only positive talk, or no problem solving during dinner or partner time. Because couples and families often demonstrate predictable patterns of behavior that are unproductive, rituals can be used to change these negative behavioral patterns. A couple can be asked to plan these rituals in therapy sessions providing information and insight for the pastoral counselor as well as shifting the family view of its situation from unproductive to productive.

Tracking

Tracking is derived from communication, the significance of family symbols, life themes, values, significant family events and are then deliberately used in conversation. Tracking provides advantages such as allowing the pastoral care-taker to enter the family, and providing information about the family structure and the sequence of events that are

keeping the family in a predictable behavior pattern. Moreover, it substantiates that the pastoral counselor values what the family is saying; and, without soliciting information, it provides a view of family dynamics through its themes, values, and events.

Enactment and Reenactment

A common technique that can be applied by pastoral counselors is to ask the family to bring an outside problematic interaction into the session and to reenact the situation. The pastoral counselor then requests the family to utilize a new set of interactions with this problem. The beauty of this two-part technique is that it empowers the clients to personally change the dynamics of the presenting problem, and strengthens the client's ability to alter the situation through specific actions. As a result, family members or couples experience self-awareness, and frequently discover more functional ways of interacting.

Behavioral Analysis or Assessment

Pastoral counselors should engage in ongoing observations of distinct acts exchanged by couples or family members, as well as interactional consequences of problematic behavior and antecedent stimuli. Family therapists focus on the function that behavior patterns serve in the family. It is through the understanding of the function of the behavior that the pastoral counselor and family begin to understand what is necessary and appropriate for change to happen.

Also, it is through assessment, or the evaluation of family behaviors, that pastoral counselors determine treatment plans and objectives. Assessment can be informal, using observation, or formal, using one of the many marriage or family assessment instruments

now available. For the pastoral counselor, assessment is a vital part of accountability for both ethical and legal concerns.

Summary of Family Systems Theory

In summary, the approaches relevant to the family systems fields are an exciting option for the pastoral counselor. Even though many of the tenets of family therapy are traditional, it is a progressive field of psychology as well. Pastoral counselors that choose Family Systems Therapy methods need to be knowledgeable about the history, theory, practice, and process of this system of therapy; and, they must be knowledgeable about societal changes with an awareness of the variety of family arrangements that they will encounter. Family Systems Therapy works very well in the fields of marriage and couples' counseling; but, the pastoral counselor must be cognizant of the matter that the couple is a subsystem of the whole family system. Pastoral counselors that engage in family or couples' therapy need to be open to the new methods and techniques that are available today. In other words, they must be systemic in their professional lives as they strive to synthesize the past and present in family systems and the larger systems in which families exist.[21]

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) was born from the behavioral school of therapy. The behavior school of therapy is divided into three generations: traditional behaviorism, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and contextual behavior therapy. Contextual behavior therapy is grounded in understanding behaviors, alongside emotions

[21] Stevens, "Systems Theories," 196.

and thoughts, in the situations in which they occur. In fact, it is only in examining them in the context in which they occur that a person's behavior makes any sense. This approach represents a radical shift from traditional behaviorism and cognitive-behavioral therapy because of the inclusion of acceptance and mindfulness-based interventions.[22] ACT has been classified by some as the product of "third wave psychologists" who are now focusing less on how to manipulate the content of thoughts and more on how to change the context of thoughts. ACT is built on the idea of what Steven Hayes called, "the assumption of destructive normality." This is the notion that ordinary psychological human processes can themselves lead to extremely destructive and dysfunctional results, possibly amplifying or exacerbating unusual pathological processes.[23] Therefore, one should acknowledge psychological pain rather than try to push it away, because trying to push it away or deny it just gives it more energy and strength.

The scheme of ACT is to contextually modify the way one sees thoughts and feelings so those feelings no longer control one's behavior.[24] As previously stated, ACT is a unique experiential psychological therapy based upon the use of acceptance and mindfulness strategies in concert with commitment and behavior change strategies for the purpose of increasing psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility is understood as getting in touch with the present moment fully as a conscious human being; and, based on what the situation presents, either changing or persisting in a behavior because of one's

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[22] Claudia Dewane, "The ABCs of ACT - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy," *Social Work Today,* 8 no. 5 (September/October 2008):36.

[23] Steven Hayes, K. Strosahl, and K. Wilson, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavioral Change* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1999), 6.

[24] Jen Plumb, "Psychology Today: How Analyzing Your Problems May Be Counterproductive," Association for Contextual Behavioral Science, Feb. 15, 2010, http://contextualpsychology.org/ psychology_today_how_analyzing_your_problems_may_ (accessed October 24, 2011).

chosen value system. A key component of ACT is that it elucidates the ways that language entangles clients into futile attempts to wage war against their own inner lives. The quintessential process of traditional cognitive psychologists and psychotherapists is to engage in a process of analyzing one's way out of problems; however, ACT asserts that one accept negative beliefs, pessimistic thinking, and depressing problems. After that, it focuses on what one wants to become in spite of the previously mentioned disheartening issues.

To appreciate this therapy, the pastoral counselor will have to work past ACT's linguistic connections to the Relational Frame Theory which gives this therapy a propensity toward New Age and Eastern Religious orientations. However, the advantage of ACT is the practical nature of some of its interventions. For example, interventions can include such things as writing an epitaph, contextualizing thoughts, or clarifying values and committing specific behaviors to the interventions.[25] Other strategies include the use of metaphors, paradoxes, and experiential exercises in which clients learn how to make healthy contact with thoughts, feelings, memories, as well as physical sensations that have previously been feared and avoided. The goal of ACT is to provide clients the skills to recontextualize and accept their traumatic private events, to develop greater clarity about personal values, and to commit to needed behavior change. Again, ACT is not about overcoming pain or fighting emotions; it is about embracing life and feeling everything life has to offer. It offers a way out of suffering by choosing to live a life based on what matters most. Rather than combined therapy for couples, the techniques of this therapy are better suited for individuals and individual life problems that may be the root cause of marriages in distress such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress

[25] Plumb, "Psychology Today."

disorder, substance abuse, chronic pain, psychosis, eating problems, and weight management, just to name a few.

Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory is constructed on the idea that people, on some level, are naturally inquisitive about discovering why individuals behaved a certain way, or why certain interpersonal events or series of events occurred. Attribution Theory explicates the fundamental human need to understand, control, and predict what goes on around a person.[26] It explains a behavior by attributing the cause to specific events. This common mental exercise provides one with a sense of control, and can affect the standing of people within a family group.

For example, when another member of the family group has erred, the natural tendency is internal attribution, often blaming the error on internal personality factors. However, when a personal error has occurred, some people tend to apply external attribution, which is attributing the causes to situational factors rather than accepting personal responsibility. On the contrary, the inclination is to attribute successes internally and the successes of one's rivals to external "luck." For example, when a football team wins, supporters say "we won;" but when the team loses, the supporters say "they lost."

For the most part, attributions are significantly driven by emotional and motivational drives. When counseling couples in distress, the following implications of this theory become particularly relevant. Couples often employ self-serving attributions by blaming one another for the problems, avoiding personal culpability. As a rule,

[26] Kazdin, "Strategic Family Therapy," 320-325.

people will make attributions to defend what is perceived as attacks, and will point out injustices in marriage relationships. An individual with a high need to avoid failure will have a greater tendency to make attributions that puts oneself in a good light.

As a general process, people go through a two-step progression beginning with internal attributions, followed by a slower consideration of whether or not an external attribution is more important. The danger is if one is extremely busy or becomes distracted, the second step is neglected making internal attribution more likely than external attribution. Therefore, it is imperative that pastoral counselors generate awareness of the danger of losing trust in one's partner as a result of blaming others by making internal attributions. Pastoral counselors must create alertness to the proclivity for making excuses via external attributions, which can lead to repetitious mistakes and can lead to cognitive discord with a partner that is making internal attributions. Pastoral counselors must consider, in spite of substantial research on the role played by attribution processes in the understanding of a variety of behavioral problems and disorders, attribution therapy typically is conducted as one element of a broader scope of treatment.[27]

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a brief, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem solving. The goal of the pastor counselor, when implementing Cognitive Behavior Therapy, is to change patterns of thinking or behaviors that are behind the difficulties people experience in order to

[27] William O'Donohue and L. Krasner, *Theories of Behavior Therapy: Exploring Behavior Change* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1995), 385-413.

modify the way they feel.[28] An excellent technical definition of Cognitive Behavior Therapy is "a purposeful attempt to preserve the demonstrated efficiencies of behavior modification within a less doctrinaire context and to incorporate the cognitive activities of the client in the efforts to produce therapeutic change."[29] Cognitive Behavior Therapy is used to treat a wide range of issues from sleeping difficulties or relationship problems to substance abuse or anxiety and depression. Cognitive Behavior Therapy can be thought of as a combination of psychotherapy and behavioral therapy. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is not a distinct therapeutic technique. The term Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a very general term for a classification of therapies with similarities. There are several approaches to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy including Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Rational Behavior Therapy, Rational Living Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, and Dialectic Behavior Therapy.

Foundational to Cognitive Behavior Therapy is the concept that one's thoughts cause feelings and behaviors rather than external elements such as people, situations, and events; therefore, a change of perception can cause one to feel and act well even if the situation remains the same. Although Cognitive Behavior therapists understand the importance of a positive and trusting client and practitioner relationship, Cognitive Behavior therapists believe that clients change because clients learn how to think differently and to act on that learning. As a result, pastoral counselors practicing Cognitive Behavior Therapy focus on teaching rational self-counseling skills. Cognitive

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[28] Ben Martin, "In-Depth: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," *Psych Central*, http://psychcentral.com/lib/2007/in-depth-cognitive-behavioral-therapy/ (accessed May 3, 2010).

[29] Philip C. Kendall, "Toward a Cognitive Behavioral Model of Child Psychopathology and a Critique of Related Interventions," *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 13, no. 3 (1985): 357-372.

Behavior Therapy is a collaborative effort between the pastoral counselor and the client in which the pastoral counselor seeks to discover the life goals of the client, and assists the client in achieving those goals. The role of the pastoral counselor employing Cognitive Behavior Therapy is to listen, to teach, and to encourage while the client's roles is to express concerns, to learn, and to implement that learning. Pastoral counselors using this therapy stimulate critical thinking by employing the Socratic Method. The goal of the pastoral counselor is to gain a very good understanding of the clients' concerns by asking questions and, in turn, encourage clients to ask questions.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy accepts the scientifically supported assumption that most emotional and behavioral reactions are learned; thus, one of the goals of therapy is to aid clients in unlearning unwanted actions and learning new ways of reacting. Therefore, pastoral counselors committed to Cognitive Behavior Therapy have specific agendas for each session; and, specific techniques and concepts are taught during each session focusing on clients' goals. Cognitive Behavior Therapy interventions include a significant amount of homework. Christian principles can easily be implemented into the cognitive-behavior therapy scheme making this a significant form of therapy for counseling couples in distress. Cognitive Behavior Therapy fits well within the biblical scheme of advice for behavior change. Notice the phrasing of the divinely inspired Apostle Paul in one of his letters,

> Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies (Phil. 4:8 MSG).

Even though there are many benefits to Cognitive Behavior Therapy as part of one's repertoire of counseling techniques, the pastoral counselor must be cognizant of the commitment and involvement level generally required for this therapy. Due to the structured nature of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, it may not be suitable for people who have more complex mental health needs or learning difficulties. Another weakness of the therapy is that, by nature, it does not address the possible underlying causes of mental health conditions such as an unhappy childhood.

Contextual Family Therapy

Contextual Family Therapy is ingrained in the Judeo-Christian tradition; and, its advocates have sought to integrate family theory and biblical theology of both the Old and New Testaments into a form of counseling. The approach recognizes that human existence is mainly relational and accentuates the natural relationships that bind the couple or family over the functional relationships. The foundations of this therapy are the loyalties to commitments that sustain family networks. This therapy realizes that all family members keep track of the perception of the balances of give and take in past, present, and future. A trustworthy early environment inexorably produces indebtedness. If a child cannot repay benefits received from parents, an emotional debt accumulates. When indebtedness is heavy, the adult child is unable to transfer loyalty from the parents and family of origin to a new relationship; therefore, marital commitment suffers. In the future, the marital commitment will be in conflict with loyalty to the offspring as the parents seek ethical balance in the new generation.

Contextual Family Therapy supposes that it is the wish of every family member to establish trustworthy relationships. Consequently, adversarial relationships within families violate the basic urge toward relational justice. Couples, or the family, are reinforced by moves toward trustworthiness and weakened by moves away from it. Thus, high levels of individual merit, accumulated by supporting the interests of others, contribute to the health of the whole family. All families have a distinct bookkeeping system that establishes value for certain debts and entitlements. The goal for the pastoral counselor in Contextual Family Therapy is always to move the marital partners and family members in the direction of ethical relationships. This goal is achieved by involving members of the extended family, because no family member alone can judge whether or not the ledger is balanced. Contextual Family Therapy is based on an enlightenment ethic that can be integrated with Christian theology to develop an approach that stresses fidelity, community, commitment, upward striving, and a reliance on a higher power that, in turn, fuels the process of responsible relatedness and interdependence. Contextual Family Therapy affirms the Christian values of trust, mutuality, and justice.

Emotionally Focused Therapy

Emotionally Focused Therapy is now recognized as one of the most researched and most effective approaches to changing distressed couples' relationships. Similar to most modern approaches, Emotionally Focused Therapy is a brief systematic approach, ten to twelve sessions in empirical studies, for fostering the development of a secure emotional bond by modifying the dysfunctional interaction patterns and emotional

responses of distressed couples. In this approach, negative interfaces are changed by accessing the underlying emotions experienced by each partner in an attempt to create new corrective emotional experiences that modify interactions. The newly formulated emotional responses are expressed in such a way as to create a shift in how couples engage. Therefore, new emotional experiences, generated in the safe and accepting environment of the sessions, promote new responses for the marriage partners. Those who habitually withdraw are helped to re-engage; and, hostile partners are supported to become more open and vulnerable. Specific shifts in interaction are choreographed to prime increased emotional responsiveness between couples. New constructive cycles of contact and caring can then begin.

Counseling that implements Emotionally Focused Therapy necessitates that the pastoral counselor assumes the role of a process consultant. Therefore, the pastoral counselor empathetically validates each partner, and creates a safe place that allows each person to become more engaged with his or her own experiences within the marriage relationship. Counseling that employs Emotionally Focused Therapy, calls for the pastoral counselor to focus on three primary tasks: the creation and maintenance of a collaborative alliance, the accessing and reformulating of emotional responses, and the shaping of new interactions based on these responses.[30]

Regarding the first task, the pastoral counselor fosters the trust and confidence that allows couples to fully engage in therapy. This is done by taking a collaborative and respectful stance toward the partners, by being genuine and transparent, and by nonjudgmental empathy. Concerning the second task, the pastoral counselor focuses on

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[30] S. M. Johnson and W. Denton, *The Clinical Handbook of Couples Therapy* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2008), 115.

the emotion that is most distressing and relevant in the session. Often this emotion is associated with attachment needs and fears, and plays a central role in patterns of negative interaction. During the course of this task, the pastoral counselor remains close to the heart of the clients' experiences and uses the experiential interventions, reflection, evocative questions, validation, heightening, and empathic interpretation to expand the experiences. Hopefully, reactive responses, such as anger, move into the background as other key emotions, such as a sense of grief or fear, become the focus of attention. Relating to the third task, the pastoral counselor tracks and reflects the patterns of interaction, identifying the negative cycles that constrict the responses of the partners to one another. The pastoral counselor assigns expressive tasks in the session that restructures the dialogue in the relationship. The two core interventions of Emotionally Focused Therapy are the exploration and reformation of emotional experience, and the restructuring of interactions.[31] This particular therapy will involve significant training on the part of the pastoral counselor.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Traditional approaches to psychotherapy are founded on the premise that the presenting problem is not the real problem; rather, it is just a symptom of a much deeper psychological or interpersonal problem to be uncovered, interpreted, and processed. The old school of thought considered therapy to be successful if it were thorough, reconstructive, and had a significant investment of time. On the other hand, Solution Focused Brief Therapy was developed with the hypothesis that no problem happened all the time; and, therapy could be accomplished in a brief time frame. Possible therapy

[31] Johnson, *Clinical Handbook of Couples Therapy*, 120.

sessions could range anywhere between three and ten sittings. Solution Focused Brief Therapy proposed that there are always exceptions to the presenting problem. The core tenants of Solution Focused Brief Therapy flow out of two underlying concepts. First, the pastoral counselor and patient work on constructing solutions for what is deemed problematic in the present, and determine together what needs to happen so the patient can improve. Second, the pastoral counselor focuses more on the strengths and resources of the patient than on the weaknesses and limitations.

The process of Solution Focused Brief Therapy begins by immediately probing for the discovery of solutions. Fundamental to this therapy is the formation of realistic, achievable, and highly specific treatment goals, which are determined by the patients as, "They decide for what they are customers."[32] Well-formed goals are small, specific, concrete, and behavioral. These treatment objectives are in the present, and are indicated by the presence of something rather than the absence of something. These therapeutic aims emphasize what a person will do or think rather than what a person will not do or not think. These highly specific treatment goals describe the first small steps the patient needs to take rather than the end of the journey.

Available to pastoral counselors are several techniques unique to Solution Focused Brief Therapy. The most well-known is the "miracle question." It is helpful for patients to imagine a future where problems are solved. The "Miracle Question" asks, "Suppose you were to go home tonight, and while you were asleep, a miracle happened – the problem that brought you here was solved. How will you and those around you know the miracle happened, what would you do differently, what would your spouse notice you were doing differently?" Another technique is the "Formula First Session Task." At the

[32] Steve de Shazar, *Putting Difference to Work* (New York: Norton, 1991). 112.

end of the first session, the pastoral counselor would say, “Between now and the next time we meet, I would like for you to notice what is happening in your life that you would like to continue to happen?” This encourages the client to focus on the solutions already occurring.

Pastoral counselors implementing Solution Focused Brief Therapy also use scaling questions. On a scale of one to ten, the client is asked to describe the problem with one representing the problem at its worst, and the number ten indicating when the miracle occurred. The client is then asked to indicate where on the scale the problem would be placed at the present time; or, what would it take to be located fifty-percent or higher on the scale. Scaling uses language to create a kind of visual image, a spatial component that gives patients a way to notice change while reinforcing the idea that no change is too small or insignificant. While there is a need for research to examine its strengths and limitations, the existing literature demonstrates that Solution Focused Brief Therapy is a pragmatic approach to change that can be used in a variety of church and clinical settings.

There are several apparent advantages to using Solution Focused Brief Therapy for pastoral care in the area of couples’ counseling. The first benefit is that the therapy is brief and focuses on solutions rather than on problems. Many counselors spend a great deal of time thinking, talking, and analyzing problems while suffering continues, rather than thinking about solutions that would result in realistic, swift, and reasonable relief.

The second positive aspect of this therapy is that it provides hope for the client. There is nothing like experiencing small successes to help a person become more hopeful. When people are hopeful, there is more interest in creating a better life and

stronger family relationships. People become more hopeful about the future and want to achieve more.[33]

Another upside to Solution Focused Brief Therapy is the confidence it inspires. By studying times when problems are less severe or even absent, it has been discovered that people, often unaware, accomplish many positive things. By bringing these small successes into focus and by repeating the triumphs achieved when the problem is less severe, people experience life improvement and expanded confidence.

The effort required to achieve success in this therapy is not overly difficult. Because solutions often already appear within the existence of family structures, repeating successful behaviors is easier than learning a whole new set of solutions that may have worked for someone else. Since it takes less effort, families can readily become more eager to repeat the successful behaviors and make further changes. This type of therapy corroborates well with the Word of God. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* states, "Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens and so complete Christ's law" (Gal. 6:1 MSG).

Conclusion

Unquestionably, interest in spirituality in the twenty-first century is on the rise. A recent report, *Religion and the Public Interest,* which incorporated the research findings of groups including the Gallup Organization and Lilly Endowment, Inc., reported that ninety-six percent of the population, approximately 242 million Americans, indicated a belief in God. A 1996 *USA Today* survey found that seventy-nine percent of Americans

[33] Insoo Kim Berg, "About Solution Focused Brief Therapy," *Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association,* http://www.sfbta.org/about_sfbt.html (accessed May 3, 2010).

acknowledge that faith can help recovery from illness. According to another survey, seventy-seven percent of patients believe feel physicians should take into consideration spiritual needs. In a 1994 *Newsweek* poll, fifty-eight percent of respondents stated the need to experience spiritual growth.[34] All of the above are indicators that a demand for spiritually-based counseling is on the rise.

According to the *American Association of Pastoral Counselors,* despite interest in psychotherapy and the ever-increasing availability of therapists, the emergence of managed mental health care and the current financial crisis has reduced the level of counseling services available to many; therefore, many people will turn to clergy for help with marriage, family, and faith issues. Also, many working poor, with no insurance benefits, may need to seek free or low-cost counseling from the clergy. In order to take advantage of this great opportunity for the Kingdom of God, to help couples and families in distress, pastoral counselors must be familiar with a cross section of psychological therapies in order to astutely develop strategies for helping this new wave of parishioners.

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[34] *American Association of Christian Counselors*, "Pastoral Counseling Today Gaining Momentum" under Pastoral Counseling Today, http://www.aapc.org/node/5 (accessed May 12, 2010).

CHAPTER FIVE

CORE COMPETENCY FOUR
BUILDING YOUR PLAN TO REPAIR FAMILIES

Introduction

A woman from the congregation comes into the church office without an appointment and asks to see the minister. She is visibly shaken; so, she is invited to sit down. She says, "The police just left our home. They came to the door this morning and asked to see my husband. When my husband came into the room, the police told us that he had been accused by three of the neighborhood children of sexually molesting them. My husband says that he did not do this; but, the neighbors still filed the complaint. What are we going to do? He would not talk to me about it, he left; and, I do not know where he went. What should the children and I do?"

A minister has been called to the hospital by the members of a man's family. The minister does not know much about the situation and when he walks in, is met by the wife and the man's doctor. The doctor relays the terminal diagnosis; and because of the emotional state of the patient, the family has not yet told the man about the severity of his condition. The man is asking to talk to the minister; however, the doctor advises the minister to be careful about what is said concerning the man's condition. As the minister enters the room, the man immediately says, "Pastor, I want to ask you something; am I going to die?"

A family's relationships are strained. Both parents are working long hours; thus, family intimacy and playtime for the children has given way to numerous structured activities acting as controlled babysitting. Arguing, on all levels of family relationships, has become incessant; and, the family unit has become grossly disconnected. Finally, after reaching the boiling point, the mother says, "We need to schedule an appointment with the pastor for counseling."

The journey through life is a series of crisis. Some are predictable and expected; yet, others are situational. In fact, there is no limit to the number of family crisis experiences that occurs in life; think of the possibilities. Therefore, the pastoral counselor needs to establish a biblical counseling process for counseling families in distress.

This section speaks to core competency number four, "Building Your Plan to Repair Families," by recommending two accomplished practices for counseling families in distress. Accomplished practice number one deals with the importance of embracing a strong theistic psychotherapy; and, accomplished practice number two addresses the significance of mastering a Christian integrative psychotherapy, a combination of relational and cognitive therapy, as a primary therapeutic tool. This is an integrative approach that fits extremely well with the Christian worldview of most pastoral caregivers.

Accomplished Practice One:
Embracing a Strong Theistic Psychotherapy

The competent pastoral counselor understands the importance of developing a strong theistic psychotherapy. It is the assertion of this writer that the best pastoral

psychotherapy, especially in the area of counseling distressed families, is derived from a strong theistic theology. It is critical that one's pastoral care not view the necessity of God as an "add-on" assumption in prescribing the appropriate treatment. Recent efforts by mainstream psychologists to introduce spiritual and religious elements into the field of psychology have opened the door for theistic approaches to psychotherapy. In fact, many researchers and psychotherapists are now incorporating theistic features such as prayer, moral values, and scripture readings into their psychotherapy.[1]

Nevertheless, inherent in the science of psychology is the inclination toward naturalism. As Thomas Leahey stated in his work, A *History of Modern Psychology*,[2] "naturalism is science's central dogma." Naturalism historically has directed psychologists to appeal to and study only natural events and processes, rather than supernatural and theistic events or processes in order to understand and explain psychological phenomena.[3] Therefore, because of the naturalistic tendencies associated with the science of psychology, there exists the risk of implementing pastoral care and psychotherapy from a weak theistic conceptualization rather than a strong theistic ideal. This weak theistic outlook generally manifests itself in three forms, a compartmentalized theistic point of view, a peripheral theistic perspective, or an inconsistent theistic

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[1] Harold D. Delaney, William R. Miller, and Ana M. Bisono, Religiosity and Spirituality Among Psychologists: A Survey of Clinician Members of the American Psychological Association, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 38, No. 5 (2007): 538–546.

[2] T. H. Leahey, *A History of Modern Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 379.

[3] P. S. Richards and A. E. Bergin, *A Spiritual Strategy for Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: APA Books, 2005), 19.

position;[4] whereas, strong theistic psychotherapy views God as an altering assumption rather than merely an add-on supposition.

Types of Weak Theistic Approaches to Psychotherapy

One type of weak theistic approach to psychotherapy that is sometimes practiced in pastoral care is called "compartmentalized theism." Pastoral counselors that fall into the camp of "compartmentalized theism" perceive private theistic beliefs to be segregated from professional practices. One may be a strong theist personally, often disclosing religious affiliations or religious beliefs for the purpose of building rapport with clients; yet, intentionally omitting theism as a core component of one's personal professional therapies and interventions. In fact, pastoral counselors that hold to this line of thinking often engage psychotherapies that are indistinguishable from secular and naturalistic approaches. Pastoral care specialists embracing the "compartmentalized theism" ideal reject the notion that conventional therapeutic approaches assume the necessity of God's influence in the mechanism of change; therefore, the practice of a conventional psychotherapy is not guided by a theistic impression or theory. According to this line of thinking, "God talk" may occur in the content of a conventional therapeutic conversation, because it may help the client relax or relate to the pastor; but, its therapeutic value is empathetic at best. In the mind of those who compartmentalize theism, to practice the process of conventional psychotherapy is to practice as though God's influence is unnecessary to the mechanism of client change.[5]

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[4] Brent D. Slife, Tiffany D. Stevenson & Dennis C. Wendt, Including God in Psychotherapy; Strong vs. Weak Theism, *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 38, No. 3 (Fall 2010): 163.

[5] Slife, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 169.

Another weak theistic approach to pastoral care is "peripheral theism," which, in many ways mirrors the same basic qualities as "compartmentalized theism." The major difference between the two is that "peripheral theism" brings certain fringe aspects of theism into the context of psychotherapy. Outlying theistic features can include such generalities as altruism, prayer, and forgiveness. These outlying theistic characteristics can be schemed to incorporate the notion of an active God, or simply integrated as conventional psychotherapeutic interventions not requiring God at all. For those who embrace "peripheral theism" strategies, relationship to a spiritual being or need of an active God is not a critical component for understanding the significance of these fringe theistic concepts.[6]

The final kind of a weak theistic approach to pastoral care is "inconsistent theism." "Inconsistent theism" is an attempt to combine, within the context of psychotherapy, the incompatible postulations of naturalistic secular psychological theories and theism. This arrangement results in a dualistic form of weak theism where God's activity is limited to a certain realm or set of factors of therapy in addition to other aspects of a therapy's theories, methods, and practices that do not require or even relate to an active God. Thus, the theistic factors of therapy are inconsistent with the naturalistic features of therapy.[7]

A Strong Theistic Approach to Psychotherapy

From a strongly theistic perspective, a potentially unlimited God is an assumption made, not a variable to be measured. A strong theistic approach to psychotherapy openly

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[6] Slife, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 170.

[7] Slife, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*,, 171.

opposes the naturalistic presumption that God's activity is not directly relevant to psychological processes, and conceptualizes the assumption of an active God involved in all realms and aspects of life. A strong theistic approach refutes the weak theistic approach of harmonizing the naturalistic elements of psychology with rudimentary theological basics through the concepts of deism and dualism. Deism is the notion that God created the world, along with natural laws, but is no longer involved in the world except in extraordinary circumstances; so, science (psychology) can proceed without considering God's activity. Dualism supports the concept that the world is divided into two spheres, the natural and the spiritual. Thus, God is involved in the supernatural and not the natural, therefore, limiting His involvement with psychology. According to the deist, God and natural laws are not actively involved in the world at the same time; for the dualist, the two are never actively involved in the same place. A strong theistic approach, by contrast, does not place limitations on God's active influence in the world.

A strong theistic approach to psychotherapy is summarized by four general requirements. First, unlike weak theism, strong theism does not automatically limit God's activity to a certain time (deism) or place (dualism). Rather, God is seen to be already present in the world and is potentially involved at all times and in all places. Theologically stated, God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. God's activity is presumed to be the center of therapeutic change and no change is possible without Him. Second, God is not to be perceived as an optional add-on to secular and naturalistic therapies and explanations. God's activity is the nucleus and permeating ingredient of the worldview and presuppositions that guide strong theistic psychotherapy, research, and practice. Third, the peripheral aspects of theism, such as altruism, prayer, hope and

forgiveness, are only theistically meaningful in view of an active God working through them. As a result, these peripheral elements are performed differently than mere psychotherapeutic interventions. Fourth, the assumption of God's activity is clearly reflected in the therapy at all levels of theory, method, and practice. [8]

Conclusion

In conclusion, naturalism and strong theism rest upon incompatible assumptions concerning the potential activity of God. Weak theism, which attempts to harmonize naturalism and theism, is unable to accomplish the task in a manner consistent with the true nature of theism; therefore, weak theism actually promotes the cause of naturalistic psychotherapy by simply using God as an addendum to its best practices. Strong theism requires the activity of God; naturalism denies this requirement. However, this incompatibility is rarely appreciated in psychology because naturalism is widely considered a relatively neutral or unbiased philosophy regarding God. As a result, naturalistic therapies are often viewed as not conflicting with the beliefs of theistic clients or theistic therapists. Nevertheless, the necessity of God is not an add-on assumption for the strong theist. It is an altering assumption, implying that its inclusion changes the meanings, usually dramatically, of even supposed common assumptions such as order and truth.[9]

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[8] Slife, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 168.

[9] B. D. Slife & J. S. Reber, Is there a pervasive implicit bias against theism in psychology? *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 29, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 63-79.

Accomplished Practice Two:
Mastering Christian Integrative Psychotherapy

As human creations of a sovereign God, all were designed by God to be both cognitive and relational beings. Humans are created in the image of God; therefore, man's ability to think and reason, his cognitive abilities, are what set him apart from the rest of creation. This truth is acknowledged in the Holy Scriptures when the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Come now, and let us reason together, 'says the Lord,'" In times of family distress, or in the aftermath of a traumatic event, a normal cognitive response usually involves an attempt to make sense of something that may seem, at the time, to be indecipherable. God has created man to be a cognitive creature; therefore, it is during traumatic events and throughout the search for meaning and answers that one may wonder if one is able to think clearly; or, is it even possible to comprehend God's direction and purpose within one's theater of crisis.

Additionally, humans were created by God to be relational beings. Although God declared that His creation was good when He formed Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed life into him, there was something not good. God told Adam that it was not good for him to be alone. It is true that we were created to have fellowship with God; but, we were also created in such a manner that requires connection and relationship to other human beings. It is within the structure of relationships that the most distressing episodes of family crisis occur. As a result of these two dynamics, many Christian counselors, as well as secular counselors, employ the use of Integrative Psychotherapy that includes both cognitive and relational therapies.

This author affirms the practical significance of applying the core tenets of Integrative Psychotherapy as presented by Dr. Mark McMinn[10] in his excellent journal article published in Christian Counseling Today.[11] Because of its Christian predispositions, Integrative Psychotherapy and its cognitive and relational essentials provide the pastoral counselor with a solid Christian philosophical structure in which to apply appropriate interventions when counseling families in distress. This perspective brings an integration of theological, cognitive, and relational therapies to the setting of pastoral counseling of families in crisis. Integrative Psychotherapy enables the pastoral counselor to see the client as God sees them, and facilitates the caregiver's insight to prescribing the appropriate Relational Cognitive Therapy.

According to Dr. Mark McMinn, Christianity has put forward the concept that humans are created in the image of God, the *imago Dei*. Through the years, three views of the *imago Dei* have materialized within Christianity; human beings are functional, structural, and relational. Three similar viewpoints have been materialized in major theories of psychotherapy as well. Integrative Psychotherapy is a three-field approach that emphasizes symptom-focused functional interventions, schema-focused structural interventions, and longer-term, relationally-focused interventions. According to Dr. McMinn, although the therapist is continually aware of all three areas, each intervention is crafted according to the particular needs of the psychotherapy client.[12] Hence,

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[10] M. R. McMinn and C.D. Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Academic, 2007).

[11] M. R. McMinn, "Integrative Psychotherapy the Core Tenets," *Christian Counseling Today* 16, No. 3 (2008): 13-16.

[12] M. R. McMinn, *Abstract; Christian Counseling* [DVD in APA Psychotherapy Video Series] (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006).

Integrative Psychotherapy is dimensionally integrative both theoretically and theologically. Theoretically the psychotherapy brings together ideas from cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, schema-focused, and relationally-focused interventions, and is theologically integrative by allowing for a Christian view of persons as it relates to psychological theory and intervention.

Even though theologically it has been determined that one is created in God's image, in one's humanness, this concept is often difficult to fully comprehend. However, the notion becomes intellectually accessible when one perceives the three dimensions of being the image of God. Understanding one's operation within the functional, structural, and relational domains that humanness operates can help clients become more fully human and destined for fulfillment with genuine purpose in life. The perfect picture of this is Jesus Christ who "became flesh *(functional dimension)* and made his dwelling *(structural dimension)* among us (*relational dimension)*. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 New Living Translation). In Jesus, we see One who healed the sick (*functional*), redefined the values and assumptions of the prevailing religious systems (*structural*), and so loved the world that He came to dwell with human beings in all of their pain and misery *(relational)*.[13]

It is important to note that even though theorists like Freud, Jung, Erickson, Adler, Rogers, Maslow, Beck, and Ellis in no way identified with a Judeo-Christian worldview; they still made valid and important discoveries about the human condition and human behavior. The conflict was in the idea that those theorists did not know or apparently care how to effectively process their concepts from a biblical framework.

[13] M. R. McMinn, "Integrative Psychotherapy the Core Tenets." 13-16.

Even though the principles of the discipline of psychology can be quite useful, they are not on equal footing with the Word of God. However, looking through a Christian lens, counselors realize the sovereignty of God's Word over man's knowledge, and grasp that truth can be gleaned from multiple sources because ultimately all truth comes from God. Therefore, Christian counseling incorporates truth found in the Word of God and assimilates it with the simple truths discovered through the social sciences. Biblically-oriented counseling is a "values-based" approach; and, when complimented by clinicians full of the Holy Spirit and educated regarding human behavior, it represents a powerful agent of change in a person's life.[14] As previously stated, Christian Integrative Psychology begins with the proclamation that humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). This therapy involves looking at clients through three sets of Christian lenses.

Looking Through the Lens of the Functional Realm

First, as the pastoral counselor triages the client who is formed in the image of God, he looks through the lens of the functional realm and offers help for the client's immediate pain. Looking through this lens requires knowing that one is created to function in a particular role in relation to the rest of creation. Humans have a sophisticated cerebral cortex that allows one to responsibly manage creation, to live with an awareness of life, to anticipate how one's choices affect the future, and one's offspring. When one enters a pastor's office in a state of deep depression or debilitating anxiety, the immediate prognosis is that the person is not functioning as fully as God

[14] "Cognitive and Relational Therapies: Connecting the Dots in Times of Distress," *Christian Counseling Today* 16, No. 3 (2008): 8-9.

intended. Therefore, the therapeutic goal is to help the client reclaim functional capacity as one created in God's image.

In most counseling situations, attention is first directed toward functional or symptom-focused interventions. The immediate objective ought to be to assist clients to feel better and function more fully. This was the example of Jesus Christ as He ministered to the needs of the people around Him; He often tended to their physical healing as well as their spiritual condition.

A variety of tools from cognitive and behavioral therapies are highly effective in helping people function better by reducing symptoms of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, anger problems, and chronic pain. For example, a cognitive therapy technique referred to as the "thought record" may help a client recover from depressive symptoms.[15] Behavioral techniques such as progressive relaxation,[16] breathing training, and interoceptive exposure can aid with issues such as panic attacks. Cognitive and behavioral techniques are also quite useful in treating obsessive-compulsive patterns, generalized anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress. Many Christian counselors disparage the science of psychology; but, it can be very useful in helping select effective functional interventions for clients. Many behavioral and cognitive therapy methods have demonstrated tremendous usefulness in scientific studies.

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[15] S. J. Rupke, D. Blecke, and M. Renfrow, "Cognitive Therapy for Depression," *American Family Physician Journal* 73, No. 1 (2006, Jan. 1): 83-86.

[16] J. Siev, and D. L. Chambless, "Specificity of Treatment Effects: Cognitive Therapy and Relaxation for Generalized Anxiety and Panic Disorders." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 75, No. 4 (2007): 513-522.

Looking Through the Lens of the Structural Sphere

Second, the pastoral counselor must reflect on the structural sphere of the client who is created in the image of God by helping him keep schemas in perspective. A schema is a mental structure used to organize and simplify knowledge of the world. Unlike the rest of creation, humans have ontological capabilities that reflect God's character. People can think rationally, use sophisticated language, and exercise moral will and self-discipline over their choices. Structural capabilities permit humans to search for the meaning in life, to make sense of daily events as they relate to the larger picture, and to map out a plan and follow it. These ontological competencies or schemas result in deeply held beliefs that function like psychological maps to help one navigate the world around them. Schemas guide one's behaviors and perceptions and can often be helpful, but are sometimes misleading or become dysfunctional.

Clients may seek help because the world is viewed with a distorted sense of reality, because social encounters are frightening, and others may be perceived as dangerous and unpredictable. Instead of settling for the dull pain of loneliness and isolation, symptoms of avoiding people to avoid pain may be developed. Rational capacities that make humanity so extraordinary have drifted off-kilter. The cause could have been early encounters with others, possibly family members that triggered unsafe feelings to be experienced.

A recommended cognitive strategy employed within this venue of counseling is recursive schema activation, which is designed to assist clients in gaining distance from the dysfunctional schemas that have been guiding the clients' lives. This strategy employs counseling methods designed to have the clients continually confront impaired

schemas. With each encounter, a greater awareness is created pertaining to the erroneous schemas causing the client to move toward a better plan. Counseling through a Christian lens can help one see the harmful effects of one's maladaptive perceptions, and can allow the development of new godly schemas and self-perceptions.

Looking through the Relational Lens

Third, the pastoral counselor must consider the relational view. The idea is that one reveals God's image in a relationship with other people. God's image is not so much ontological as it is dialogical. Note the flow of Genesis 1:27, "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (New Living Translation). Immediately, after affirming that humans are patterned after God, one sees that the pattern is expressed in relationship.

It is not be enough to just talk to the client about safe and healthy relationships; the client will need to actually experience a healthy relationship initially with the counselor, then others. The pastoral counselor will need to be aware of reenactments of old relational patterns because people often resort to what is familiar during times of stress. However, a healthy and compassionate therapy relationship can help a client break free from old, dysfunctional relationship patterns. Pastoral counseling seeks to provide suitable therapies for restoring relationships by illustrating to the client what it means to be in the relational image of God.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the value of Christian Integrative Psychotherapy is immensely significant in counseling families in distress. This particular procedure of psychotherapy

provides the pastoral counselor with a godly premise, *imago Dei*, upon which many valuable techniques from the field of psychology may be appropriately applied and allocated as programs for healing. Christian Integrative Psychotherapy, also known as Relational Cognitive Therapy, permits the client to be seen by the pastoral counselor in the same way as the client is seen by God.

APPENDIX A

SEMINARY RESEARCH STUDY

Research Objective:

The objective of this study was to research the core counseling course requirements of the basic Master of Divinity Degree programs from twenty-five major Theological Seminaries in the United States. These Seminaries represented a diverse selection of institutions from both sectarian and nonsectarian religious affiliations. The purpose of the data collected was to determine the following general statistics:

The percentage of required pastoral counseling or general counseling courses offered relative to the overall curriculum. The average number of pastoral counseling or counseling courses offered per Master of Divinity program.

Controls:

The Master of Divinity degree programs queried for this research only considered the general Master of Divinity programs or pastoral ministry Master of Divinity programs and did not include Master of Divinity degrees with specializations in counseling, counseling related fields of study, or chaplaincy.

The query included a broad spectrum of those considered to be “major” theological institutions, and included a diverse selection of denominational and nondenominational traditions.

This information was collected from course catalogues and degree programs posted online by the above institutions during July, 2011.

Data collected:

Seminary	**Denominational Affiliation**	**Program Credit Hours**	**Required Counseling Hours**	**Required Counseling Classes**	**Percentage of Curriculum**
Southwestern Theological Seminary	Southern Baptist	91	0	0	0
Asbury Theological Seminary	Wesleyan	96	6	2	6.2
Reformed Theological Seminary	Reformed	106	3	1	2.8
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary	Baptist	93	0	0	0
Grace Theological Seminary	Grace Brethren	90	0	0	0
Fuller Theological Seminary	Multidenominational	144	4	1	2.7
Boston University School of Theology	Wesleyan Methodist	96	0	0	0
Harvard Divinity School	Non-sectarian	81	0	0	0
Union Theological Seminary New York	Nondenominational	78	0	0	0
Yale Berkeley Divinity School	Ecumenical & Episcopal	72	0	0	0
The Master's Seminary	Nondenominational	98	2	1	2.0
Dallas Theological Seminary	Nondenominational	120	2	1	1.6

Notre Dame School of Theology	Catholic	83	1	1	1.2
Concordia Seminary St. Louis	Lutheran	137	3	1	2.1
Westminster Theological Seminary	Reformed	111	2	1	1.8
Talbot Theological Seminary	Evangelical Protestant	98	2	1	2.0
Erskine Theological Seminary	Reformed	102	6	2	5.9
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary	Evangelical	94	0	0	0
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary	Interdenominational	90	3	1	3.3
A. W. Tozer Theological Seminary	Christian and Missionary Alliance	81	3	1	3.7
Southern Theological Seminary	Southern Baptist	88	0	0	0
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School	Evangelical Free	94	9	4	9.6
Regent University School of Divinity	Pentecostal	90	0	0	0
Oral Roberts University School of Theology	Charismatic	88	3	1	3.4
Princeton Theological Seminary	Presbyterian	78	3	1	3.8
Totals		2399	52	19	2.1

Results:

Required counseling courses in Master of Divinity programs queried constituted an average of approximately 2.1 percent of overall institutional curricula.

Theological Seminaries, on average, offered less than one required counseling course (.76%) per Master of Divinity program.

Nearly one third (32%) of the seminaries queried did not offer any required counseling classes in their basic Master of Divinity programs.

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURING YOUR CHURCH TO RESTORE MEN

Introduction

Appendix B covers, "Structuring Your Church to Restore Men," and addresses the substantial problem of men and Internet pornography. Because of the shameful stigma attached to this condition, churches tend to shy away from constructing a biblical healing process in this critical need area. The information presented in this chapter is divided into two sections, presenting first the problem of Internet pornography and second, unfolding a threefold reparative plan for pastors and counselors of churches that desire to accept responsibility and exhibit compassion to men who struggle with the issue of pornography.

It is an understatement to say that pornography is the cause of mayhem in the lives of Christian men, their marriages, their children and the American church. Pornography's devastating impact influences everything from the compulsive misery of the "secret indulger" to the heinous criminal explosion of the sexual deviant. Pornography leaves in its wake waves of victims, men, women, and children, with a wide assortment of physical, mental, and emotional scarring. The Associated Press reported on December 12, 2000, the following story, "Father stabs his 12-year-old son in the head for refusing to perform a sex act less than one hour after downloading pornography from

the Internet."[1] This is just one of many "victims' stories" that has been reported over the years to victims of pornography.org,[2] a proactive grass-roots organization dedicated to fighting the media invasive pornography industry that has made obscene material easily accessible to all, including children. It is fair to say the secular media, confused about First Amendment rights, has predisposed an entire generation of people toward sexual insensitivity, and has tainted modern culture's decency, conscience, morality and compassion for others. As a result, the public is often unaware that innocent people are hurt and continually becoming victims of pornography. In addition, far too many Christian men have bitten into the "forbidden fruit" of pornography; and, if the issue is not properly addressed, the spiritual condition of the American church may be greatly endangered.

The Problem of Internet Pornography

Easy Access to Internet Pornography

The Internet has transformed life in the American family. The Internet brings from the world the good, the bad, and the ugly to the American family's doorstep. It brings the historic ruins of ancient Athens to that doorstep; but, it also brings the red light district of Bangkok.[3] The Internet has been symbiotically linked to human sexuality since its inception as a relatively unknown United States' military research project, which

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[1] Jan Larue, "Last Time Around," *Christian Counseling Today* 11, no. 3 (2003): 45.

[2] Vickie Burress, "Stories from the Heart," Victims of Pornography, www.victimsofpornography.org (accessed Feb. 1, 2011).

[3] Sean Barney, "The Porn Standard: Children and Pornography on the Internet," *Third Way Culture Project*, http://content.thirdway.org/publications/14/Third_ Way_Report_-_The_Porn_Standard_-_Children_and_Pornography_on_the_Internet.pdf (accessed January 28, 2011).

has morphed into the global superhighway of information, communication, and commerce it has become today. In fact, pornography was one of the early financial engines that helped catapult the Internet to its present state.[4] The marriage of technology with sexuality has created a unique continuum of positives and negatives for America culture in that there is now greater access to information regarding sexual information and sexual health; however, the Internet has also become a highly profitable and effective means of distributing sexually explicit material. The Internet has become a sophisticated conduit for compulsive sexual behaviors, sex trafficking, and sex crimes. Moreover, because the sex industry has an unprecedented proximity to the home and work environments, couples, families, and individuals of all ages are being impacted by pornography in new ways.

Internet pornography is different from other forms of pornography because of the "Triple-A Engine" effect of accessibility, affordability and anonymity.[5] Additionally, characteristics that make the Internet a unique and powerful medium for cybersex are that it is intoxicating, isolating, integral, inexpensive, imposing and interactive.[6] The previously mentioned "Triple-A Engine" effect is generally accepted as the principle cause of a number of pre-existing problems with other forms of pornography that have worsened in recent years; thus, many have been drawn into problematic pornography

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[4] Al Cooper, Eric Griffin-Shelley, David L. Delmonico and Robin M. Mathy, "Online Sexual Problems: Assessment and Predictive Variables," *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* 8, no. 3-4 (2001): 267–285. Taken from Testimony Of Jill C. Manning, M.S. Hearing On Pornography's Impact On Marriage and The Family Subcommittee On The Constitution, Civil Rights And Property Rights Committee On Judiciary United States Senate November 10, 2005

[5] Cooper, A., "Sexuality and the Internet: Surfing Into the New Millennium," *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 1, no. 2, (1998): 181-187.

[6] David L. Delmonico, Elizabeth Griffin, and Joseph Moriarity, *Cybersex Unhooked: A Workbook for Breaking Free from Compulsive Online Sexual Behavior* (Center City: MN: Hazelden Educational Press, 2001).

consumption who normally would have not been involved with this material prior to the arrival of the Internet. According to experts,

> Personal inhibition levels, social controls, and the lack of willing partners and sexual scenes that may limit sexual activity in everyday contexts are obsolete in cyberspace. It is easy for latent desires to be realized in cyberspace. Internet sexuality may thus serve as a catalyst.[7]

Just as drug professionals are familiar with drug content, drug paraphernalia, and drug delivery systems, those familiar with pornography implement the Internet, more and more, as the preferred delivery system for their virtual sexual "fix." The Internet has allowed men, with ease and anonymity, to become deeply involved with this sinister sin. Sadly, virtual pornography has become the "drug of choice" among conservative Christian men as well.[8] According to a survey published in the *Journal of the American Psychological Association*, eighty-six percent of men in general are likely to click on Internet sex sites if given the opportunity.[9] Pornography bears out the truth of Jesus' words, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:28 NIV).

Because the demand for pornography is so excessive and its presence on the Internet is ubiquitous, it is difficult to avoid if this is one's aim. When one searches the term "porn" on Google, it returns 31,300,000 links in 0.10 seconds.[10] Most Internet users have, more than on one occasion, been inadvertently directed to an Internet pornographic

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[7] S. Leiblum, and N. Döring, "Internet Sexuality: Known Risks and Fresh Chances for Women." in Al Cooper, "Sexuality and the Internet: Surfing Into the New Millennium," *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 1, no. 2, (1998): 29.

[8] Stephen Arterburn, "Your Cheating Heart: Men and Pornography," *Christian Counseling Today* 14, no. 1(2006): 12.

[9] Mark Kastleman, *The Drug of the New Millennium: The Science of How Internet Pornography Radically Alters the Human Brain and Body*, 2nd ed. (Orem, UT: Granite Publishing, 2001).

[10] Sean Barney, *Third Way Culture Project.*

site. Research presented in 2002 by the *London School of Economics,* revealed that nine out of ten children between the ages of eight and sixteen have viewed pornography on the Internet, in most cases unintentionally. Pornography has permeated our modern web-based culture to the extent that counteractive and protective measures must be taken to filter its nasty contents from the eyes of the general public not wishing to view this malevolent material.

The statistics pertaining to Internet pornography are truly staggering. According to compiled numbers from respected news and research organizations, every second $3,075.64 is being spent on pornography and fifty percent of all spending on the Internet is related to sexual activity. Every second 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography and daily thirty million people log on to pornographic web sites. In that same second, 372 Internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines as twenty-five percent of all search engine requests are pornography related; the term "sex" is the number one topic that is searched on the Internet. Every thirty-nine minutes, a new pornographic video is being created in the United States. In other words, pornography consumption is big business. The pornography industry has larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple, and Netflix combined. The worldwide pornography revenues in 2006 ballooned to over ninety-seven billion dollars.[11] Porn revenue in the United States is larger than combined revenues of all professional sports franchises and equals that of ABC, CBS, and NBC combined.[12] Internet pornography has

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[11] Jerry, Ropelato, "Internet Pornography Statistics," *Top Ten Reviews,* 2006, www.http://Internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/Internet-pornography-statistics.html. (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).

[12] Associated Press, "Stage Set for xxx Internet Addresses,*"* June 2, 2005, www.cnn.com/2005/TECH/Internet/06/01/Internet.porn.ap/ index.html, (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).

exacerbated the overall problem with pornography because it is accessible, affordable, and anonymous.

An unprecedented characteristic of Internet pornography is the ease in which children and adolescents have access to it, both solicited and unsolicited. In the past, adult bookstores or restricted movie theatres were the tangible gatekeeper or buffer to minors being exposed to this material, albeit not impenetrable. Currently, anyone can be a consumer and/or target of sexually explicit material. Children represent a large and rapidly growing segment of online users. Children use the Web for a wide variety of activities including homework, informal learning, browsing, playing games, corresponding with electronic pen pals by e-mail, placing messages on electronic bulletin boards, and participating in chat rooms. Among the activities most attractive to children are those that allow them to communicate directly with their peers, for example, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and e-mail. Almost ten million or fourteen percent of America's sixty-nine million children are now online with over four million accessing the Internet from school and five million seven-hundred thousand from home.[13]

According to SafeFamilies.org, the average age for initial Internet exposure to pornography is eleven years old; and, the largest consumer of Internet pornography is the twelve to seventeen year-old age group.[14] Some researchers believe that as many as eight percent of fifteen to seventeen year-olds have had exposures to hard-core pornography while doing homework. It is this writer's opinion that the United States Department of

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[13] Federal Trade Commission, "Protecting America's Consumers," June 25, 2007, www.ftc.gov/reports/privacy3/history.shtm, (accessed Feb. 15, 2011).

[14] Tech Missions – Safe Families, "Statistics on Pornography, Sexual Addiction and Online Perpetrators," www.safefamilies.org/sfStats.php, (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).

Justice adequately posited the cause of the problem in a 1996 post-hearing memorandum that stated, "Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions."[15]

The Church and Internet Pornography

The problem of pornography and the Internet has not escaped the pulpits and pews of the American church either. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Religious Commission stated in a 2007 interview with the *Southern Baptist Texan,*

> The flood of pornography in our culture has desensitized society and has contributed to the fact that our nation is wandering aimlessly in dangerous, uncharted territory. That flood has entered the church doors, leaving anecdotal and documented evidence that families and churches are being damaged, mostly by Christian men -- some of whom are ministers who succumb to a cheap imitation of God-designed sex. Sexuality is a far bigger and more troubling issue in the church than any other moral issue.[16]

According to LifeWay Publication, *Facts and Trends*, forty-seven percent of Christians say that pornography is a major problem in the home, fifty-three percent of men at *Promise Keepers'* rallies admitted viewing pornography during the previous week, and forty percent of pastors have visited pornographic web sites.[17]

Craig Gross, an expert in the field of Christianity and pornography, made this still relevant statement several years ago in an interview with *Leadership Journal*, "Ten years

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[15] U.S. Department of Justice, "Post Hearing Memorandum of Points and Authorities," at l, ACLU v. Reno, 929 F. Supp. 824 (1996).

[16] Jerry Pierce, "Flood of Pornography Breaching the Church," *Southern Baptist Texan*, in the Baptist Press, July 6, 2007, http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=26023. (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).

[17] Ken Walker, "Online Pornography; Pastors Not Immune to Cybersex Snare," *Facts and Trends* 51, no. 2 (March/April, 2010): 16.

ago this was a topic for a Saturday men's breakfast. Not anymore. …Everybody has either had contact with pornography or knows somebody who has. This is a topic for Sunday morning."[18] Also, according to a poll taken by *Leadership Journal*, forty percent of Evangelical clergy struggled with pornography and approximately thirty-three percent of Evangelical clergy had looked at Internet pornography within the last thirty days. In the past, most pastors would not have spent money on prostitution, or extra-marital affairs because they did not have the discretionary funds that most others have; however, now it is a different story, as comparatively, pornography on the Internet is relatively inexpensive or in many scenarios even free. Numerous counselors attribute solitude, anonymity, lack of supervision and accountability, pressures, and spiritual weakness as factors that contribute to the lack of pastoral integrity in this compulsive behavioral area.

The Problematic Effects of Internet Pornography

It is hard to believe that some would argue the merits of pornography, citing certain positive social, cultural, and spiritual benefits and a lack of clear negative theology on the matter;[19] yet, as Stephen Arterburn, a competent writer on the matter, astutely argued, "'The use of pornography is not a very good idea.' Pornography is not a very good idea because it makes a man less of a man, not more of one. It disables a man from experiencing male sexuality in the competent way most men want to share it with another female."[20] Even if one would discard the clear theological perspectives opposing the sinful aspects of pornography, socially, pornography reduces human beings to sexual

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[18] "Porn Comes to Church," *Christianity Today International, Leadership Journal,* July 1, 2005, www.christianitytoday.com/le/2005/summer/12.15.html, (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).

[19] Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2008), 184-186.

[20] Arterburn, *Christian Counseling Today*, 12.

merchandise to be bought, sold, used, and discarded; and, anthropologically it often diminishes human sexual behaviors to those not even practiced in the naturalistic animal kingdom. Pornography rips the soul from a woman as it objectifies a woman's very being and causes men to develop a one-dimensional view of females that results in little regard for a woman's feelings or views. Incidentally, researchers have acknowledged that while pornography may not be a solitary influence in people's lives, exposure to it is one important factor that contributes directly to the development of sexually dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors.[21]

It is not a very good idea for numerous other reasons as well. No one is unaffected by the mental, emotional, spiritual, and often physical consequences of viewing pornographic material. The collateral damage of these effects is not confined to the individual's viewing pornography; it extends to families and culture.

Pornography spoils the exclusive, wonderful, and intimate relationship God intended for a man and woman to share in marriage. At least three studies support the fact that women viewed cybersex and/or pornography consumption as a form of infidelity that reduces the exclusivity of the relationship.[22] Women commonly feel betrayal, loss, mistrust, devastation, and anger as responses to the discovery or disclosure of a partner's pornography use and/or online sexual activity. A 2000 study concluded that women overwhelmingly felt cyber affairs were as emotionally painful as live or offline affairs;

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[21] Claudio Violato, et al, *The Changing Family and Child Development*, (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2000), 53.

[22] A. J. Bridges, R. M. Bergner, and M. Hesson-McInnis, "Romantic Partner's use of Pornography: It's Significance for Women," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 29, (2003): 1–14; R. M., Bergner and A. J. Bridges, "The Significance of Heavy Pornography Involvement for Romantic Partners: Research and Clinical Implications," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 28 (2002):193–206; J. P. Schneider, "Effects of Cybersex Addiction on the Family: Results of a Survey." *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* 7 (2000): 31–58.

and, many viewed the online sexual activity to be just as much adultery or cheating as live affairs.[23] Rather than driving a man toward a companion and wife, pornography pushes a man into a world of selfish, compartmentalized solitude. God intended intimacy between a husband and wife to be a driving force for life and excitement, while building an intimate bond that is often the reboot key after experiencing life's difficult conflicts and struggles. Because a husband's sexual drive has been satisfied by pornography, he no longer needs to pursue or court his wife, leading to a moribund relationship void of romance and rich intimacy. Pornography causes marriage to be more about the man than the wife, as the husband progressively sees the wife as less than an equal. According to Stephen Arterburn, pornography cheats the married couple in several significant ways.

> Pornography cheats a woman of her security in knowing that she is the only one he will ever approach for sexual fulfillment and security. It cheats the couple out of a growing bond of deep intimacy from fully knowing each other. It cheats a man out of his sexual competency and robs him of his desire to pursue his wife in every way she loves to be pursued. Finally, it cheats a man out of his ability to stand clean before his Lord, knowing he is a man of character and integrity. When the heart cheats with pornography, everyone is robbed of the ideal that God designed for us all.[24]

Pornography can even rob a marriage before it ever begins. The argument has often been posited that while pornography is bad for married men it is alright for the single guy. This mindset is derived from the abstract thinking that the patterns and habits developed as singles will totally disappear when the wedding vows are said. Anyone involved in marital counseling knows that the single person does not make a radical transformation at the point of marriage. Marriage does not cure the desire for

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[23] Schneider, J. P., "Effects of Cybersex Addiction on the Family: Results of a Survey." *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, (2000): 7, 31–58.

[24] Arterburn, *Christian Counseling Today*, 12.

pornography; instead, the desire for pornography tends to form bridges outside of the relationship. These bridges become very difficult to burn.

Hugh Hefner's first Playboy magazine, in 1953, encouraged men to indulge their lust and view what was meant to remain private. His argument was that men were entitled to see the secret parts of a woman. He promised an expanded sexual consciousness and competency that the uptight and faithful would never experience.[25] Instead, Hefner's pornographic culture has created anything but a sexual utopia. Hefner's sinful idealism and anti-God approach has created a generation of men who are intimately and sexually incompetent. A man addicted to pornography, in most cases, loses interest in his spouse because the porn viewing does not entail hassles, expectations, or issues of performance. He generated a cohort of men that have suffered through multiple failed marriages.

Cybersex is a major cause of separation and divorce. At a 2003 meeting of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, two thirds of the 350 divorce lawyers who attended said the Internet played a significant role in the divorces in the past year, with excessive interest in online porn contributing to more than half such cases. Pornography had an almost non-existent role in divorce just nine or ten years ago.[26] Psychologist, Patrick Carnes, currently the leading United States researcher on sexual addictions, found that among 932 sex addicts studied ninety percent of the men and seventy-seven percent of the women reported pornography as significant to their addictions. He also found that two common elements in the early etiology of sexually addictive behavior were

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[25] Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream,* 172-180.

[26] Divorce Wizards, "Divorce Statistics: Pornography Cyberporn and Divorce," http://www.divorcewizards.com/Divorce-Statistics-Pornography.html (accessed January 20, 2011).

childhood sexual abuse and frequent pornography.[27] Capitulating on his observation that pornography was not a very good idea, an unnamed police officer once stated, "Not everyone who views pornography is a sex deviant. But every sex deviant views pornography." [28]

The Addictive Nature of Internet Pornography

By nature, pornography is addictive and progressive often emulating the mortifying symptoms of the drug addict. Recent research has shown that porn viewing on the Internet stimulates a powerful cocktail of neurotransmitters that floods the brain and provides a high similar to that produced by narcotics.[29] Experts believe that a porn addiction may be harder to break than a heroin addiction.[30] Dr. Victor Cline, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, and a highly respected psychotherapist specializing in family and marital counseling and sexual addictions, identified four stages of progression describing the addictive quality of pornography.[31] According to Dr. Cline, after exposure and repeated viewing of pornography, a person enters the first stage of obsession, which is addiction. Dr. Cline noted that once addicted, one could not throw off dependency on the pornographic material by oneself, despite

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[27] Patrick, Carnes, *Don't Call It Love: Recovery From Sexual Addictions* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 57.

[28] Frank Schmitt, *Uncreative Uses of the Computer*, Class PowerPoint Presentation: DSMN 876, Jan. 2011.

[29] Wendy and Larry Maltz, *The Porn Trap* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 18-20.

[30] Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space, US Senate, Washington DC 2004: US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, *The Science Behind Pornography Addiction*, Nov. 18, 2004, http://www.obscenitycrimes.org /Senate-Reisman-Layden-Etc.pdf. (accessed Jan. 20, 2011).
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[31] Victor B. Cline, "Pornography's Effects on Adults and Children," *Morality in Media*, 2001 ed. 3-5.

many negative consequences such as divorce, loss of family, and problems with the law, problems that included such issues as sexual assault, harassment, or abuse of fellow employees. Many of Dr. Cline's clients have testified as to their extreme addiction to the pornographic material in terms of having their whole lives consumed by it.

Dr. Cline observed from his patients that once addicted a person often reached the second stage, which is escalation. At this stage, pornographic material that formerly produced the high became ineffective; therefore, more material, longer viewing times, and coarser, more degrading material was sought after to achieve the same degree of stimulation. Men, at the stage of escalation, generally experienced a diminished capacity to love and express affection to spouses in intimate relations leaving the wives to feel lonely and rejected.

Following escalation is desensitization, the third stage. At this stage of one's obsession with pornography, the material originally perceived as shocking, taboo breaking, illegal, repulsive, or immoral is perceived to be acceptable and commonplace. The sexual activity depicted in the pornography is legitimized in one's consciousness no matter how antisocial or deviant it actually may be. Even though the pornographic activity was possibly illegal and contrary to one's previous moral beliefs and personal standards, there is increasingly a sense of self-permission attached to the notion that "everyone is doing it." Men at this stage are convinced their pornography is a little secret that is not hurting anyone; in fact, they believe it helps them cope with the stress of life and marriage. Pornography is seen as a meaningless act that keeps them out of trouble and out of the beds of other women. It is easy to fall into the frame of mind that compares looking at pictures to physical involvement, and concludes that it is not that big

of an insult to the marriage. During this stage, the porn abuser soon forgets that each viewing is an act of betrayal of his wife.[32]

Dr. Cline's final stage is an increasing tendency in acting-out what the user has previously been exposed to and has experienced in pornography. This may include such things as compulsive promiscuity, exhibitionism, group sex, and voyeurism, frequenting massage parlors, having sex with minor children, rape, and inflicting pain on them or a partner during sex. At this juncture, the behavior of the abuser frequently cultivates sexual addiction and is unable to change or reverse the negative consequences. Many examples of negative effects from pornography come from the private or clinical practice of psychotherapists, physicians, counselors, attorneys, and ministers. It is in these various stages of addictive pornography that healers come face to face with real people who are in some kind of significant trouble or pain.

Developing a Church Program for Overcoming Addiction to Internet Pornography

Accepting Responsibility and Exhibiting Compassion

The beginning point for establishing a church program for overcoming addiction to Internet pornography is a church's willingness to accept responsibility and exhibit compassion to men who have been beaten up and distressed by this cultural sin. Because Internet pornography is such a looming issue, the Church must be prepared to help hurting people, especially Christian men, overcome their sexual obsessions. However, the problem is admitting that Internet pornography carries with it a stigma far worse than that of other addictions such as drugs and alcohol. This negative stigma often prohibits

[32] Arterburn, *Christian Counseling Today,* 13.

many men from seeking help for this problem at church. As Richard Land stated in the Baptist Press, "You can go to your Sunday School class and say you have a real problem with alcohol and ask the class to pray for you, but if you go to your Sunday School class and say you need prayer for a problem with pornography, it would be like you set off a stink bomb in the room."[33]

Therefore, a church must be challenged to lovingly accept the responsibility set forth by the Apostle Paul to the brothers and sisters of church congregations everywhere, "… if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently." The Apostle Paul emphatically followed that directive with, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1 NIV). The "law of Christ" refers to the second part of the great commandment, "love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27 NIV). The church's responsibility is to help the sinner overcome sin in spite of the stigma attached to it. The Apostle Paul reminded Christians, in the last sentence of Galatians 6:1, that all are just a mouse click away from the same sin; therefore, one should use caution, but do not be too proud to help.

When Jesus was challenged by His contemporary religious leaders about the issue of loving one's neighbor as oneself, He presented His explanation in the form of a parable about a Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. One may apply the lessons from the story to the church's responsibility to help its neighbors who struggle with Internet pornography. One may also presume that it is the Lord's expectation that the body of Christ demonstrate compassion even with such an ominous sin. The parallels between the man who was attacked and one who has suffered the negative effects of pornography are astounding. Like the victim of Jesus' parable, the victim of Internet sin has been

[33] Pierce, "Flood of Pornography Breaching the Church."

stripped of dignity, beaten up emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and left lifeless on the side of the road. However, when the opportunity to be a good neighbor and assist such a victim as this occurs, the pastor of the church must not emulate the behavior of the Pharisee and the church leaders ought not to follow in the footsteps of the Levite; rather, it is anticipated by Jesus that the church would proceed with the same compassion as the Good Samaritan. That is the point of His parable. The church must accept the responsibility for helping and compassionately caring for one who suffers from such an afflicted soul.

This kind of care and counseling can be provided by a church that has prayerfully and thoughtfully constructed a comprehensive healing plan for those who suffer from the addictive behavior that is attached to pornography. This healing plan is formed because the church should be committed to the need for cultural change in the lives of men. The plan should be assembled to include an easy access door for entry into a confidential church-sponsored healing program, a system for support and encouragement during the cathartic process, and a substantial group of supporters who have the necessary skills and means to enable the plan to succeed in the church.

Changing the Culture

For a program of this nature to work, there must be willingness to create a new culture in one's life. Andy Crouch's book, "Culture Making, Recovering Our Creative Calling," proposed that one's creative purpose in life is to "make culture." He defined culture as "what we make of the world;" it is the name for one's persistent, restless human effort to take the world as it is presented and make something else of it. According to Couch, this was the intent of the writer of Genesis when he said that human

beings were made in the image of God; so, just like the original Creator, humans are to be creators as well,[34] continually cultivating and planting godly cultures wherever He calls us to go.

Culture making occurs most often on a personal level but may extend to family, community, and beyond depending on one's power to cause change. However, some Christian men have been diverted from God's ordained task of creating godly culture and have allowed the surrounding culture, the sinful pornographic culture of the world, to control and influence. Therefore, to bring about change in the lives of men engulfed in this fallen culture, a new culture must be created. Crouch put forward the notion that the environment best suited for creating new culture moved outward through three concentric circles of support, the center consisting of no more than three people, the next level of assistance including no more than twelve people, and the final level of support not exceeding one-hundred-twenty people, an example implemented by Moses and Jesus Christ.[35] Crouch also perceived that God graciously imparted talents, gifts, and abilities to individuals to accomplish cultural changes. Crouch also suggested the larger grouping of people include some who have the means to help form cultural change and others who have a holy respect for power and a holy willingness to spend power alongside the powerless.[36] The concept of moving outward through three concentric circles of influence is the basis for this author's proposed model to help men move from the deviant culture of pornography to a new righteous culture of godliness, freedom, and hope.

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[34] Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 23.

[35] The numbers 3, 12, and 120 do not have to be exact and are representative of small medium and large.

[36] Crouch, *Culture Making*, 263.

The key to success within the scope of this model is whether or not a man is willing to "man up" and be fundamentally committed to imitating Jesus Christ, the ultimate creator of new culture. The Apostle Paul said, "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children" (Eph. 5:1 NIV), resolutely affirming that one's highest calling as a man is the imitation of the pattern that Jesus provided in His life and witness. Dr. Ron Hawkins said in his article, Jesus the God-Man, "Our personal commitment as men to the disciplined practice of His imitation provides the anchor point for our personal joy, our public and private worship, and our achievement of lasting shalom.[37] Committing to the culture of imitating Jesus is the initial step for recovery if one is to overcome pornography.

The Word of God says, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 NIV), then goes on in the text to delineate four cultural characteristics of Jesus Christ that men should seek to replicate. First, men should imitate Jesus' humility. Jesus surrendered His glory completely for the sake of others. Jesus forsook the entitlement associated with His position in the heavens and embraced the purposes of God for His life, even when that decision resulted in the loss of position and relationships. Jesus' life choices were formed within a deep awareness that He was practicing in His daily life the unfolding will of the sovereign God who had sent Him on His mission. Unquestioning obedience to the Father's purposes and a deeper love for fallen humans, than could ever be comprehended, guided the life of Jesus Christ the Savior. One imitates Jesus when one surrenders to the control of the Word of God, when one empties one's life of the controlling addiction of pornography, and when one enters

[37] Ron Hawkins, "Jesus the God-Man," *Christian Counseling Today* 14, no. 1 (2006): 48-50.

into the world of serving and meeting the needs of others rather than serving one's own selfish desires.

Second, men must emulate Jesus' resolute commitment to service. In the pattern of the bondservant of Exodus 21:5 and 6, Jesus is marked by His love manifested in the service of others, even the undeserving. The Savior is divested of personal freedom and committed to the wellbeing of those who are impacted by His commitments and choices. Consequently, in the presence of opportunities to act selfishly and sinfully, the person seeking to emulate Christ refuses personal fulfillment and consciously chooses to authentically "be there for," serve and love his Lord, his wife, and his children.

Third, men ought to replicate Jesus' mental toughness. Men are privileged to witness, in the life and ministry of Jesus, the mental toughness that helped Him view His sufferings within the larger purposes of the Father's determination to redeem His lost creation, and facilitate His unyielding resistance of temptations that were common to all men. The same mental toughness exuded by Jesus permitted Him to control His circumstances, when faced with suffering and temptation, rather than allow those situations to control His life. When men witness the sufficiency of God's sustaining grace and benevolence in the midst of personal trials and temptations, life is filled with an integrity that has a transformative influence for good. Finally, men should copy the peace Jesus demonstrated throughout His difficult ministry. Peace is a funny thing because one cannot simply imitate peace. In order to duplicate peace, one must experience peace. Men who heed the call to imitate Jesus will find a deep, personal relationship with the One whose serenity is autonomous from human circumstances. His peace is a special peace that gives freely to all who trust His words and His grace (Jn.

14:25-28). His is the peace that passes all human understanding and is a gift given by Jesus to rule in the hearts and minds of men as it did in His (Phil. 4:6-7). As Christian men, one's greatest privilege and responsibility is to imitate Jesus' peace from positions of leadership in families, churches, and communities. When one is frazzled and losing it, the man filled with peace from Christ can step into, not away from, the situation. Then, empowered by the Holy Spirit and constrained by the desire to accurately reflect the likeness of the Prince of Peace, one models and speaks a healing calm over the situation and all its participants.[38] Christlikeness is the initial cultural change that is the goal of the church program presented by this writer for helping men overcome the sinful influence of pornography.

Establishing a Comprehensive Plan to Help

The following comprehensive church design plan is a model designed by this author to help men struggling with the issue of pornography. The plan is called "Construction 101 – How to Construct a Sacred Home," and is referred to as "CBS." The inference of the title relates to First Corinthians 6:19 as it is derived from the Message version of the Bible which states,

> Didn't you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please squandering what God paid such a high price for? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So, let people see God in and through your body…"

The purpose of the design plan is to enable men to construct the body into a home worthy of housing the Holy Spirit. The mission of the program is to assist men in constructing a solid new life culture to replace the old culture tainted by pornography. The program is

[38] Hawkins, "Jesus the God-Man." 48-50.

designed around the acronym CBS, which is a twist on the construction terminology for "concrete block structure" or CBS construction as it is commonly called. CBS construction is impervious to fire, rot, and termites. CBS can withstand hurricane-force winds when properly reinforced with steel bars making this acronym perfect for the three dynamics of the program: construct a foundation to build upon, build a support system for reinforcement, and set up a larger team of supporters and enablers to complete the project. The CBS program is designed for the church to assist a person who wants help in overcoming pornography and its issues, and to build a house that cannot be destroyed by the torrents of pornography's devastating effects. (Matt. 7:24-27).

Constructing a foundation to build upon (three people)

Discussing the blueprints for change – Confidential one-on-one counseling is the initial entry point into the program for help. At this point, one struggling with the issue of pornography may make a personal, confidential, appointment at a church with a pastoral counselor who is trained to deal with this specific issue. This pastoral counselor must be sensitive to the fact that the person who is struggling with this issue is probably feeling a great deal of shame and exhibits a reluctance to speak about it. Generally, a man will come to counseling because the pornography has been exposed by someone at work, a spouse, or a friend. Sometimes a man will seek help because the feelings of guilt and shame have become arduous. In a confidential comfortable setting, the pastoral caretaker can communicate acceptance and a willingness to understand the ongoing struggle of the person seeking help. The person seeking help should be approached with grace rather than judgment. Each pastoral counselor ought to include the following statement in the opening remarks:

> The Bible clearly states *"all have sinned."* It is my nature to sin, and it is yours too. None of us is untainted. Because of sin, we've all hurt ourselves, we've all hurt other people, and others have hurt us. This means each of us needs repentance and recovery in order to live our lives the way God intended.[39]

This statement will help break down barriers between the pastoral counselor and the person seeking help.

During this initial meeting, the pastoral counselor will need to gently probe for information that will be helpful in providing wise counsel and constructing a plan for creating a new godly culture in the life of the person seeking help. The length of time the person has been involved Internet pornography, as well as the extent of the involvement, will need to be considered. Because honest confession and repentance are essential to the change process, the pastoral counselor must determine how willing the person is to take steps to change. The initial intervention for the person seeking help will be an activity exploring David's confession of sin in Psalm 51.

When concluding this initial session, the pastoral counselor provides hope to the counselee that victory over this issue is entirely possible. Even though there will be times of temptations and possible setbacks, God will be faithful to forgive and restore. The counselee will be assured of continued support throughout the counseling process and instructed to structure a system of accountability through the help of a trusted friend. Five follow-up sessions delineating specific actions comprise the rest of the "construct a foundation to build upon" phase.

Fleeing temptation – The first session helps the person identify all the activities and locations that cause temptation. The counselee will be advised to avoid bookstores that

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[39] Rick Warren, *Celebrate Recovery: About*, (2011), http://www.celebraterecovery.com (accessed Feb. 22, 2011).

sell pornographic materials. It may be a good idea for the counselee to only use the computer when someone else is in the room and disconnect the phone from the Internet altogether. Purchasing software that blocks access to the undesirable Internet sites is also a viable suggestion.

Identify emotional triggers – The second session assists the counselee in identifying emotional triggers. Alcoholics Anonymous has narrowed down four moods that trigger most compulsive/addictive behaviors to the simple acronym HALT. Hunger, anger, loneliness, and being tired are the most common triggers; therefore, the counselee ought to be encouraged to take steps to minimize the triggers. There may be work associates, stressful situations, even certain times of the day that trigger the temptation. The counselee should be guided to discover which trigger is the strongest.

See it as sin – The third session aids the client in perceiving pornographic actions as sin and takes away the counselee's arguments for behavioral justification. During this session, the pastoral counselor confers how God views the sin, the nature of forgiveness, and God's unconditional love. At this point, the pastoral counselor should evaluate how the counselee perceives self in relationship to how the counselee is viewed by God.

Refocus on Christ – The fourth session facilitates the counselee's refocusing on Jesus Christ. It is crucial, since the overall goal of the spiritual construction plan is to imitate Christ, that a plan is developed to deepen the counselee's relationship with Jesus. A significant plan will include the disciplines of daily scripture reading and prayer. The plan should also include scripture memorization so the counselee can bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5 NIV).

Moving upward – The final session is an exit interview of sorts. First, if married, it evaluates the counselee's relationship with the spouse and provides an invitation to meet with both to explore the effects of this behavior on the relationship and to find healing for wounds. Second, because Internet pornography can cause long-term problems, if this has been a long-standing issue with a high degree of involvement, it may require enlisting the support of a professional trained in the area of sexual addictions. Finally, after the series of sessions, the counselee is invited to become part of a support group in the church with other men who have struggled with the issue of pornography.

Building a support system (twelve people)

Becoming part of a support group is essential to overcoming the seductiveness of Internet pornography and establishing the disciplines necessary to construct a new personal culture of imitating Jesus Christ. In an excerpt taken from "Dealing With Pornography," a pamphlet in the "Close to Home" series published by Mennonite Publishing Network, a young man named Steve remarked,

> A few years later, I attended seminary to prepare for pastoral ministry. During that time, my addiction progressed into more deviant and dangerous forms. I began going to peep shows, renting X-rated videos, consuming more and more porn, and masturbating compulsively. I kept pleading with God to release me from this dungeon. Instead, my feelings of despair and isolation only drove me deeper into the addictive cycle. Grace finally came in an unexpected way. I befriended a young man who was an alcoholic and I began attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with him. I found a spirit of hope and acceptance that I had never experienced before. Somehow this community of broken people had found a pathway to healing. That introduction to the twelve-step movement led me to Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA). The relief I felt at my first SAA meeting overwhelmed me. Here was a group of men who weren't put off by my story, who were being honest with one another, and who were dealing with their addiction.[40]

Stories like this validate the critical importance of support groups in overcoming issues such as pornography. The support group structure of "CBS" will not exceed twelve men in order to stay consistent with the biblical model for culture change proposed earlier in this paper by Andy Couch; and, the support group will implement a "spiritual" recovery system for use in its group format.

Most people are familiar with the classic twelve-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous and other groups. Throughout recent history, many people have been helped through the twelve steps practiced by AA members and similar organizations; however, within most twelve-step programs, there is vagueness about the nature of God, the saving power of Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In seeking a spiritual program that is similar in format to the twelve-step programs that work so well, yet keeping with the spiritual goals of "CBS," this writer has selected "Celebrate Recovery" from Saddleback Church, California as a support-group model to be followed. "Celebrate Recovery" presents steps of recovery given in logical order by Jesus Christ in His most

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[40] Anonymous, "Hi, my name's Steve and I'm a Porn Addict," *Canadian Mennonite* 15, no. 2, (Jan. 24, 2011): 8, www.proquest.com/ (accessed February 25, 2011).

famous message, “The Sermon on the Mount.” Following are the features that make this program well suited for this writer’s suggested recovery program:

First, this recovery program utilizes the biblical truth that people need others in order to grow spiritually and emotionally. The program is built around small-group interaction and the fellowship of a caring community. There are many therapies, growth programs, and counselors today that are built around one-on-one interaction; but, “Celebrate Recovery” is built on the New Testament principle that people do not get well without help. People need one another. Fellowship and accountability are two important components of spiritual growth.

Second, “Celebrate Recovery” support system is based on the Bible, God’s Word. “The Sermon on the Mount” begins with Jesus teaching eight ways to be happy; these are commonly known as the Beatitudes. Taken at face value, most of these statements do not make sense and even sound like contradictions. However, when one fully comprehends what Jesus meant, one realizes that these eight principles are God’s road to recovery, wholeness, growth, and spiritual maturity.

Third, this recovery program is forward looking. Rather than practicing remembrance therapy and divulging in self-pity from the past, or dredging up and rehearsing painful memories over and over, “Celebrate Recovery” focuses on the future. This program emphasizes that regardless of what has already happened, the solution is to start making wise choices in the present and depending on Christ’s power to help one make those changes.

Fourth, this program for recovery stresses personal responsibility. Instead of victimization and self-justification, this program assists people in facing one’s poor

choices and deals with what one can actually change. The secret is that one cannot always control one's circumstances; but, one can control one's response to everything. This is an important secret of happiness. When one ceases wasting time assigning blame, there will be more time and energy to fix the problem. When a person stops hiding faults and stops hurling accusations at others, the healing power of Christ can begin working in the mind, will, and emotion.

Fifth, this recovery program emphasizes commitment to Jesus Christ; the program calls for people to make a complete life surrender to Christ. This step is the key to lasting recovery. Everyone needs Jesus for support to succeed in recovery. There is an evangelistic element to this program in that a number of people outside the church will be attracted to the program because of the lives it changes.

Finally, a significant aspect of this program is that it produces lay leaders. Because the program is biblical and church-based, it produces a continuous stream of people moving into ministry after finding recovery in Christ. Below are the eight recovery principles based on the Beatitudes to be implemented in the "CBS" program proposed by this author for developing a church program for overcoming addiction to Internet pornography:

> **R**ealize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit…."*
>
> **E**arnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him and that He has the power to help me recover. *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."*
>
> **C**onsciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. *"Blessed are the meek…"*
>
> **O**penly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. "*Blessed are the pure in heart…"*
>
> **V**oluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness…"*
>
> **E**valuate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others. *"Blessed are the merciful..." and "Blessed are the peacemakers…"*
>
> **R**eserve time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer, in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will
>
> **Y**ield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words. *"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires."*[41]

The "CBS" support group will meet once weekly. The format of the "CBS" support group will consist of four sessions: worship, testimonies or teaching, share time, and fellowship.

Setting up a larger team of supporters and enablers (one hundred twenty people)

The final component of developing a church program for overcoming addiction to Internet pornography is setting up a team of supporters and enablers. This is a team of people who have the resources and influence to create an environment for cultural change

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[41] John Baker, *Celebrate Recovery: About* (2011), *http*://www.celebraterecovery .com (accessed Feb. 22, 2011).

in the lives of men seeking help and in the heart of the church. This part of the process involves gathering people who have the power and means to sustain a ministry of this sort. This is a team of people with the appropriate spiritual gifts and talents to enable success within the church and community setting. This team should include, but is not limited to, people who are able to support this ministry prayerfully, fiscally, medically, professionally, administratively, and logistically. According to Couch's model, this team should not exceed more than one-hundred twenty people or it becomes too diluted to succeed. Constructing a foundation through personal counseling, building a spiritually guided support group, and setting up a larger team of supporters will enable this writer's church to effectively minister to men, to free men from the culture of pornography, and to assist men with creating a new culture of imitating Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

It is imperative that a ministry willing to help those who struggle with sexual problems has a correct theology about marriage and sexuality. A correct theology about marriage and sexuality paradoxically places accurate restraints on sex; but at the same time, opens the floodgates of sexual freedom and pleasure within a marriage relationship. Rather than being the neglected or misrepresented topic that it is, a biblical understanding of marriage and sexuality must be incorporated with the whole counsel of God and preached in the appropriate church forums.

In the very beginning, God created both male and female together, in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27). Individually, both reflect something of the divine image; but, together male and female reflect even more of God's essential being. God is love, God

forgives, and God is morally responsible. God makes and keeps His commitments; and, God celebrates the joys of life. We are created in God's image so these qualities are within us and these are the essential qualities of holy marriage. As God personifies the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), so male and female grow together in love, joy, peace, patience, and self-control. These godly qualities are nurtured in a marriage that will express the image of God in the two partners and in the relationship. Therefore, God intended for there to be a beautiful intimate, spiritual intercourse fostered in a marriage relationship. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were naked, blissful, unashamed, and non-inhibited in their husband-wife sexuality, just as God created them (Gen. 2:22-25). This is the design of God for husband and wife. In private, husband and wife are to engage in mutual celebration of love through sexual passion that is pleasurable to both partners, and in ways that build up the godliness of each person. Any sexuality expressed outside of God's intended purposes is sin.

The events that occurred in Numbers 25:1 remind God's people that sexual sin is progressive. Its tendency is to draw people farther and farther from God. An innocent flirtation with sexual sin more than often leads to deadly consequences. The Bible is very clear about sexual sin. The Apostle Paul stated, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust" (1 Thess. 4:3-5 NIV). God created sex as a beautiful expression of love in marriage. Satan took that beauty and distorted it. Sexual sin is inclusive of a wide range of activities that are forbidden by God. No matter what society permits, believers must look to God for instruction in this serious matter. Followers of Christ should avoid thoughts or activities

that distort the oneness in marriage intended by God. God's commands are for the good of His people because He knows the power of sexual sin to destroy.

Sometimes men mistakenly think certain parts of life can be concealed from others. The Bible says, "I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give each one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:23). Nothing is hidden from God; no sexual sin will escape His notice. Everywhere one goes, everything one says, thinks, or does is seen by God. This understanding alone should help one steer clear of sexual sin.

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PERSONAL

Born: July 6, 1955
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EDUCATIONAL

BA, Southwest Institute of Biblical Studies, 1978
MAR, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008
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MINISTERIAL

Ordained: Southwest Community Church, Miami, Florida, 1978
Church Planter Certificate: Southern Baptist Convention, 2001
Clinical Pastoral Education: Vitas Innovative Hospice Care, 2012

PROFESSIONAL

Associate Pastor: Southwest Community Church, 1980-1984
Senior Pastor: Arch Creek Bible Church, 1984-1997
Deacon Pastor: Flamingo Road Church, 1997-1999
Church Planter: Palm Lake Baptist Association 2000-2002
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