

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Biblical Counseling Curriculum: Building a Counseling Curriculum to Train Ministry  
Students to Counsel Advanced Topics**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This project was dedicated to the creation of a higher education curriculum that would support the needs of ministry students who study at West Coast Baptist College. Counseling is at the heart of what Christ committed himself to during His earthly ministry. (Mark 2:16–17, King James Version). The skills to counsel advanced topics in the local church arena should be an essential element of instruction that takes place in colleges that train ministry leaders. In order to effectively transfer these truths to students, a qualitative research project was implemented which utilized thirty-six interviews of alumni in order to assess areas of weakness in counseling topics among graduates of West Coast Baptist College. The project also benchmarked counseling degrees in similar institutions to assess the norms of practice of similar degrees. Finally, in order to triangulate the data, the project assessed the requirements of counselor education in California in order to validate the graduate areas of weakness and the normal practices of like-institutions. The resulting evidence allowed for a curriculum to be developed and implemented at West Coast Baptist College for the further training of those who will serve in various ministry capacities. This curriculum will enable the graduates of the program to effectively counsel diverse areas of difficulties in the local church.

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This project is dedicated to both a person and a place. First to my son in heaven, Everett James.

Though we only held you for a moment, your short life compelled me to start this academic journey towards pastoral counseling. I look forward to seeing you again someday.

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## Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
WCBC	<i>West Coast Baptist College</i>
LBC	<i>Lancaster Baptist Church</i>
AV	<i>Antelope Valley</i>
TRACS	<i>Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools</i>
WCFA	<i>World's Christian Fundamentals Association</i>
MRE	<i>Master of Religious Education</i>
FTE	<i>Full-time Equivalency</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
SLOs	<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>
ILOs	<i>Institutional Learning Outcomes</i>
SCS	<i>Southern California Seminary</i>
MACC	<i>Masters of Christian Counseling</i>
LR	<i>Luther Rice College and Seminary</i>
SACSCOC	<i>Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges</i>
MABC	<i>Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling</i>
BJU	<i>Bob Jones University</i>
CALPCC	<i>California Association for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors</i>
IFB	<i>Independent Fundamental Baptist</i>
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or others

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Success, joy, and peace are common pursuits of all men. As time continues to march forward, the path to success, joy, and peace in life continually becomes hindered by a plethora of emotional, physical, and psychological hardships. The effects of a post-pandemic environment have left many in increased chronic stress, deflated personal hope, and increased depression.<sup>1</sup> Many are searching for ways to manage or cope with but are left bearing their affliction alone.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary and complex issues are persistently arising, and the modern ministry worker must be equipped to wisely counsel the convolutions at hand so that those who are encumbered will not need to manage these burdens on their own. To have competence in the ministry of counseling, the ministry worker must be adequately trained to handle the unique psychological circumstances of the present age.

In modern settings, programs of higher education and learning are developing more counseling-based pastoral degrees<sup>3</sup>. These programs have equipped ministry workers to integrate the Scripture and proven counseling themes to benefit their congregations. This Doctor of

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Witters, "U.S. Depression Rates Reach New Highs," Key Topics, Gallup, Last Modified May, 17, 2023, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/505745/depression-rates-reach-new-highs.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Sophie Bethune, "Stress in America: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma," *American Psychological Association*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2023/collective-trauma-recovery#methodology>.

<sup>3</sup> BIOLA includes 24 credits of counseling material in the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry and Leadership (<https://www.biola.edu/degrees/g/pastoral-care-and-counseling-macml/courses>). Southern California Seminary's Bachelor of Biblical Studies has a list of electives containing nine out of fourteen classes in the area of counseling or psychology (<https://www.socalsem.edu/bachelor-of-arts-biblical-studies/>).

Ministry (DMIN) research project is dedicated towards the development of a curriculum that is established through the examined needs of West Coast Baptist College alumni and can be utilized in a graduate setting of West Coast Baptist College to better impact the recipients of the ministry of each graduate. This initial section will focus on the context of the ministry of the researcher, the literature surrounding the topic of counseling from a ministry perspective, and the plans to develop the curriculum and present it as a viable option for a future concentration at West Coast Baptist College. One of the final portions of this project will assess whether the project will present a curriculum that will align with the standards presented by the college's accreditation agency. The research will also attempt to gain perspective from the state of California to align best with the needs of a counseling program based out of California.<sup>4</sup> The section to follow will pertain to the ministry context and purpose of the project. The ministry context will enhance the ability to understand the location and philosophy of the place of research.

### **Ministry Context**

The ministry context of this project is a college in Southern California called, West Coast Baptist College and Lancaster Baptist Church. This action research project will enlist members of this college to be intricately involved. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand the context of the ministry. In the following sections, the reader will observe the history, philosophy, and demographics of the church and college.

West Coast Baptist College (WCBC) in Lancaster, California, was founded in 1995 by Pastor Paul Chappell and the members of Lancaster Baptist Church (LBC). As an auxiliary

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<sup>4</sup> This project is not attempting to gain state recognition or licensure; however, it is attempting to gain insight to determine what is needed to be covered from the state's perspective.

ministry of LBC, the college exists to “Train Laborers for the Harvest.”<sup>5</sup> The mission of the college is as follows, “West Coast Baptist College is committed to developing leaders with a heart for God who are committed to the Word, compassionate toward the lost, and compelled to change communities for Christ in the twenty-first century.”<sup>6</sup>

### History of Lancaster Baptist Church

Paul Chappell came to Lancaster in 1986 to help revitalize a dying church of only twelve members. Through the process of door-to-door outreach and faithful preaching of the gospel, the church grew to over 1,500 people faithfully attending by 1993.<sup>7</sup> Pastor Chappell envisioned training laborers to go, and reach the lost in communities such as Lancaster throughout the world.<sup>8</sup> On September 4, 1995, West Coast Baptist College began with forty-three students with the goal of training these students to go into the harvest fields (Matt 9:37).<sup>9</sup> Since these humble beginnings, the college has produced over three thousand graduates.<sup>10</sup> For the last five years, each graduating class has had a 98 percent placement rate into vocations that include (but are not limited to) pastoral ministries, church secretarial positions, missions positions, or in various forms of Christian education.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “Purpose and Mission,” About, West Coast Baptist College, last modified March, 2023, <https://wcbc.edu/about#purpose-and-mission>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> “Our History: Where We Came From,” About Us, Lancaster Baptist Church, last modified June 2023, <https://www.lancasterbaptist.org/about>.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Chappell, “Into the Harvest: The Purpose of West Coast Baptist College,” Ministry Leadership, Paul Chappell, Last Modified May 7, 2014, <https://paulchappell.com/2014/05/07/into-the-harvest-the-purpose-of-west-coast-baptist-college/>.

<sup>9</sup> “Timeline,” Timeline, Lancaster Baptist Church, last modified June 2023, <https://www.lancasterbaptist.org/timeline>.

<sup>10</sup> John Goetsch, *2023–2024 College Catalogue* (Lancaster, CA, 2023), 3.

<sup>11</sup> “Student Achievement Data,” Other Links, West Coast Baptist College, last modified May, 2024, <https://wcbc.edu/student-achievement-data>.

The goal to reach Lancaster, CA, with the gospel has encouraged students of WCBC from across the world to reach their home countries, states, and cities for Christ. The encouragement to engage in the ministry can be directed back to the hands-on ministry approach of the existing faculty. The instruction at WCBC is not simply taught, but the instruction is also modeled. All staff members can be seen ministering to individuals throughout the week through the bus ministry, Sunday school, visitation, soul-winning, community work projects, etc. Due to the staff involvement, the students learn audibly, visually, and experientially. Objectively, the education of WCBC affects the heart, head, and hands.

Near the twentieth anniversary of the college, the administration of the college determined to seek accreditation.<sup>12</sup> The decision came after long, difficult conversations due to the unique setting of being under the authority of a local church. While many concerns were brought up about the process, the administration believed that the college could maintain and support its sole ministry vision and sought out membership and accreditation through the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), which is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education accreditation.<sup>13</sup> After a five-year candidacy, WCBC was granted the status of a category III institution on April 16, 2019.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Accreditation,” Academics, West Coast Baptist College, Last Modified October, 2023, <https://wcbc.edu/academics/accreditation>.

<sup>13</sup> Transnational Association of Christian Schools and Colleges, “TRACS Distinctives,” TRACS, <https://tracs.org/tracs-distinctives/>.

<sup>14</sup> There are four different categories based upon the offerings of each individual school. Institutions that have been labeled as “Category I” offer certificates, diplomas, and associates degrees. Institutes labeled “Category II” can offer the same program but also offer bachelor’s degrees. Institutions labeled “Category III” can offer the same programs as lower categories but also offer master’s degrees. Institutions labeled “Category IV” can offer the same programs as lower categories but also offer doctoral degrees. TRACS, *Accreditation Manual* (Forest Virginia, October 2023), 5.

In 2018, the college made provisions for adult and global learners to train from local settings by offering asynchronous online education.<sup>15</sup> Initially, the master's program was the only available; however, the addition of a bachelor's program in Bible made learning available across multiple life stages.<sup>16</sup> Over the last seven years, the online program has delivered classes to 1,150 students. The online platform has become an important tool in delivering quality education to those who cannot make Lancaster their home. However, as for the philosophy, across both learning platforms, the philosophy remains united and the same. The philosophical context will now be examined.

### Philosophy

The philosophy of WCBC derives from an independent fundamental Baptist perspective. As a local church-based ministry, the college aims to train servant leaders to change the locality where God has placed them. Chief emphasis is placed on the major doctrines of Scripture as each student is required to take a minimum of thirty-six core Bible credits.<sup>17</sup> At the heart of training at WCBC is the development of students who are passionate about Christ and His leading. The philosophy is strictly of the Baptist denomination and has strong foundations as a school with strong ties to historic fundamental theology that strictly adheres to biblical and personal purity.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Chappell, "Announcing: Online Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies," Ministry News, PaulChappell.com, Last Modified February 19, 2018, <https://paulchappell.com/2018/02/19/announcing-online-bachelors-degree-in-biblical-studies-at-wcbc>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> West Coast Baptist College, *2023–2024 College Catalogue* (Lancaster, CA, 2023), 70.

<sup>18</sup> "Philosophy," About WCBC, West Coast Baptist College, Last Modified October, 2023, <https://wcbc.edu/about#philosophy>.



## Connections to Fundamentalism

As mentioned in the previous section, there are connections between the college and fundamentalism. In 2013, Chappell wrote a book on ‘authentic ministry’ for Independent Fundamental Baptist ministries.<sup>19</sup> Here, he discussed a philosophy of ministry that adheres to the fundamental doctrines of the faith while gracefully transitioning the church to win souls in the modern age.<sup>20</sup> Chappell takes time to discuss the heritage of the church, which would help to define the foundational setting for the college.<sup>21</sup> Regarding Fundamentalism, Chappell states, “This movement has been a part of my life since day one, and even before I began ministry as a nineteen-year-old, I knew that I was an independent fundamental Baptist by conviction.”<sup>22</sup> He breaks down his terms and defines the fundamental nature of his beliefs as the “Orthodoxy of his faith.”<sup>23</sup> While the following paragraphs will not stand as a complete history of fundamentalism, several important stages will be examined to give a brief context of the history of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism developed in the post-Civil War era as a defense against modernist ideology/theology that crept into American churches.<sup>24</sup> Attacks against the infallibility of Scripture and the amplification of skepticism came from men like Immanuel Kant and Frederick Schleiermacher.<sup>25</sup> Kant saw the church as a non-essential element of Christianity because God

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Chappell, *The Road Ahead* (Lancaster, CA: Striving Together Publications, 2013), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 118. In this section, Paul Chappell discusses getting mentored in the founding of the college leaders in fundamentalism.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>24</sup> David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 5–6. Beale places the early inceptions of Fundamentalism all the way to 1857.

<sup>25</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), 734, Kindle Edition.

spoke to men through conscience.<sup>26</sup> Schleiermacher, whose philosophy was largely based upon the philosophy of Kant, believed in Christianity as the emotions perceived in complete reliance upon God.<sup>27</sup> George Marsden wrote the following regarding the influence of Henry Beecher, “Beecher advocated a ‘Life School’ of preaching which would ‘understand men’ as opposed to creeds and traditions. Even Scripture should be subordinated to the authority of the modern age.”<sup>28</sup> George Marsden spoke about the influence of modern and foreign thought, which would challenge the authority of Scripture. He wrote the following:

Into many strongholds of American Protestantism suggests that the walls of the old-style orthodoxy, so strong in appearance as late as the 1870s, had in fact restrained a flood of new views that had been gathering for some time. Gradual modifications in the content prevailing American theology together with inconspicuous shifts come common sense to idealism had been feeding a rising tide of change. But the real waves came from abroad and by the time they hit America their full force had developed. Three strong concussions were felt almost simultaneously—evolutionary naturalism, higher criticism of the Bible, and the newer Idealistic philosophy and theology.<sup>29</sup>

In his quote, he notes that the rise of modern thinking was developing beyond the borders of America but ultimately would strike theology in three distinct areas: creationism vs. evolution, authority of Scripture, and idealistic philosophy taking precedence over the observed theology.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, Marsden, in this quote, established the origins of the philosophical deception and the rise of liberalistic thought. Liberalism during this tumult of spiritual influence in America, men confidently stood against liberal spiritual views. Conservatives like Torrey argued that Christ and

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<sup>26</sup> George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), 8–9.

<sup>27</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 24.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–26.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

his disciples did not simply preach the truth, but they also pointed out and uncovered error.<sup>31</sup> This ideology illustrates perfectly the mindset of the early fundamentalists who came together in prophetic conferences and associations to ultimately denounce conformity to the philosophy and liberalism of that age (modernism) and adhere to the obedience of what Scripture provides. David Beale breaks down the stages of fundamentalism into two different eras that are separated by the years. He calls the era between 1857 to 1930 the Nonconformist era of fundamentalism and between 1930 to present the Separatist era of Fundamentalism.<sup>32</sup> The early era produced an association dedicated to the fundamentalists called the World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA).<sup>33</sup> Theologians such as Reuben Torrey, C. I. Scofield, W. B. Riley, C. M. Alexander, and others led the first meeting of this association in spring of 1919.<sup>34</sup> The association provided preaching and support for the fundamentalists of the day but ultimately slipped away due to more denominational-type associations.<sup>35</sup>

Fundamentalism slightly changed beyond 1930. The movement turned from separating from worldliness and non-Scriptural ideology to separating from individuals and organizations that represented philosophical views that disregarded the authority of Scripture and doctrine.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, militant fundamentalism would become the trend of the 30's through the 70's, but leaders in the more modern age (1970s and beyond), as Jerry Falwell would arise and lead a new

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<sup>31</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 5–6.

<sup>33</sup> P. J. Rooks, "Hegemonic Fundamentalism in Wichita, Kansas: The Defenders of the Christian Faith, 1926–1931," *Critical Research on Religion* vol. 11, no. 3 (2023), 300–301.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–2

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, 9.

generation of Christ followers who adhere to biblical holiness in purpose and practice.<sup>37</sup> These early influences from preachers, like Falwell, rested upon the heart of Paul Chappell. As a young child, these were the figures who were prominent within the Baptist movement and thereby became heroes of the faith. These figures would soon be the model that Chappell would go back to later in life for counsel when he became pastor at Lancaster Baptist Church and later established West Coast Baptist College . Chappell wrote about the influencers in fundamentalism, like Jerry Falwell in a blog post in 2007 where he said:

Dr. Falwell was a frequent speaker at the church where I grew up in San Jose, California. On more than one occasion he was a guest in our home. As a young boy, I recall having meals with him and some of his associates from Lynchburg.... I vividly recall hearing Dr. Falwell, Dr. G.B. Vick, Dr. Jack Hyles, Dr. John R. Rice, Dr. B. Myron Cedarholm, and others preach when I was a young man. This was certainly a golden era amongst fundamentalists. Now that most of the men from that era are with the Lord in Heaven, every honest independent Baptist must think back and be thankful for the good contributions they made.<sup>38</sup>

Given the opportunity to cross paths with preachers like Rice, Falwell, and Cederholm gave Chappell the opportunity to learn from these predecessors in ministry. He claimed that these connections have influenced the foundations of the college and have provided the philosophical identity that shapes the way the training takes place at WCBC.

At WCBC, the strong ties to fundamentalism are seen through the eyes of the major tenets of fundamentalism. Harris referred to the five most important tenets as the “Five Points of Fundamentalism.”<sup>39</sup> The five major tenets are the following: “the inerrancy of Scripture; the virgin birth of Christ; His substitutionary atonement; His bodily resurrection; the authenticity of

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<sup>37</sup> “Militant fundamentalism” describes an aggressive opposition towards all forms of compromise and the rigid upholding of standards for practical holiness.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Chappell, “Dr. Jerry Falwell,” *PaulChappell.com*, May 17, 2007, <https://paulchappell.com/2007/05/16/dr-jerry-falwell/>

<sup>39</sup> Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 25–26.

the miracles.”<sup>40</sup> If one were to examine the 2023 version of the WCBC college catalogue, they would find those same major tenets of fundamentalism identified strongly throughout the doctrinal statement.<sup>41</sup> Scriptural authority is the keystone element that holds all of the various elements of the college into order. Further, the reader would find that the first foundational pillar of the college is to, “uplift sound doctrine.”<sup>42</sup> As already examined, from the earliest days of fundamentalism, there has been a strong adherence to holding strong doctrine and separating from apostasy.<sup>43</sup>

Ultimately, the philosophy of the college is founded upon the principles of separation from the deviation away from doctrine.<sup>44</sup> As a testament to the previous statement, all men who desire to graduate from the college must pass what are called “Oral Examinations.”<sup>45</sup> These examinations enable the male student to display his ability to defend the major doctrines of the faith in a live setting with two Bible faculty members.<sup>46</sup> All of the five major tenets (as described above) are covered in the examination.<sup>47</sup> Without passing this examination, the student cannot graduate from their elected program.<sup>48</sup> In consideration of this capstone examination, one can certainly make the connection between the early fundamentalist’s strong desire to defend the

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<sup>40</sup> Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 25–26.

<sup>41</sup> West Coast Baptist College, *2023–2024 College Catalogue* (Lancaster, CA, 2023), 16–21.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, 5–6.

<sup>44</sup> “Philosophy,” About WCBC, WCBC.edu, last modified November, 2023, <https://wcbc.edu/about#philosophy>.

<sup>45</sup> West Coast Baptist College, *2023–2024 College Catalogue*, 48.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Oral Examination questions are provided to each student and cover questions relating to the following: bibliology, theology (proper), Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, eschatology, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, and separation.

<sup>48</sup> “The West Coast WAE: We Are Eagles,” West Coast Baptist College, last modified October, 2023, <https://www.wcbc.edu/west-coast-wae>.

tenets of the faith and the foundations of fundamentalism that exist at West Coast Baptist College.

It is important to note this philosophical connection to fundamentalism as it provides further context into the DNA and culture of the college. Without this connection, the college would not have the same strong conviction of the authority of doctrine and the conviction of separation from that which grows apart from the authority of doctrine and God's Word. This connection also provides a vital connection to hesitancy towards secular sources for mental health difficulties. Due to the view of absolute sufficiency of Scripture, often the view of fundamentalists is that mental health is directly and solely correlated with spiritual health.<sup>49</sup> Those who hold to the sufficiency of Scripture believe that Scripture alone provides the truth necessary to live in complete obedience before God.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, among fundamentalists, there has been, at different times, a historical dichotomy that exists between psychology and the faith.<sup>51</sup> There can be a hesitancy of both ministry leaders and congregants diagnosing a matter of mental health, such as depression or schizophrenia as more than a spiritual problem. Hartog and Gow observed this exact scenario in their study of 126 congregants of centrally conservative congregations.<sup>52</sup>

While this has been a past position of most fundamentalists, there is a current openness towards counseling education that takes these customs into consideration. In a study done in the Fall of 2023 of recent graduates (graduating class of 2018 through 2023), there was a question

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<sup>49</sup> Kristine Hartog and Katheryn Gow, "Religious Attributions Pertaining to the Causes and Cures of Mental Illness," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* vol 8. no. 4 (January 23, 2007), 265.

<sup>50</sup> Dennis Jowers, "The Sufficiency of Scripture and the Biblical Cannon," *Trinity Journal* vol. 30, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 49.

<sup>51</sup> Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul-Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), Location 2491 of 9694, Kindle Edition.

<sup>52</sup> Hartog and Gow, "Religious Attributions," 269–70.

asked regarding the effectiveness of training at WCBC.<sup>53</sup> Seven unique areas were presented. Most areas scored high on a 4-point Likert scale. The lowest score on the list was “Developing Capacity for Pastoral Care.”<sup>54</sup> Based on this answer, it can be assumed that WCBC students have noted the gap in training and are longing for additional answers in this field. As noticed in the introductory section, the post-pandemic environment has left many in need of pastoral care.<sup>55</sup> While WCBC has been strong educationally in the areas of Bible or theology and education, it is apparent that there is a need to equip students to properly help others bear their burdens through the ministry of counseling.

This final piece of philosophical context will become important throughout the remainder of the project. The importance of making a connection to the philosophical environment of WCBC is easily matched by the necessity of understanding the demographical details of the college. Observing these details will provide the context to support the purpose of the thesis project.

### Location and Demographics

The college is positioned in the Antelope Valley (AV). Located in the northernmost portion of the county of Los Angeles, the AV represents the following cities: Acton, Antelope Acres, Little Rock, Lancaster, Rosamond, Palmdale, Quartz Hill, Mojave, Lake Los Angeles, and Aqua Dulce.<sup>56</sup> The college is specifically concentrated in the city of Lancaster. As a

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<sup>53</sup> West Coast Baptist College, “2023 Alumni Inventory,” (November 2023), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> The World Health Organization indicates that anxiety and depression have increased 25 percent since the pandemic, “COVID-19 Pandemic Triggers 25 Percent Increase in Prevalence of Anxiety and Depression Worldwide” News, World Health Organization, Last modified March 2, 2022, <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>.

<sup>56</sup> “Cities,” AntelopeValley.com, last modified July, 2024, <https://www.antelopevalley.com/cities.html>.

supporting ministry of Lancaster Baptist Church, the students at the college are able to engage the public in unique outreach events in Lancaster and other surrounding cities throughout the semester.

The student body of WCBC is the most important demographic within this ministry context. While the college resides in California, 63 percent of the active, on-campus, student body are non-California residents and 86 percent of the active population live outside of the AV.<sup>57</sup> Seventeen students represent international countries with Canada being the major contributor of international students (15 of 17).<sup>58</sup> Within the student body, the genders are represented equally with 51 percent of the people being male and 49 percent of the people being female.<sup>59</sup>

Regarding the location of the ministry, it was noted that the placement of the college is in the state of California. While this state boasts of physical beauty, grandeur of size, and robust population, there are some major challenges to ministering biblically within the “Golden State.” A striking example of this reality may be found in the words of California’s governor, who recently wrote, “California is proud to have some of the most robust laws in the nation when it comes to protecting and supporting our LGBTQIA+ community.”<sup>60</sup> Many of the laws being implemented are central to adolescents and the identification of their own gender. For instance, an amendment to bill AB 957 includes that the judge must consider whether a parent affirms

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<sup>57</sup> Student body metrics were obtained through a report generated by the admissions department at WCBC.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Gavin Newsom, “Governor Newsom Signs Legislation Supporting LGBTQ+ Californians,” CA.gov, September 23, 2023, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/09/23/governor-newsom-signs-legislation-supporting-lgbtq-californians/>.



their child's self-identified gender.<sup>61</sup> This provides more than enough context to show the chosen worldview of the lawmakers in California. Specifically, a judge can rule that if a parent does not affirm the chosen gender identity of their child, then that judge can assume the unfit nature of those particular parents. The judge can then remove custody of the parents as they are not providing a safe environment for the child. On a small level, this illustrates the difficulty of potentially counseling individuals in California. There is a need of proper education to continually aid WCBC students in preparing them to counsel through a day when an item as simple as gender identity is being questioned and twisted in the mainstream media and (further) in the political arena. This provides the platform that shows the utter necessity to continue training laborers to counsel effectively in the harvest.

The impact of training laborers expands past the education that is taught on the campus in Southern California. The distance modality available to the student body has allowed for the online department's acceleration, which is an important factor in the college's development. Of the active students, 20 reside internationally, and 233 reside within the states.<sup>62</sup> The online student body represents over 40 states and the vast majority reside outside of California (78.1 percent).<sup>63</sup> The online student platform of learning differs from the on-campus modality in gender representation, as 69 percent of the populous is male and only 31 percent female.<sup>64</sup> The

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<sup>61</sup> California Legislative Information, "An Act to Amend Section 3011 of the Family Code, Relating to Family Law," February 14, 2023, [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB957](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB957).

<sup>62</sup> Student body metrics were obtained through a report generated by the admissions department at WCBC.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

married population is equal to 38.7 percent of the online populace, which indicates the varying aspects of online learning regarding life stage.<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the undergrad and the graduate program have major online components; however, the focus of this DMIN project will be the graduate program. The master's degree at WCBC is a Master of Religious Education (MRE).<sup>66</sup> The MRE program, as previously mentioned, contains two unique concentrations, Christian Education and Biblical Studies. Both concentrations are thirty-three credits and share four core classes: Advanced Hermeneutics, Spiritual Formation and Discipleship, Servant Leadership, and Research and Writing.<sup>67</sup>

The master's program at WCBC has averaged 102.5 students each year over the past three years, and the class average size is 10.47 students per class.<sup>68</sup> The graduate program full-time equivalency (FTE) in 2022 was 47.99.<sup>69</sup> Master's students have demonstrated a persistence in coming back to classes after breaks between semesters. In the 2022–2023 school year, over 73 percent of master's students returned the next semester after the winter or summer break.<sup>70</sup> The persistence to return to their studies shows developed commitment toward their degree path. The next sections will present and discuss the problem, purpose, and thesis of the DMIN project, which will directly impact WCBC's master's program.

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<sup>65</sup> Student body metrics were obtained through a report generated by the admissions department at WCBC.

<sup>66</sup> West Coast Baptist College, *2023–2024 College Catalogue*, 112.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>68</sup> West Coast Baptist College, "Insight: 2023 Distance Education Planner," (December, 2022), 7.

<sup>69</sup> Calculated by dividing the full amount of purchased credits for the year by the full-time credit equivalent for the specific level of study.

<sup>70</sup> Student retention metrics were obtained through a report generated by the academic department at WCBC.

### Problem Presented

The West Coast Baptist College graduate program presents the availability for a student to pursue one of two concentrations that lead to a degree in religious education. Both concentrations exist to further the mission of the college, which stands to “Train Laborers for the Harvest.” This goal exists at all levels of the college (undergraduate through graduate) and pertains to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. At the heart of every program is the desire to see all people groups come to a fuller understanding of Christ; furthermore, the programs of WCBC exist to help others navigate their path to understand the will of Christ.

Religious education, as produced at WCBC, should focus on discipleship in the life of the Christian. Berg’s definition of discipleship places a requirement to relinquish all selfish thoughts and motives in order to follow Christ. He states, “Discipleship requires humility to abandon personal ambitions and ways of handling life and demands daily yoking oneself to the will and teachings of Another.”<sup>71</sup> Humility is at the forefront of Christianity because all Christocentric change is dependent upon the humility to acknowledge the depravity of self and further acknowledge the grace that only comes through Christ.<sup>72</sup> The life of the disciple is a life of change primarily through the transformation and renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:1–2). Religious education allows the student to be prepared to administer the path towards humble change, amid the current self-driven society through the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:2). Discipleship is the foundational goal of counseling because humble, Christlike change should be the aim of all biblical counselors.<sup>73</sup> The counselor must then be ready to help his community grow by being

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<sup>71</sup> Jim Berg, *Essential Virtues: Marks of the Christ-Centered Life* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2008), location 741 of 4913, Kindle.

<sup>72</sup> Mark McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 26.

<sup>73</sup> Robert D. Jones, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 20.

aware of the mental and emotional changes that must take place. Religious education, which equips ministers to be aware of these needs is at the heart of counseling.<sup>74</sup>

In the discussion of the ministry context, there was mention of the persistency of WCBC master's students. These students have a hunger for education and understanding primarily because they have a passion to lead to their individual ministries. The problem at hand is that WCBC does not have the necessary graduate curriculum to train graduates to counsel confidently within their ministry. In order to be more effective within the ministry context, the ministry servant must be well-equipped to understand the complex issues that exist in the ministry of counseling. The West Coast Baptist College (WCBC) graduate program only uses one counseling class for both concentrations, and it does not cover the necessary content to equip students to further their ability to minister in their ministry context. The problem is that West Coast Baptist College graduate ministry students are not adequately trained to counsel advanced topics in their ministry setting.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop a curriculum that equips WCBC graduate ministry students to increase their counseling competence. By offering a new concentration based on ministry context needs, the college can continue to fulfill its purpose of training laborers for the harvest in an expanded ministry discipline. The main attributing factor of this purpose is the need for better counseling education amongst Baptist ministers and ministry workers. This is a purpose that can bring about real change in an individual life or community.

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<sup>74</sup> Mussa Kilengi, "Need for further Training in Counselling Techniques and Approaches for Pastoral Counselling Providers in the ELCT – CD," E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences 3, no. 13 (2023), 689.

What factor will drive this DMIN Project? Essentially, the purpose of this project is development. The necessary change at WCBC is the addition of a counseling curriculum in the graduate program, which will bring a successful opportunity for current graduate students and alumni to deepen their counseling skills. The purpose is crucial to the continuance and completion of the project. The complete project disconnected from the purpose will likely bring minimal change. Stringer states, “If an action research project does not make a difference, in a specific way, for practitioners and other stakeholders, then it has failed to achieve its objective.”<sup>75</sup> The DMIN project has more than the temporal impact in mind; it considers the eternal value of the solution being weighed. Without purpose, that solution can be difficult to obtain.

To train the WCBC students effectively and purposely, a curriculum must be developed that concentrates on the purpose of continual training of ministry servants in biblical counseling. This project will incorporate a biblical foundation as it is an essential tool for the sanctifying process (John 17:17) and the best means of changing the matters of the heart and mind (Heb 4:12). As the project develops from biblical foundations, it will continue by assessing modern mental conditions and therapies for those conditions to produce the best options for the proposed curriculum.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The first assumption that exists is the demand for further education with regard to counseling. Effective ministry laborers of the gospel must effectively attend to the mental and emotional difficulties of congregants within their respective communities. The graduate students

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<sup>75</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (US, SAGE Publications, Inc, 2020), 11, Liberty University Online Bookshelf.

at WCBC do not receive enough training in advanced topics to give a foundational response to the emotional difficulties that they will face in a ministry setting.

God's Word is truth and remains the authority for faith and practice.<sup>76</sup> Robert Jones believes, "All systems of Counseling emerge from an authoritative body of knowledge."<sup>77</sup> The foundational body of knowledge that this research project is built upon is the Bible. All other sources of knowledge must be filtered through the Word of God. Within the Word of God, are the answers for the hurting and the hopeless. All counselors should be ready to answer questions of despair with the promise of hope (1 Pet. 3:15).

The intention of Christian counseling is more than personal wholeness, it also includes mending relationships and provoking spiritual growth. McDowell writes, "Though not all crises or problems are spiritual (in their cause or in their correction), they are interrelated with a person's spiritual beliefs and spiritual state."<sup>78</sup> An individual's spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical states work together in rhythm to produce a healthy individual. Any kink in the system can affect all parts of the individual person, as a mental problem can reflect a poorly maintained system.

### **Definitions**

Competent counseling begins with the counselor's ability to communicate with the individual in the session. Communication is an essential aspect of thriving and excelling in the purpose that God has designed for each individual. It is impossible to communicate if those who are speaking with one another are defining words and phrases differently. The purpose of this

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<sup>76</sup> John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16.

<sup>77</sup> Robert D. Jones, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 38.

<sup>78</sup> Josh McDowell, *Handbook on Counseling Youth* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1996), 7.

section is to facilitate communication between the reader and researcher. In order to produce precision in the dialogue to follow, several key terms will be defined in the list that follows.

*Biblical Counseling.* It is a system of counseling that derives from the foundations found in the Word of God. Robert Jones states, “Biblical counseling seeks to do nothing more or less than intentionally, consistently apply historic, orthodox, evangelical Christian truth to the realm of personal ministry and human problems.”<sup>79</sup> The principal focus of this system of counseling is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who establishes the basis for healing and wholeness.<sup>80</sup> The greatest tool of the biblical counselor is the truth found within the Word (John 17:17).

*Curriculum.* Due to the location of WCBC, the state of California has given a thorough definition of curriculum that reads, “Curriculum, or course of study, is the content and plan for instruction. It is made up of the instructional resources, methods, and assessments needed to help students develop critical skills and knowledge.”<sup>81</sup> Curriculum navigates a specific concentration of study and is often associated with systems of education such as elementary, high school, undergraduate, and graduate schools.

*Great Commission.* The Great Commission is a term that is often correlated with Matthew 28:19–20, which displays Christ’s command to His disciples to go and make disciples through global evangelism. The main thrust of Christ’s command to the disciples is a reproducing of themselves through concentrated actions of instruction of God’s Word and obedience to God’s Word.<sup>82</sup> The commission Christ gives to His disciples is to be through His

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<sup>79</sup> Robert D. Jones, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 11.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> California Department of Education, “Curriculum,” <https://www.cde.ca.gov/qs/ci/>, last modified December 7, 2022.

<sup>82</sup> Mookgo Kgatle, “Globalization of Missions an Exegesis on the Great Commission,” *In Die Skriflig* vol. 52, no. 1 (July 2018), 2.

authority and the power which He supplies to His followers Andy Pettigrew states, “The Great Commission decrees God’s ongoing granting of authority first seen in Adam and now given to all those who are in Christ.”<sup>83</sup> Disciples in Christ can go and are commanded to go and make other disciples through the power and presence of God.

*Independent Baptist.* The Independent Baptist movement began unofficially in the early to mid-twentieth century as a partial denominational group.<sup>84</sup> The core emphasis of the independent Baptist group is the autonomy of the local church and the independence from any denominational oversight. Tribute for starting this sect of Baptists is often given to J. Frank Norris who spurned denominational hierarchies.<sup>85</sup>

*Fundamentalism.* Staying true to the term, those who would claim to be fundamentalists will strive to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the faith. David Beale defines fundamentalism as, “The unqualified acceptance of and obedience to the Scriptures.”<sup>86</sup> Later Beale noted the supreme foundations of the fundamentalist belief system as the following: “The inerrancy of Scripture, Christ’s virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, and biblical miracles.”<sup>87</sup> While the fundamentalist culture has historically endured patches of divisive behavior; the identity of a fundamentalist is in the fixed desire to purely exegete biblical truths and apply those truths towards holy living.

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<sup>83</sup> Andy Pettigrew, “Christian Leadership and the Great Commission: Foundations for Building Christian Leaders,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 15, no. 1 (Spring, 2021): 113, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/christian-leadership-great-commission-foundations/docview/2812787245/se-2>.

<sup>84</sup> Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 33.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>86</sup> Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



*Integration.* It is a blend of scientifically proven psychological resources and biblical resources. “As the act in which a therapist’s practical reason—how the therapist decides what to do—draws on both psychological and religious and spiritual sources.”<sup>88</sup> Siang-Yang Tan states, “An integration view takes psychology seriously but submits it ultimately to scriptural truth, the Bible properly interpreted.”<sup>89</sup> The Bible provides truth as a filter that can stand guard against fallacious counseling models.<sup>90</sup>

*Modernism.* Modernism, is a term that was adopted by conservatives in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and used to describe the philosophy which devalues the authority of Scripture.<sup>91</sup> Modernism not only devalues and disregards the authority of Scripture but also elevates the authority of man and human intellect.<sup>92</sup> During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fundamentalists arose and spoke out against Modernism and asserted the authority of Scripture/doctrine.<sup>93</sup>

*Pastoral Counseling.* Pastoral counseling is counseling that is practiced from within a ministry of the church through a recognized (often ordained) leader of the church towards members of the congregation.<sup>94</sup> The primary focus of the pastoral counselor is on Scripture and

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<sup>88</sup> Joseph Stewart-Sicking, Jesse Fox, and Paul J. Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy: A Process-Based Model for Pluralistic Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 11.

<sup>89</sup> Siang-Yang Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective*. Second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), 31.

<sup>90</sup> Jones, *The Gospel for Disorder Lives*, 45.

<sup>91</sup> David New, *Christian Fundamentalism in America* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2012), 232.

<sup>92</sup> Stan Mitchell, “The Effects of Modernism on Christianity,” *Warren Christian Apologetics Center* vol. 5, no. 1 (March 28, 2022).

<sup>93</sup> New, *Christian Fundamentalism in America*, 115.

<sup>94</sup> Felicity Brock Kelcourse, “Pastoral Counseling in the Life of the Church,” *Encounter* vol. 63, no. 1 (Winter 2002), 137, ProQuest, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/pastoral-counseling-life-church/docview/216768468/se-2>.

the Power of God to bring healing in the life of a counselee.<sup>95</sup> The primary emphasis of the pastoral counselor is the delivering the hope found in the cross of Christ.<sup>96</sup> This means that the pastoral counselor accentuates the theological foundations to counsel spiritual, mental, and emotional issues.

*Sanctification.* The process of transformation in the life of the believer begins at conversion. Jim Berg writes, “Once a person becomes a child of God, God begins a process in him that changes him to become more like Christ in his attitudes, ambitions, and actions.”<sup>97</sup> As sanctification focuses on individual spiritual growth, it is the central focus of counseling done from a biblical perspective. Jones states, “We can best summarize all these outcome goals with one supreme aim: that our counselees become more and more like Jesus Christ, the perfect human (though divine) who thoroughly embodies every biblical ideal.”<sup>98</sup> If Christlikeness is the common goal shared between sanctification and biblical counseling, it will play a critical role in the life of the counselee.

*Soul Care.* The role of soul-care is the internal and external care of individuals. Soul care focuses on change which brings harmony to mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical health. While pastoral counseling leads others to hope in Christ, soul care focuses on peace with God and others through reflecting Christ internally and externally.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Peter Pan, Jen Der, Liang-Yu F. Deng, Shiou Ling Tsai, and Jenny S. S. Yuan, “Issues of Integration in Psychological Counseling Practice from Pastoral Counseling Perspectives,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* vol. 32, no. 2 (Summer 2013), 154, ProQuest, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/issues-integration-psychological-counseling/docview/1437251919/se-2>.

<sup>96</sup> Chris J. K. Leins, “What Makes Pastoral Counseling so Pastoral? Distinguishing between Pastoral Care and Clinical Practice in Modern Life,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 40, no. 4 (Winter, 2021), 344

<sup>97</sup> Jim Berg, *Changed into His Image*, 2nd edition (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2017), 16.

<sup>98</sup> Jones, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> John Ortberg, *The Me I Want to Be* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 21.

*Sufficiency of Scripture.* The sufficiency of Scripture is a term that describes the authority of Scripture over faith and practice. John Piper states, “The Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only inspired and inerrant words of God that we need, in order to know the way of salvation and the way of obedience.”<sup>100</sup> He argues that while Scripture is entirely true and inerrant, Scripture does not hold the entirety of truth. However, he states, “In the Bible God has given us, we have the perfect standard for judging all other knowledge.”<sup>101</sup> The apostle Paul told Timothy, that Scripture was profitable in the areas of “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.” (2 Tim. 3:16, King James Version). The sufficiency of Scripture thereby communicates that Scripture is the revealed, inspired Word of God and is given for man to know the only way of salvation (Rom 10:17) and know instructions for living in obedience as a disciple of Christ (John 17:17).

### **Limitations**

The first limitation of this action-based research project is the sample size of the subjects. The curriculum that will be developed for this project will be available only to alumni and current students in the master’s program. This leaves a relatively niche audience of those from a like-minded faith and educational background. The second limitation presented is an inability to see the curriculum fully in action as an implemented concentration before the end of the research. While this project is about the development of a curriculum to fit the needs of the students, a limitation would be within the ability to publicize the curriculum fully. This leads to the next limitation, which would include the accreditation status of the school.

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<sup>100</sup> John Piper, “Thoughts on the Sufficiency of Scripture: What it Does and Does Not Mean,” *Articles, Desiring God*, last modified February 9, 2005, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/thoughts-on-the-sufficiency-of-scripture>.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

The third limitation is focused on WCBC's accreditation status. In order to be within the guidelines established by the college's accreditor, every class must be taught by an academically qualified individual. The graduate program would require an individual with a doctorate degree within the realm of the subject matter. The curriculum would not necessarily need to be publicized or revealed fully to TRACS to complete the research; however, this project seeks to show that the curriculum will fully be in agreement with TRACS standards. While this can be navigated through having a "teacher of record", it still poses a limitation to the project.

### **Delimitations**

A first delimitation would include the range of participants within the study. The audience, while narrowed to a selective audience, will be fairly easy to contact as the college keeps a fairly good relationship with all alumni and current students. Records of numbers and email addresses are properly stored in a database at the college. As the researcher interviews the participants, the modern ability to record an interview and allow an internet site to transcribe the interview is another delimitation. Online tools create a massive delimitation in the total research process. Another delimitation would include the team of faculty members with whom the researcher is able to work daily. The team of faculty surrounding the researcher are qualified individuals who can collaborate with the research in order to enhance its substantive value.

### **Thesis Statement**

All of humanity is involved in a search for purpose and belonging.<sup>102</sup> This search sometimes drives individuals to answers that never bring hope, satisfaction, or resolution.

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<sup>102</sup> Lynda Shevellar, Jane Sherwin, and Neil Barringham, "The Human Search for Belonging," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* vol 16, no. 1 (2014), 2.

Ultimately, Scripture reveals a remedy for the needs of mankind; this answer is simply, God.<sup>103</sup> The follower of Christ understands and prescribes this remedy; however, it does not excuse these followers from a life of unwanted circumstances and suffering. James conveys that these trials and circumstances are to be expected (Jas 1:2). Within these circumstances, God has provided the church with personnel that can help exhort and build the individuals within the church (Eph 4:11–12) and ease the suffering that is brought on by the consequence and presence of sin. These servants have the unique ability to give God’s formula for finding purpose within the trials and circumstances of life.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, these same servants need to be equipped to demonstrate, through a type of intensive discipleship, how these same trials and circumstances are the tools in the hands of the creator to create lasting, Christocentric change. This type of change promotes the type of maturity, which enables the believer to operate effectively as a disciple of Christ and have a proper unity between spirit, body, and emotions.<sup>105</sup> The curriculum proposed will concentrate on equipping these servants to counsel towards this transformative, sanctifying process.

If the mission of West Coast Baptist College is to train these select servants of the local church, they must be adequately trained to present the hope of Christ within their given ministry context. In the midst of a lost modern society, advanced issues arrive that need the delicate, timely preparation of those who can counsel and mentor individuals into a loving relationship with Christ. More than ever, the servant of Christ is essential to furthering the counseling

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<sup>103</sup> Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins, “Christian Counseling as a Ministry and Perspective,” *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2011), 30

<sup>104</sup> Richard A. Fowler and Natalie Ford, *Grace-Based Counseling: An Effective New Biblical Model* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2021), 21.

<sup>105</sup> Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul-Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), location 7408 of 9694, Kindle.

ministry of Christ. As such, if WCBC implements an advanced counseling curriculum, then its graduate ministry students will be equipped to guide hurting congregants toward spiritual health properly.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The problem at West Coast Baptist College presents the need to research the literature that will discuss the integration of psychotherapy into the existing religious framework of the graduate program. The purpose of the literature review is to embody the research surrounding the realm of development and establishment of curricula in higher education. The secondary purpose will be to evaluate the current literature surrounding the distinctiveness of counseling from a ministry perspective and the integration of psychology into faith arenas. The final element of this review will encircle the growing need of pastors and ministers to continue developing their understanding of how to counsel competently.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible truly stands as the firm authority foundation on which therapies must rest.<sup>2</sup> There is a difference, however, between theological training and practical training in counseling from the basis of a Christian worldview. There is a growing trend of pastors and ministry leaders concluding they are inadequately trained in the practical discipline of counseling and therapy.<sup>3</sup> In attempts to understand the context of counseling from a Christian worldview, the literature review focuses on incorporating therapies that are supported from an empirical basis into the realm of ministerial counseling. In order to build a curriculum to support the need to train graduate students at West Coast Baptist College effectively, the review will focus on literature

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<sup>1</sup> Richard A. Fowler and Natalie Ford, *Grace-Based Counseling*, 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Laverne Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation on the Role of the Pastoral Counselor," (DMin thesis, Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Lynchburg, VA: 2021), Scholars Crossing (OCLC 1282197849), 34.

that demonstrates both proper methods by which a curriculum should be built and by expressing the methods of counseling. On a small scale, this takes into account personal values and the distinctiveness of worldviews in the counseling session, as every unique individual comes with a unique set of perspectives and values that direct the course of decisions that are made on a daily basis.<sup>4</sup> The review observes the continual need for development as a counselor and demonstrates the literature surrounding continual development.

### **Literature Review**

King Solomon expressed that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl 1:9), and within this expression of truth, one can understand the issues that are experienced in the present have existed for centuries. While appearances change, what challenges occur, do not deviate far from root problems, which have not changed since the inception of time. This principle can be applied to mental health struggles. Humankind has dealt with mental health struggles and sorrow since Adam and Eve's sin.<sup>5</sup> Due to the ever-existing role of suffering, much literature has been produced to help provide context and content to assist in the relief and healing of the mind and emotions. This literature review seeks to synthesize what has been written from both the secular and Christian vantage points. Within this literature review exists the topics of pedagogy and purpose, curriculum development, education and development, personal values, distinctiveness of ministerial counseling, and integration of faith and counseling theories.

These five topics were chosen as part of the literature as each topic helps to solidify the dimensions of the project. As the mission is to develop a curriculum in counseling, the objectives

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Stewart-Sicking, Jesse Fox, and Paul J. Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy: A Process-Based Model for Pluralistic Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Jones, Kellen, Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 43.



of the mission would focus on the flooded spectrum of curriculum features. The curriculum design provides the support structure for the entirety of the training. Education and development continues the trend of the topic of instruction and tutelage and deals with the nature of continuing education among ministerial leaders in the area of counseling education. The personal values section describes the principles and beliefs that direct individuals to seek counsel, the preference of where they will seek counsel, and why religious establishments attract most seekers of soul care. This navigates into the distinctive patterns of ministerial care and what makes the ministerial type of counseling effective within the proper settings. Finally, the integration of faith and counseling theories is a section that will consider the necessity and practicality of incorporating modern counseling practices and theories within biblical counseling. As each of these topics is considered, it will shape the foundations of the research thesis.

### Pedagogy and Purpose

Due to the nature of this thesis project and the ministry context, this section's goal is not to exhaust the subject of pedagogy but to provide a sufficient foundation for the context of curriculum design. In order to consider curriculum design and development, one must understand the art and purpose of education. David Lundie claims, "Pedagogy and purpose are interlinked."<sup>6</sup> If pedagogy and the purpose of education are interwoven, this section seeks to analyze the purpose behind education and practices linked to these purposes.

Generally speaking, pedagogy is typically understood to be the practice or science of education or instruction; however, the definition can vary between sources. Paul Black and

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<sup>6</sup> David Lundie, "Pedagogy and Purpose," *British Journal of Religious Education* vol 46, no. 1 (2024), 3.

Dylan William define pedagogy in a broader as “the act and discourse of teaching.”<sup>7</sup> Norm Friesen claims pedagogy is the following: “The practice of influencing someone (including oneself) with the intention of improving them, including also both informal and more theoretical reflection on this practice.”<sup>8</sup> But is education simply about influence for the sake of improvement? Gert Biesta suggests that the purpose of education is more existential than practical. Biesta gives the following purpose of education, “The point of education is that students learn something, that they learn it for a reason, and that they learn it from someone.”<sup>9</sup> Biesta further details this purpose in that education regards one’s discovery of existence and how one learns to exist.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, this individuation is a primary element of what Biesta calls the three domains of education, which consists of qualification, socialization, and subjectification.<sup>11</sup> Qualification concerns the capacities and skills necessary to show value in the individual’s context, socialization regards the impact of surroundings and culture both purposefully, indirectly, and directly; and subjectification is understood to be the individual’s discovery of self in their efforts to discover purpose in existence.<sup>12</sup>

In a different view, Jane Murray promotes four different, alliterated purposes for education-enhancement, equality, emancipation, and eudaemonia.<sup>13</sup> Murray frames this

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<sup>7</sup> Paul Black and Dyllan William, “Classroom Assessment and Pedagogy,” *Assessment in Education : Principles, Policy & Practice* vol. 25, no. 6 (2018), 555.

<sup>8</sup> Norm Friesen and Karsten Kenklies, “Continental Pedagogy & Curriculum,” *International Encyclopedia of Education* (2023), 245.

<sup>9</sup> Gert Biesta, “What is Education for?: On Good Education, Teacher Judgement, and Educational Professionalism,” *European Journal of Education* vol. 50, no. 1 (2015), 76

<sup>10</sup> Gert Biesta, *World-Centered Education: A View for the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>12</sup> Gert Biesta, *World-Centered Education: A View for the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 44–45.

<sup>13</sup> Jane Murray, “What is the Purpose of Education? A Context for Early Childhood Education,” *International Journal of Early Years Education* 31, no. 3 (2023), 572.

perspective to give a visual that supports education as the great need of society. Murray suggests, “Education must focus on nurturing and leveraging every individual’s personality, talents and abilities.”<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, her conclusion is that education is the right of every person and thereby enhances the society of the student as well as the individual student.<sup>15</sup> In comparison, Biesta’s view determines that education predominately is focused on the individual and their understanding of self, while Murray’s view focuses on the placement of the individual in society and the benefits of education in society. From a Christian perspective, Alex Sosler determines that education should purpose to benefit the church, self, and state.<sup>16</sup> He articulates, “The way this education occurs is with a robust understanding of personhood (*homo adorans*), aims (love of neighbor and God), and communities (the common good).”<sup>17</sup> This outlook balances the benefit to both self and society by fixating upon an inward-out perspective of education with the first focus dedicated to God’s purpose for each individual to God’s purpose for each individual towards society.

Styles and methods of teaching can appear to be varied within different settings, consequently, there are many pedagogical approaches to curriculum design; however, before these theories can be assessed, it must be stated that those instructing must have the capacity to embrace the subject matter properly. As an example, Dawn Morely and Golam Jamil argue that the use of inquiry and peer-based pedagogical approaches can be more effective in developing

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<sup>14</sup> Jane Murray, “What is the Purpose of Education? A Context for Early Childhood Education,” *International Journal of Early Years Education* 31, no. 3 (2023), 572.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Alex Sosler, “A Typology of Christian Higher Education: Analyzing the Purposes of Learning,” *Christian Higher Education* vol. 22, no. 2 (2023), 111.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

individuals learning skills.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, over the last several decades, policies that would pertain to neoliberal pedagogies have governed the educational domain.<sup>19</sup> Neoliberalism is the educational methodology that derives from an economic basis and pursues the values surrounding privatization and economization.<sup>20</sup> Zummy Anselmus Dami claims, “Neoliberal pedagogy is universal, neutral, removes democracy, emphasizes privatization, competition, compliance, and understands the teachers’ role and function as technicians or machines.”<sup>21</sup>

Thomas and Sarah Warner argue for an opposing pedagogical option, which they believe empowers educators and students alike by moving away from the rigidity of the neoliberal system to a critical pedagogical approach.<sup>22</sup> Warner and Warner contend that the neoliberal approach neglects and devalues the academic educator as well as emphasizes what to think as opposed to how to think.<sup>23</sup> Their view is that a critical pedagogy allows educators to produce more flexible assessments to allow the students to think more critically and be evaluated on personally rather than corporately.<sup>24</sup> Jacob Neumann believes that critical pedagogy applies a

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<sup>18</sup> Dawn Morley and Md Golam Jamil, *Applied Pedagogies for Higher Education: Real World Learning and Innovation Across the Curriculum* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2021), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Kirsty Jackson, “‘Over to You’: Considering the Purpose of Education through a Student-Centered Sustainability Project,” *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* vol. 39, no. 1 (2023), 68, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/over-you-considering-purpose-education-through/docview/2787810021/se-2>.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Giroux, *Neoliberalism’s War on Higher Education* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2014), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Zummy Anselmus Dami, Marlon Butarbutar, and Sri Wahyuni Kusradi, “Two Different Models of Pedagogy: Rethinking Teachers’ Pedagogy Competency in Christian Religious Education,” *International Journal of Christianity & Education* vol. 27, no. 2 (2023), 144.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Warner and Sarah Warner, “‘The Tensions Between Philosophies of Education and Critical Pedagogies in Neoliberal Higher Education,’” *Transitioning Students into Higher Education* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 134.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 123–24.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

belief that the student will continue to think critically rather than mechanically long after their departure from their instructor.<sup>25</sup>

Many articles can be found speaking of the views of neoliberal pedagogy and pedagogy; however, this section will now focus on biblical pedagogy. Dami argues that Christian educators should have a standard of pedagogy that would be of the highest quality as they are followers of the one with the greatest pedagogic aptitudes, Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup> In the spectrum of Christian higher education, Naomi Smith suggests that the biblical pedagogy or methodology of instruction at Christian Universities should prepare students who are “global-ready.”<sup>27</sup> She proposes that this methodology include practices that would do the following: “Shift to support those students who can skillfully and sensitively impact the world in our experiential cross-cultural, interfaith exchanges.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore, a Christian instructor must focus on competencies that would be of the highest quality, and Christian institutions should focus on developing students to embrace an international impact. If the focus of the college is to train laborers for the harvest, then the intent is international. The determination of the education at WCBC must then philosophically align with Smith’s suggestion of purposefully preparing globally prepared students.

### Curriculum Development and Design

The navigation that allows education to flow flawlessly into the minds, hearts, and hands of students is the curriculum. In developing a curriculum, Bok, makes suggestions for developing

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<sup>25</sup> Jacob Neumann, “Critical Pedagogy and Faith,” *Educational Theory* vol. 61, no. 5 (2011), 601, Wiley Online Library, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2011.00423.x>.

<sup>26</sup> Zummy Anselmus Dami, Marlon Butarbutar, and Sri Wahyuni Kusradi. “Two Different Models of Pedagogy: Rethinking Teachers’ Pedagogy Competency in Christian Religious Education,” *International Journal of Christianity & Education* vol. 27, no. 2 (2023), 144.

<sup>27</sup> Naomi Ludeman Smith, “Considering a Critical Ethnorelative Worldview Goal and Pedagogy for Global and Biblical Demands in Christian Higher Education,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* vol. 42, no. 4 (2013), 353.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

an internationalized curriculum. His thoughts on this curriculum development can be summarized in one question, “How can this curriculum adequately prepare students...?”<sup>29</sup> Patrick Blessinger articulates that curriculum design and designers should be preoccupied with understanding the needs of learners and developing that content, which connects with these students.<sup>30</sup> As designers of curriculum consider the needs of the learners, the implementation of the curriculum should be focused on learning outcomes that would measure the effectiveness of the developing curriculum. This implementation should deploy assessment tools that maximize the desired outcomes of all curricula in question. If the content of a learning center were input-based, there would be no ability to assess the effectiveness of the content. Student, institution, and program learning outcomes deploy an internal assessment of the context of the content and note the effectiveness of the curriculum based on the abilities of the learning to operate effectively in their learning environment.<sup>31</sup>

To prepare students effectively, the curriculum should be led by student learning outcomes (SLOs), and those SLOs should be consistent with the mission-based institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). These institutional outcomes or objectives are those proficiencies established as the goal of the scholarship at each institution.<sup>32</sup> Much like these desired proficiencies, regarding the nature of SLOs, Zhang communicates that SLOs represent the

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<sup>29</sup> Derek Bok, *Higher Expectations: Can Colleges Teach Students What They Need to Know in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 43.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick Blessinger Enakshi Sengupta, and Mandla Makhanya, eds. *Humanizing Higher Education through Innovative Approaches for Teaching and Learning* (Bingley, England: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021), 29.

<sup>31</sup> Barrio Minton, Casey A. Gibson, M. Donna, and Carrie A. Wachter Morris, *Evaluating Student Learning Outcomes in Counselor Education* (Newark: American Counseling Association, 2016), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>32</sup> Karen C. H. Zhoc, Tony S. H. Chung, and Ronnel B. King, “Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Self-Directed Learning: Examining their Relation and Contribution to Better Student Learning Outcomes in Higher Education,” *British Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 6 (2018), 988.

desired successes of the implementation of the curriculum as shown through the student's abilities in accomplishing the necessary educational requirements of the curriculum.<sup>33</sup> Enomoto and Warner argue that SLOs can provide the path in representing the product of the curriculum and, therefore, should be considered as the primary target of the education in proper academic settings.

Entrenched in the criteria of regional and most national academic accreditors would be a requirement for institutions to display SLOs within their given curriculum.<sup>34</sup> On a regional level, this is evidenced by standard 2.3 by the accrediting commission, Western Senior College, and University Commission, which expresses that an institution must demonstrate that SLOs are an applied means of assessing student success.<sup>35</sup> From a national level, TRACS articulates that SLOs must appear on three distinct planes within the academic organization-institutional, program, and course.<sup>36</sup> These objectives should be defined clearly and with ease of access to the student. A syllabus can be the primary placeholder for SLOs due to its nature as the first point of contact between the instructor and the learner.<sup>37</sup> Establishing the desired outcomes of a curriculum is a substantial aspect of curriculum development and should be a central focus in curriculum design.

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<sup>33</sup> Jianxin Zhang, "Research on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: Practical Exploration of the Review of CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Provider," *CHEA/CIQG Publication Series* (December 2017), 4.

<sup>34</sup> Nhung Tuyet Thi Pham and Binh Thanh Thi Nguyen, "Internal Quality Assurance of Institutional Learning Outcomes: United States Case Study and Implications for Vietnam Higher Education." *Vietnam Journal of Education* 5, no. 2 (2021), 1.

<sup>35</sup> "2023 Handbook of Accreditation," Handbooks, Western Senior College and University Commission, <https://www.wscuc.org/handbook2023/#standards-of-accreditation>.

<sup>36</sup> "Accreditation Manual: 2024 Edition," Publications and Resources, TRACS, [https://www.tracs.org/\\_files/ugd/a8a4b6\\_c89d620360ce41d88d690a0150af27d9.pdf](https://www.tracs.org/_files/ugd/a8a4b6_c89d620360ce41d88d690a0150af27d9.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> Jamie Wagner, Kathryn Smith, Chris Johnson, Michele Hilaire, and Melissa Medina, "Best Practices in Syllabus Design," *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* vol. 87, no. 3 (2023), 432.

The involvement of administration and faculty as a community of support in the development of curriculum can be a massive benefit. A higher education counseling concentration was developed in a program in Central Texas to fit the needs of the Latinx community.<sup>38</sup> In establishing this program, the counseling faculty sought the support of the administration and staff, which benefited in affirming and establishing the need for the concentration as well as setting goals for the new concentration.<sup>39</sup> This collaboration between faculty and administration brought about the succinct verification that was needed to create that which was an effective system within its setting.

In a separate study completed at Midwestern University, employers and alumni were surveyed to understand basic competencies and attributes in order to support a curriculum redesign for a course in business communication.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the researchers, Rachel Dolechek and Kruti Lehenbauer, claimed the following, “Completing this study allowed faculty the vision needed to draft updated course objectives, revise course materials, and plan for discussions with internal stakeholders.”<sup>41</sup> This study sets a precedent for the development of the proposed curriculum through college alumni. Interviews with alumni can demonstrate the overall effect of the education implemented at any particular university, as alumni are that institution’s product. Therefore, if education methods need to shift or a new curriculum needs to be developed, alumni could be most fitting mouth pieces of the change that is necessary.

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<sup>38</sup> Stephanie Ramirez, Gena St. David, “Implementing a Latinx Counseling Concentration within a CACREP Program,” *Counselor Education and Supervision* 60, no. 3 (2021), 194.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>40</sup> Rachel Dolechek, and Kruti Lehenbauer, “Rebuilding from the Ground Up: Employer and Alumni Perspectives for Course Redesign,” *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* vol. 86, no. 1 (2023), 76.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.



## Education and Development

People who value their faith system seek support from their pastoral or ministry mentors.<sup>42</sup> Often, the literature notes that ministerial counselors feel the lack of authority for counseling based upon a gap in training.<sup>43</sup> Brad Johnson concludes that ministry leaders must acknowledge the areas in which they lack educational authority due to the lack of classes provided in their training.<sup>44</sup> There is evidence of a growing need for seminaries and ministry education systems to provide a strong education to ministry leaders regarding this type of integration. This area of literature will discover what is said about the education of the pastoral counselor and the need for further development. The usefulness of a minister's service is often based on the preparation that they have been given. Whether it is self-study or part of an advanced element within education, the ministry counselor must be well-equipped and prepared to handle the advanced topics of his or her day.<sup>45</sup>

The theologian John Behr wrote, "The task of education is not to enable students to answer questions that arise today, but to be able to respond to those that will be raised in decades to come."<sup>46</sup> Within this theory lies the nature of what has been written about further development. Admonishment has been placed upon the ministry or pastoral care giver to further their training in counseling and prepare for the questions that will arise tomorrow. Stewart-Sicking calls for extended training of those in pastoral counseling roles to be more well-equipped

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<sup>42</sup> Clyde M. Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling*, 15

<sup>43</sup> Richard Laverne Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation on the Role of the Pastoral Counselor," 34.

<sup>44</sup> W. Brad Johnson and William L. Johnson, *The Minister's Guide*, 212.

<sup>45</sup> Mussa Kilengi, "Need for further Training in Counselling Techniques and Approaches for Pastoral Counselling Providers in the ELCT – CD," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 3, no. 13 (2023), 686.

<sup>46</sup> John Behr, "Theological Education in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2020), 2.

in psychospiritual themes.<sup>47</sup> This continued development is called for due to the rising call for help in the counseling spectrum.

If there is no preparation for the questions that may arise, how will the pastoral and ministry counselor be able to fulfill the concern of Peter, who charges believers to be prepared to give an answer regarding the innate hope of the believer (1 Pet 3:15). As an immense of a task that lies before counselors who advise the very image-bearers of God, it is essential that they be equipped through further development to communicate the truth of the hope of Christ-enabled change.<sup>48</sup> This type of development is at the heart of the surrounding literature. Klemashevich developed a study regarding the remediation of Christian counseling trainees. Within this study, he remarked that these students who continue to develop counseling aptitudes are learning to demonstrate Christian love through proficiently applying proper counseling techniques.<sup>49</sup>

Individuals want to know that they are being counseled by a capable and knowledgeable individual. The drive for further development in the literature is evident. Brad Johnson articulates that ministers are often the first line of defense in the life of a believer and must demonstrate an even basic understanding of counseling competencies.<sup>50</sup> Richard Fowler expresses that a need for continued development is essential to be able to respond in a fashion that would represent Scripture and basic ethics.<sup>51</sup> As therapists are required to reaffirm their ability to practice through continued education, Siang-Yang Tan believes there is an essential

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph Stewart-Sicking, Jesse Fox, and Paul J. Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy*, 40.

<sup>48</sup> Jamie M. Klemashevich, "An Integrative Approach to the Remediation of Student Trainees in Christian Counseling Programs," *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 40, no. 3 (2021), 239.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Johnson and Johnson, *The Minister's Guide*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Richard A. Fowler and Natalie Ford, *Grace-Based Counseling: An Effective New Biblical Model* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2021), 14.

need for pastoral counselors to continue development in this area due to ever-changing laws or revisions in codes of conduct.<sup>52</sup> The Bible commands that all things should be done with excellence (Eccl 9:10), and thereby Perry Glanzer supposes that the hunt for quality and merit is a distinction of a Christian.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the suggestion of the literature is the continued educational development of those caring for others. In this further development, Scott proposes that continued counselor preparation engages all elements of the human instrument- the mind, the spirit, the emotions, the experiences, and the worldview.<sup>54</sup>

### Personal Values

Personal values often are the influencers for decisions, and thereby, personal values have their given place in current literature within the counseling context. Stewart-Sicking, a counseling educator and expert on faith-based integration, observes that growing and developing within a spiritual environment has a tremendous impact on individual insights and personal values.<sup>55</sup> Cantoni determines that beliefs and values will ultimately heavily interpret one's own social and political systems.<sup>56</sup> Much like the unfeigned faith of Timothy, which was passed down from his mother and grandmother (1 Tim 1:5), most values are derived from childhood background in a particular religious or cultural context and steers one to the proper guides when in search for wisdom or instruction. Stewart-Sicking would ultimately conclude, "Our client's

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<sup>52</sup> Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 452.

<sup>53</sup> Perry L Glanzer, Hina Abel, Emma Cartisano, Kevin O'Donoghue, Austin Smith, Madeline Whitmore, and David Winkler, "Christ-Animated Graduate Education in America: Can We Redeem a Protestant Failure?" *International journal of Christianity & Education*. 26, no. 3 (2022), 226.

<sup>54</sup> Seth L. Scott, "Balancing Discipleship and Gatekeeping in Counselor Education," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 39, no. 2 (Summer, 2020), 104.

<sup>55</sup> Stewart-Sicking, Fox, and Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy*, 13.

<sup>56</sup> Davide Cantoni, Yuyu Chen, David Y. Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y. Jane Zhang, "Curriculum and Ideology," *Journal of Political Economy* 125, no. 2 (2017) 339, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26550398>.

lived religion or spirituality should be our guide; the traditions they consider authoritative are ones we should build some familiarity with.”<sup>57</sup>

Personal values determine the worldview of each individual, and for this reason, authors and experts in the counseling arena heed the importance of the values of the individual.<sup>58</sup> Lasair describes the good things that are pursued by individuals as moral aims and as their experiences eventually determine their worldview.<sup>59</sup> According to Johannessen, many of these moral aims are areas in which the individual has learned from a predecessor or mentor (including parents).<sup>60</sup>

As in any area of life, the Bible confirms that the way an individual thinks will determine the outcome of his or her actions (Prov 23:7). Consequently, the counseling session pivots upon an understanding of the counselee’s worldview.<sup>61</sup> Clyde Narramore, the founder of the Rosamead School of Psychology at BIOLA<sup>62</sup>, articulated the need for understanding of personal values as these values can take a common condition or situation and present it in a unique fashion through the eyes of the client or counselee.<sup>63</sup> As with any profession, there is a need to grasp the subject at hand fully, and in the counseling relationship, the subject is the client, congregant, or patient seeking help. Therefore, the literature would convey that is of great value to clearly understand the impact of a worldview.

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<sup>57</sup> Stewart-Sicking, Fox, and Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy*, 40.

<sup>58</sup> Wilkins, “Educating the Congregation on the Role of the Pastoral Counselor,” 61.

<sup>59</sup> Simon Lasair, “What’s the Point of Clinical Pastoral Education and Pastoral Counselling Education? A Narrative Response,” *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, vol. 73, no. 2 (2019), 116.

<sup>60</sup> Dagny Johannessen, “Developing a Methodology for the Moral Education of Active Bystanders: A System Perspective,” *Kybernetes* vol. 46, no. 2 (February 2017), 224.

<sup>61</sup> Fowler and Ford, *Grace-Based Counseling*, 21.

<sup>62</sup> “History,” Rosamead School of Psychology, BIOLA University, <https://www.biola.edu/rosemead/about/history>, accessed August 6, 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Clyde M. Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling: Professional Techniques for Pastors, Teachers, Youth Leaders, and All Who Are Engaged in the Incomparable Art of Counseling* (Barakaldo Books, May 2020), 79.

The literature acknowledges the importance of religion, faith, and spirituality and notes the need for counselors to be more acclimated toward these values.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, due to the faith backgrounds of individuals, the Christian minister is often the first line of defense in the areas of grief, misfortune, and confusion.<sup>65</sup> Those individuals who prescribe to a branch of spirituality or faith will often rely on that faith as a comfort-blanket for the struggles of life. Frequently, an individual's faith turns into the coping mechanism that enables them to navigate the circumstances of this life.<sup>66</sup>

The focus on individual personal values often leads the counselor to decide to incorporate their values into a course of action for effective change. Jones reflects upon how goals can demonstrate personal values as they demonstrate the true desires of the individuals.<sup>67</sup> Sonia Waters, an associate professor of pastoral theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, wrote, "Spirituality— or beliefs about what is sacred in one's life— can become an organizing value: it can help to integrate one's aspirations and goals into a coherent life-plan, providing daily direction and guidance."<sup>68</sup> The pastoral, Christian, or ministry counselor can thereby be an instrument towards the progression of an individual by tapping into the determined faith of their client or congregant and directing them towards emotional, social, and psychological relief but also transitioning suffering to spiritual growth and maturity.<sup>69</sup> If a counselor can connect with the

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<sup>64</sup> Jacqueline Williams-Reade, Elsie Lobo, Gabriela Gutierrez, "Integrating Spirituality into MFT Training: A Reflexive Curriculum and Qualitative Evaluation," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 45 (April 201), 220.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson and Johnson, *The Minister's Guide to Psychological Disorders and Treatments*, 8.

<sup>66</sup> Alise Murray, Nancy Steinberg Warren, Katherine Bosanko, and Lori Williamson Dean, "Genetic Counseling Graduate Training to Address Religion and Spirituality in Clinical Practice: A Qualitative Exploration of Programs in North America," *Journal of Genetic Counseling* 29, no. 6 (2020), 1245.

<sup>67</sup> Jones, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 493.

<sup>68</sup> Sonia E. Waters, *Addiction and Pastoral Care* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), 104.

<sup>69</sup> Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 31.

values of the individual, he or she can tap into the very heart of how an individual makes decisions or determinations of truth. Jones reflects upon the need in certain settings for the counselee to self-evaluate. Within this evaluation, the counselee walks through goals they have set in a myriad of subjects. In this discussion, the counselor can determine what that individual values.<sup>70</sup>

### Distinction of Pastoral Counseling

A major theme that arose within the literature surrounding the field of counseling is the distinctiveness of pastoral counseling. As this research project is not designed to build a curriculum for licensed, mental health counseling, pastoral counseling became a necessary topic to investigate. Ultimately, the apostle Paul drew attention to the need for those in pastoral care to take heed to the flock and to shepherd the flock as overseers (Acts 20:28). W. Brad Johnson, Ph.D., who serves as a professor of psychology in the United States Naval Academy, made the distinction that pastors have the burden and charge to shepherd the community.<sup>71</sup> The burdens expressed by the community become the burdens of the ministerial counselor and, thereby, those who minister within a community must be aware to the health needs of that same community.<sup>72</sup> A minister who does not possess the ability to be aware will lack the ability to bear the burdens of their community fully. Lasair considers awareness to be a key trait of pastoral counselors and is an essential attribute necessary to operating as the complete care-giver.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Jones, Kellen, Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 493.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson and Johnson, *The Minister's Guide*, 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>73</sup> Simon Lasair, "What's the Point of Clinical Pastoral Education and Pastoral Counselling Education? Political, Developmental, and Professional Considerations," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* vol. 74, no. 1 (2020), 23.

The most basic understanding of the pastoral distinction is the ability of the minister to see the need, especially in the life of an individual.<sup>74</sup> Often, a great amount of spiritual discernment that exists within this ability. That same spiritual discernment disseminates from an individual wholly given to the Bible, and the instruction received from thorough study.<sup>75</sup> This ideation (regarding the education of the minister from Scripture), however, is not original to the literature surrounding counseling but to Paul's charge to Timothy to study the Scripture in order to be equipped for the work God intended (2 Tim 2:15; 3:16–17).

Within the scope of pastoral counseling is the observed focus of the counselor. Chris Leins, a licensed professional counselor, described the focus and distinction of the pastoral counselor and wrote, "The focus of the pastor in 'counseling' is the message of the cross, and the foremost priority of his work is articulating that message well."<sup>76</sup> Jones agrees with this assessment but includes that this focus must be on the redeeming quality of Christ's work.<sup>77</sup> Within this consideration is a message that promotes engagement toward spiritual formation, which should be a distinctive focus of the Christian counselor's growth in and through the work of Christ.<sup>78</sup>

The first two sections have dealt predominately with personal values and the distinctiveness of ministry counseling. Within the discussions of personal values and the distinctiveness of pastoral or ministry counseling commences a conversation of integration of

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<sup>74</sup> Clyde M. Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling*, 10. The author notes the parallel of the minister to Christ due to the focus of Christ's ministry towards individuals.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>76</sup> Chris J. K. Leins, "What Makes Pastoral Counseling so Pastoral? Distinguishing between Pastoral Care and Clinical Practice in Modern Life," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 40, no. 4 (Winter, 2021), 344.

<sup>77</sup> Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 18.

<sup>78</sup> Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 30.

spirituality and psychology. The literature often answers the question of the necessity of integration for the non-faith-based (i.e., secular) and ministerial institutions. William Hathaway defines integration as the following: “The attempt to synthesize, mutually accommodate, correlate, or complement psychology from an authentic Christian perspective.”<sup>79</sup> This synthesis will be the topic of discussion in the following sections.

### Integration

There is a fine balance between empirical sciences, therapies, and practices within psychology and spiritual guidance that is produced by the Bible. Often, this balance is where the controversies lie in wait for further discussion. Siang Tan, a professor of psychology at Fuller Seminary and an expert in biblical integration, made an assessment of integration, which viewed psychology as an important element in human development but yielded all findings to the authority of Scripture.<sup>80</sup> From the Christian perspective, this gives a working process; however, some of the literature surrounding the secular perspective would identify integration as an individual’s ability to pull from the supply of spiritual or religious assets in order to fulfill the proper therapy in the patient or client’s life.<sup>81</sup> From the ministerial perspective, spiritual growth is the aim; however, non-faith based counselors are neutral towards spiritual gain but have determination to see personal development in the life of a client.<sup>82</sup> This provides the basis for the next elements of the discussion within the literature contexts of competencies with regard to both mental health and spiritual spectrums.

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<sup>79</sup> William Hathaway, “Integration, Biblical Counseling, and Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* vol. 39, no. 3 (2021), 257.

<sup>80</sup> Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 403.

<sup>81</sup> Andrzej Jastrzębski, “Models of Psycho-Spiritual Care: Responding to the Spiritual Needs of Our Contemporaries,” *Studia Elckie* 23, no. 2 (2021), 174.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.



The challenge of integration resides within the competency levels of both clinicians in the arena of religious and spiritual capacities and ministers in the understanding of mental health contexts. There is a strong connection between personal faith values and positive outcomes from a mental health standpoint.<sup>83</sup> Thereby, Alise Murray reveals that some healthcare providers have been integrating religious and spiritual themes into their training.<sup>84</sup> Others have noted the importance of continued development into religion and spiritual themes to understand the context of their clients and patients better and provide more holistic care to these individuals.<sup>85</sup> Comprehensively, the literature suggests the continued development of religious and spiritual competency to understand the full extent of the client's worldview or personal values.

As literature confirms the need for mental health professionals to incorporate spirituality and religion into their practice, there also lies a discussion regarding the need for ministry counselors to integrate themes and developments from the discipline of psychology into their counseling practice.<sup>86</sup> Chris Leins articulates that this type of integration has the potential of stripping the distinctiveness of the pastoral position and thereby ascertains that suffering in the life of a Christian is not a symptom to treat but a reason for elation in the work of God's grace within the sanctifying process.<sup>87</sup> His continued perspective is that the pastor or minister does not need to utilize specific types of therapy to ease the suffering in an individual; simply put, his ideation is one that would isolate the minister from fulfilling counseling duties. John Klaasen,

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<sup>83</sup> Stewart-Sicking, Fox, and Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy*, 73. Positive outcomes were noted in the areas of substance abuse, PTSD, dementia, depression, suicide, and stress reduction.

<sup>84</sup> Murray, Warren, Bosanko, and Dean. "Genetic Counseling Graduate Training," 1246.

<sup>85</sup> Williams-Reade, Jacqueline, Elsie Lobo, Gabriela Gutierrez, "Integrating Spirituality into MFT Training: A Reflexive Curriculum and Qualitative Evaluation," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 45 (April 2021), 228.

<sup>86</sup> Stewart-Sicking, Fox, and Deal, *Bringing Religion and Spirituality into Therapy*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> Chris J. K. Leins, "Distinguishing between Pastoral Care and Clinical Practice in Modern Life," 353.

professor of global studies at Boyce College, refutes this by articulating that the pastoral position has transitioned from that which is isolated to the “centrality of experience.”<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, the pastoral position has taken Christ’s hands-on approach by dealing with the depths of individual lives throughout the course of His earthly ministry.<sup>89</sup> Kim states that the growth that Christians need is one that is bathed in both conceptual and perceptual learning.<sup>90</sup> The pastoral position is to lead by shepherding individuals through their unique experiences.

### **Theological Foundations**

The nature of this DMIN action project presents two major components: education and counseling. As already discussed, the theological positioning of WCBC is of the greatest importance. Consequently, the theological framework that will be examined in this section is exceptionally significant to the purpose of the project. The theological framework established in this section will review how the education of counselors in the ministry context has its foundations within the principles found in Scripture. Specific focus will be placed on the need for continual development as a disciple, the foundations that exist for counseling, and the distinct methods of biblical counseling. The need to develop a curriculum is directly correlated with the need to continue to grow and develop as a disciple. Scriptural foundations will help the reader acknowledge the precedent and need for disciples to know how to counsel from biblical truth.

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<sup>88</sup> John S. Klaasen, “Pastoral Care and Narrative : Towards a Narrative Pastoral Care Approach in Intercultural Communities,” *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 54, no. 1 (2020), 7.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson and Johnson, *The Minister’s Guide*, 3.

<sup>90</sup> Jonathan Kim, James R. Estep, *Christian Formation : Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Prague: B&H Publishing Group), accessed October 13, 2023, ProQuest Ebook Central, 1897c

### Continual Development

Foundationally, the story of man’s origin is due to the willingness of God to create man in His own image (Gen. 1:26). In God’s image, man is able, like his Creator, to process reason, think independently, and seek out wisdom. Manuel Fasko argues, “Each human being has God-like cognitive capacities and thus the potential to imitate divine wisdom in thought and action as a proficient causal reasoner.”<sup>91</sup> Man’s ability to think, reason, and search out truth directly correlates with the initial (and continuing) purpose God designated for mankind. God’s design was for man to have complete dominion over all His creation (Gen 1:26–28). On this topic, George Hobson and William Edgar write the following:

Because [man] is given moreover the mandate to exercise dominion over the creation and is therefore designed to be able to know it, possesses in consequence the rational capacity, through mathematics, to do, among other things, what we call science, that is, to fruitfully investigate God’s handiwork that we call nature and to discover its inner workings and laws.<sup>92</sup>

The task of man is thereby to continue to grow and develop so that he may further out the original task, which God designed for man. If the mind was part of the likeness man has with the Almighty, then the responsibility of man is to continue to search out truth to fulfill the original task that God ordained at man’s inception- to have dominion over all things better.

The ability to exercise man’s likeness with God in pursuing his purpose continues as one commences in a relationship with Christ. Unquestionably, the focus of the Great Commission is the further education of disciples (Matt 28:19–20). Pertaining to this great final command of Christ, Craig Blomberg states, “The main command of Christ’s commission is ‘make disciples’

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<sup>91</sup> Manuel Fasko, “‘God Said, ‘Let Us make Man in our Image After our Likeness’ - Mary Shepherd, the Imago-Dei-Thesis, and the Human Mind,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* vol. 31, no. 3 (2023), 480.

<sup>92</sup> George Hobson, and William Edgar, *Imago Dei: Man/woman Created in the Image of God : Implications for Theology, Pastoral Care, Eucharist, Apologetics, Aesthetics* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2019), 13.

(*mathēteusate*).<sup>93</sup> Christ’s instruction to make disciples is ultimately furthered by His directive to educate them to further follow both His example and commands. There is an acknowledgment in this passage that making disciples is more than the conversion of the soul.<sup>94</sup> The disciple of Christ is not just to believe in Christ but also to follow Christ. The word “teaching” (Matt 28:20, KJV) acknowledges the enduring challenge of the disciple to continue growing in the knowledge of the Savior and His ways.<sup>95</sup> Paul and Peter would encourage this growth of knowledge as seen within their letters to the first-century Christians (Col 1:10; 2 Peter 3:18). Thomas Schreiner states, “Grace and peace will be amplified in knowing Jesus Christ as God and Savior. Everything needed for life and godliness is available through knowing God. Growing in knowledge is necessary for living the Christian life.”<sup>96</sup>

The writer of Hebrews recognizes a fault amongst his subjects of merely being content with a surface-level understanding of God’s Word.<sup>97</sup> The writer of Hebrews rebukes the audience for the lack of pursuing deeper truths of Scripture (Heb 5:11–14). He challenges them with the analogy of ‘milk’ versus ‘meat’. The milk represents the Christian who is without exercise in the matters of the Word of God. Donald Guthrie determines that these are Christians who are

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<sup>93</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 431.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 401.

<sup>97</sup> Robert W. Wall, *Colossians & Philemon*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Col 1:9–11.

unpracticed.<sup>98</sup> He further conveys, “The things of God require something more than a nodding acquaintance.”<sup>99</sup>

Peter expresses that the Christian should be equipped to provide an answer to any soul who demands an explanation of the intrinsic hope of the believer (1 Pet 3:15). Within this challenge is an obvious and apparent need for preparation to answer such a one.<sup>100</sup> Thomas Schreiner states, “Every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.”<sup>101</sup> At the fulcrum of all Christian faith is Scripture. Paul instructed Timothy to commit to the continual study of the truths of Scripture (2 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 3:16–17). Robert Yarborough observes, “The cognitive and pedagogical foundation for what pastors feed their minds and souls with and commend to their people and the world is the Scriptures.”<sup>102</sup> Of course, Christ states that the Word of God is the means of sanctification (John 17:17).<sup>103</sup> Continual development in the Word helps the believer to express the hope that exists within the life of the Christian better.

### Foundations for Counseling

Hope is the basis for all counseling. Without hope, men are left to their own misfortunes, distresses, and crises without any form of resolution. The Scripture provides hope because it

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<sup>98</sup> Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 138.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 1 Pe 3:15–16.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 175.

<sup>102</sup> Robert W. Yarborough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus, Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2018), 430.

<sup>103</sup> Bruce Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King!: With Study Guide, The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 246.

enables the emotionally fatigued and weary soul to glance at the Savior and find that He is the personification of hope (1 Tim 1:1; Titus 2:13; Heb 6:18–20). The 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Psalms were originally composed as one poem, which Derek Kidner states as, “One of the most sadly beautiful [poems] in the Psalter.”<sup>104</sup> Three times within this singular poem, he states, “Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him” (Ps 42:5, 11; 43:5, KJV). Tremper Longman expressed, “He wonders why he is so depressed and then urges himself to hope, to envision a time when his relationship with God will be restored. He will indeed one day praise God again.”<sup>105</sup> Jeremiah expressed this hope in the moment of extreme sadness as he wrote the book of Lamentations (Lam 3:24). The strength of Jeremiah’s hope did not rest in a concept or a fleeting wish but in the fact that his God (unlike other gods) was completely dependable.<sup>106</sup> The Christian is enabled to convey the same hope that lies within as he or she continues to develop in his or her understanding of that hope in and through Christ.

The Scripture speaks of the hope of Christians that becomes the anchor for the soul. David Allen states that the writer’s use of the anchor analogy would be more personalized in the early church as it was a common symbol amongst Christians.<sup>107</sup> He further writes, “Several pictures of anchors can be found in the Roman catacombs.”<sup>108</sup> An anchor produces safety, security, and stability. Constancy in the midst of chaotic weather and treacherous conditions is

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<sup>104</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 182.

<sup>105</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, vols. 15–16, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. David G. Firth, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 195.

<sup>106</sup> F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, vol. 16, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 474.

<sup>107</sup> David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 401.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

the unique working of the anchor.<sup>109</sup> In the first century, the church faced severe and treacherous persecution, and yet, their belief in Christ became the anchor of their soul. Hope in Christ provides the essential constancy and security in the midst of the raging storm. The writer of Hebrews utilizes the word ‘soul’ (Gk. ψυχη) in Hebrews 6:19 to provide a holistic view of the impact of this hope. When Christians are focused on Christ as the source of their stability and strength, they can experience the victory that hope can provide.

The biblical concept of hope drives the counseling session. Hope in Christ provides peace through Christ. Counseling focuses on human harmony between the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects. Noel Due reflects upon the nature of counseling and observes that the foundations of counseling are established in the foundations of mankind’s purpose as beings. He states, “We must begin at the beginning. ‘Who are we?’ cannot be answered biblically, except in terms of ‘Who have we been created to be?’”<sup>110</sup> The book of Genesis allows the reader to draw attention to the creative origins of mankind when God made man in his image and likeness (Gen 1:26–27). An implication of this formation is the ability of man to engage in a relationship with God. Due remarks, “They have been made as sons and daughters of God, to relate to God as Father and to live in the communion of his family.”<sup>111</sup>

God further developed people to be relational beings (Gen 1:27; 2:18). Functioning, both personally and relationally, among the image bearers of God represents the harmony of the functioning between the members of the Godhead.<sup>112</sup> The purpose of harmony was broken by the fall. The fall brought about sin and judgment to the world (Rom 5:18, 19). Derek Kidner

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<sup>109</sup> Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, 156.

<sup>110</sup> Noel Due, “Pastoral Counseling: Biblical Foundations and Framework,” *Reformation and Revival* vol 13, 2 (Spring 2004), 44.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

remarks, “It took the work of the last Adam to bring home to us our full downfall in the first Adam.”<sup>113</sup> Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Paul defines this summarization as “the gospel” [1 Cor 15:1–5, KJV]) gave the disciples the opportunity to find that purposed harmony in the person of Christ (Rom 5:1–2; John 14:27). Through Christ, men find peace and purpose. Outside of Christ, are conflicts from within the individual and within the corporate body of Christ (Rom 7:23–25; 1 Cor 3:3).

Counseling from a biblical perspective takes hold of the power of Christ, through His Word and His gospel, to bring harmony and peace back into the life of His disciples. Counseling can be found throughout Scripture. Solomon gives wise counsel to his son, Rehoboam, throughout the book of Proverbs (Prov 1:8,10; 2:1; 3:1, 11). George Schwab states of Proverbs, “Wisdom is a matter of reverencing God and learning how to live a righteous life before him.”<sup>114</sup> Keith Evans defines counseling biblically simply as, “The discipline of rightly understanding the biblical text and applying it to circumstances in life.”<sup>115</sup> Solomon’s wise and applicable counsel lives through the preserved text, and modern disciples have a primary source of counseling instruction. Although he was imperfect and betrayed David, Ahithophel was viewed as a wise counselor in the Old Testament. (2 Sam 16:23). Joyce Baldwin remarks, “His advice was accepted with all the authority normally reserved for the word of God himself!”<sup>116</sup> Isaiah proclaims the ability to have peace through the power of God (Isa 57:19). Ultimately, the Lord

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<sup>113</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 72.

<sup>114</sup> George M. Schwab, “The Book of Proverbs,” vol 7., in *The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 471.

<sup>115</sup> Keith Evans, “Biblical Counseling: A Discipline,” *Reformed Presbyterian Theological Journal*, vol. 5, 2 (Spring 2019), 28.

<sup>116</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 8, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 283.



promises healing and a route to personal wholeness.<sup>117</sup> Gary Smith states, “Everything that caused heartache, pain, violence, oppression, and loss in the past will be removed so that God’s healing power might transform this evil world and create a new world based on his grace. This is all the work of God. Thanks be to God!”<sup>118</sup>

In the New Testament, Christ spends the better part of His time in earthly ministry counseling twelve men (Matt 10:1–4; Mark 3:14). He displayed the type of intense discipleship that would be parallel to the counseling session. Christ’s instruction through the lens of John’s Gospel illustrates the investment of the Savior (John 13:1–17; 14:1–17; 21:15–19). He compels His followers to love others as He displayed love toward them (John 13:34; 15:12). This instruction was followed immediately by the illustration of his own instruction, the crucifixion (John 19:16–30). Of these passages, Borchert includes, “It is clear that self-sacrifice as understood by John did not arise from a philosophical ideal but from the actual self-giving death of Jesus. Such a death is the ultimate measure of love, and thus Jesus indicated that no other love surpasses such love.”<sup>119</sup> His investment in the disciples was an investment of self. Henrichsen observed, “When we invest in the lives of other people, we transmit not only what we know but, more importantly, what we are.”<sup>120</sup> Christ was not only transmitting knowledge but His own character (1 John 4:8). This is the duty

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<sup>117</sup> J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 406.

<sup>118</sup> Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 566.

<sup>119</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12*, vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), Logos Edition.

<sup>120</sup> Walter Henrichsen, *Disciples Are Made Not Born* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2018), 10.

bestowed upon all counselors, to not only bestow the knowledge of Christ but their own character through investing of self.

His counseling ministry also permeated into the lives of those with difficult situations. The Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1–42) is the prime example of Christ’s ability to listen patiently. Gerald Bochert recognizes that Jesus established a pattern of listening without judging, condemning, or arguing. “Jesus did not argue with the presuppositions of Nicodemus (John 3:2) and the paralytic (5:7); Jesus did not argue with the woman here. The point is not winning arguments but introducing people to the dimension of God in their lives.”<sup>121</sup> Christ was able to empathize and direct the woman (and all others who He counseled) to the identity of their true need. This Samaritan woman thirsted for love, acceptance, and value. Jesus presented all three, and she walked away whole (John 4:7–27). Instead of casting her away for the sin she had committed (John 4:17–19), Jesus showed mercy and offered her what she desperately needed—the living water (John 4:13–14).

Pauline literature often concentrated on the thought patterns of the first-century churches. He engages the believers at Ephesus and challenges them to have a committed renewal process of the mind (Eph 4:23). The continuous need for renewal is noted in the apostle’s use of the present tense.<sup>122</sup> The church at Philippi was generally a well-functioning church; however, two women, namely Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2–3), needed reconciliation from an apparent quarrel. In discussing this specific occurrence in Scripture, Richard Melick proposes that this disagreement between the two was more than the average quarrel and could have, hypothetically,

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<sup>121</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, vol. 25A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 207.

<sup>122</sup> Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 137.

caused a divide within the church.<sup>123</sup> He further states, “It was divisive enough to cause the church to write to Paul about it; the entire church was asked to intercede on behalf of these women; and the fellowship and ministry of the church faced a major crisis because of it.”<sup>124</sup> The solution Paul designates begins in the second chapter of his letter when he states, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...” (Phil 2:5, KJV). The obvious need for these prominent women was to observe the way they thought and shift towards Christ-focused thinking. He begins his conclusion by exhausting a list of virtues they should be contemplating (Phil 4:8). These virtues would create peace in the minds of the disciple but also enable the disciple to live lives of obedience toward their master, Christ.

#### Methods of Pastoral Counseling

As already discussed, the fall of mankind has shaken the harmony in life God purposed for His image-bearing creation. Therefore, it is essential for ministry workers to understand how to respond to battles of the mind, soul, and spirit, which come because of the effects of sin. In response to the need for counselors in ministry who are well equipped to discern how to counsel some of the difficulties that exist relationally, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally; David Powlison articulates, “[Counseling] is a relational and pastoral enterprise engaging in care and cure of the soul.”<sup>125</sup> As this project is not in efforts to train mental health counselor’s but to train those of a pastoral nature, this section will focus solely on pastoral counseling rather than the wider range of mental health counseling.

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<sup>123</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 146.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> David Powlison, *The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 19.

The duty of the counselor is pastoral by nature and is rooted in the guidance of souls toward balance and peace of the soul and mind.<sup>126</sup> The church and ministry represent the greatest hub for the guidance of souls toward peace through the power of the gospel. It is critical, then for the individuals who have a part in ministry work to be involved in the practice of soul-care through the ministry of pastoral counseling. At the heart of this level of soul-care and counseling is the Word of God. Eric Johnson states, “Understanding Scripture promotes our understanding of God, ourselves, and the way of salvation, so it is indispensable for our psychospiritual well-being (and for Christian soul care).”<sup>127</sup>

Heath Lambert expresses a simple view from his perspective of counseling. He states, “Counseling is a conversation where one party with questions, problems, and trouble seeks assistance from someone they believe has answers, solutions, and help.”<sup>128</sup> While this definition is less complex, it sets the stage perfectly for the model Lambert proposes of counseling is rooted in the theology found in Scripture. He continues, “God prescribes a solution to our problems—faith in Christ—and reveals him to us in the Scriptures. God authorizes a process of transformation and shows us what it looks like in the pages of the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>129</sup> Herein lies the argument Lambert will inevitably make, “Counseling success that honors Christ, is based in the Word, and leads to qualitative and lasting change in the heart of a person.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Powlison, *The Pastor as Counselor*, 19.

<sup>127</sup> Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul-Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), location 387 of 9694, Kindle Edition.

<sup>128</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 13.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>130</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 24.

Life's events have a distinct custom of shaping the aspects through which an individual visualizes reality. As discussed in the literature review section, personal values shape the counselee. The primary focus of the individual is associated with their life goals and motivations. Those motivations drive the individual towards action, which breeds experience. Lasair would note that moral judgment of self is the product of how one visualizes oneself in light of their experiences while navigating and pursuing their own moral goals.<sup>131</sup> Often, the course by which life proceeds will either enhance or distort one's paradigm by which they conceptualize their surroundings. Proper Christian counseling motivates the counselee to view life's circumstances and troubles through the lens of Scripture. Jay Adams, writer of several Christian counseling books, described scriptural counseling as the following:

Counseling that is truly scriptural is motivated by the Scriptures, founded *presuppositionally* upon the Scriptures, structured by the goals and objectives of the Scriptures, and developed systematically in terms of the practices and principles modeled and enjoined in the Scriptures.<sup>132</sup>

Every single structure relies upon the foundation. If the foundation is weak, then the structure will also be regarded as weak. The strongest foundations are only found upon the truth of God's Word. God's Word supplies the necessary ingredients for sanctification and spiritual formation (John 17:17). The psalmist declared that the Word of God was like a lamp providing light for the path (Ps 119:10). Adam's perspective is that Scripture is not simply a good tool for counselors but is the only tool that can adequately benefit both the counselor and the counselee. Paige Patterson asks, "What exactly can the soft sciences deliver that is not already available in a

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<sup>131</sup> Simon Lasair, "What's the Point of Clinical Pastoral Education and Pastoral Counseling Education? A Narrative Response," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* vol. 73, no. 2 (2019), 116.

<sup>132</sup> Jay Adams, "The Use of the Scriptures in Counseling Part I: Christian Counseling Is Scriptural," *Bibliotheca Sacra* vol. 131, 521 (January 1974), 17.

proper relationship to God and commitment to His instruction in the Bible?”<sup>133</sup> Patterson’s question epitomizes the argument of those who seek to administer the type of counsel argued for by Jay Adams.

Jay Adams is associated with the term ‘Nouthetic’ counseling, which originates from his book *Competent to Counsel*. Nouthetic has its root in the Greek verb *νουθετέω* (*noutheteo*) found eight times in the New Testament, which alternates in translation between forms of the words ‘admonish’ (Rom 15:14; 1 Thess 5:12; 2 Thess 3:15; and Col. 3:16) and ‘warn’ (Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 5:14; and Col. 1:28). The noun *νουθεσία* (*nouthesia*) is also linked to the term ‘Nouthetic’ and is used three times in Scripture and is commonly translated as ‘admonition’ (1 Cor. 10:11; Eph. 6:4; Titus 3:10). He describes this type of counseling to be confrontational counseling in which the church is fully involved, not just the ministers.<sup>134</sup> He further proposes the purpose of nouthetic confrontation, which is the following: “The fundamental purpose of nouthetic confrontation, then, is to effect personality and behavioral change.”<sup>135</sup>

Nouthetic counseling rejects any secular counseling methodology and purposes to utilize Scripture for counseling purposes solely. Patterson claims that ministerial counselors should not be ignorant of the methodologies and theories of secular counseling theories, but should remain faithful to the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling needs.<sup>136</sup> The aforementioned author, Heath Lambert acknowledged Jay Adam’s work and developed his book *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* to develop what he claimed to be Adam’s “Good Work.”<sup>137</sup> Westminster Theological

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<sup>133</sup> Paige Patterson, *The Sufficiency of the Bible in Counseling* (Bennington, VT: Northeastern Baptist Press, 2023), 54.

<sup>134</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 41.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>136</sup> Patterson, *The Sufficiency of the Bible in Counseling*, 56.

<sup>137</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 33.

Seminary recognizes a difference between Adam’s nouthetic counseling and true biblical counseling. In a recent article published, the following distinction was presented:

Generally speaking, Biblical counselors (as opposed to Nouthetic counselors) focus more on understanding and hearing their counselees and approaching them with a softer confrontation... Nouthetic counselors are more focused on the people they are counseling as sinners, and their responsibility for that sin. Biblical counselors attempt to understand those they are counseling as simultaneously perpetrators of sin and victims of sin, sinners and sufferers.<sup>138</sup>

While the difference between biblical counseling and nouthetic counseling may be minor, it is important to recognize those differences. Those differences are found in the type of the response of the counselor towards the counselee.

Biblical counseling is a second practice of Bible-based counseling. It focuses on observation, listening, and responding through the authority of Scripture. The major difference, as reported is the gentler response. This gentle way of responding is parallel with Paul’s instruction to Timothy to be apt to instruct with gentleness and meekness (2 Tim 2:24–26). The nouthetic counselor focuses on confronting sin, which is understood to be the cause of internal issues.<sup>139</sup> The biblical counselor’s focus does not negate sin or its effects but focuses more on listening to understand the nature of sin and the nature of suffering within the counselee.<sup>140</sup>

Within this perspective, Josh McDowell uses the acronym “L.E.A.D.E.R.” to describe the way a counselor can intervene in the counseling session. He proposes that the biblical counselor (1) Listen, (2) Empathize, (3) Affirm, (4) Direct, (5) Enlist, and (6) Refer.<sup>141</sup> Each of the steps along McDowell’s path leads the counselor to begin by empathetically observing and then directing

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<sup>138</sup> Westminster Theological Seminary, “Nuances of Biblical Counseling” (September 3, 2023), <https://www.wts.edu/admissions-resources/nuances-of-biblicalcounseling>.

<sup>139</sup> Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), Kindle Location 114 of 5161.

<sup>140</sup> “Nuances of Biblical Counseling,” Westminster Theological Seminary, September 7, 2023, <https://www.wts.edu/admissions-resources/nuances-of-biblical-counseling>.

<sup>141</sup> Josh McDowell, *Handbook on Counseling Youth* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 3.

people towards Scripture as they also enlist the help of actionable steps to get through the issue surrounding the counselee. McDowell proposes that the goal of all biblical counseling is to bring the individual to a conforming relationship with Jesus Christ.<sup>142</sup> Noel Due makes a similar connection and states, “All our pastoral counseling must therefore be Christologically orientated: Christ’s character is the goal of the Christian life.”<sup>143</sup>

Some qualified pastoral counselors take another approach to counseling called integration. A popular proponent of integration, Siang-Yang Tan states, “An integration view takes psychology seriously but submits it ultimately to scriptural truth, the Bible properly interpreted.”<sup>144</sup> This philosophy allows for the pastoral counselor utilize modern psychotherapeutic interventions as long as they hinge upon the ultimate authority of Scripture. The difference between this view and biblical counseling would be in the openness of the integrative counselor to utilizing modern interventions alongside of Scripture to help the patient or counselee. Ultimately, the biblical counselor is less open to integration and uses the Scripture as the foundation for their enablement to counsel.

In the exercise of counseling, Peter Jen Der Pan claims that there are unique differences between the practice of mental health counseling and pastoral counseling.<sup>145</sup> The differences can be summarized as differences of a philosophical nature, differences in interventions and boundaries, and differences in goals.<sup>146</sup> Philosophically, pastoral counseling is dependent upon God’s power for effectual change; adversely, mental health counseling can employ personal

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<sup>142</sup> McDowell, *Handbook on Counseling*, 7.

<sup>143</sup> Due, *Pastoral Counseling*, 49.

<sup>144</sup> Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 403.

<sup>145</sup> Pan, Der, Deng, Tsai, and Yuan, “Issues of Integration in Psychological Counseling,” 154.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*



growth and development as mediators of transformation.<sup>147</sup> From a practical outlook, the boundaries in a pastoral counseling relationship are less rigid and restrained than the boundaries within a mental health counseling relationship.<sup>148</sup> Finally, the incorporated goals can appear to be different between these two ways to facilitate counseling. The goal for pastoral counseling is to see the counselee conform to the image of Christ, while the goals of mental health counseling include generation of solutions towards problems and support for emotional relief.<sup>149</sup> Summarizing this author's perspective, the foundational motivation for most pastoral counseling that takes place is Christ and His word. From this viewpoint, pastoral counseling addresses the problems within man from a theological perspective and applies biblical solutions to the needs of man.

### Conclusion

What can be concluded in Scripture regarding these principles? Primarily, God has designed and equipped man to pursue wisdom and instruction. From the counsel within the book of Proverbs to the epistles in the New Testament, encouragement is found to continue pursuing the truth. Scripture provides the basis for the continual development of disciples and the encouragement to counsel the weary and heavy-laden towards personal and spiritual wholeness and harmony. This section also provided a description and distinction of pastoral counseling with several practical methods of applying counsel from a pastoral perspective. The focus will now shift towards theoretical foundations regarding counseling and curriculum.

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<sup>147</sup> Pan, Der, Deng, Tsai, and Yuan, "Issues of Integration in Psychological Counseling," 154.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 155.

### Theoretical Foundations

Counseling education is a discipline with extensive contributions from higher education institutions. Most major universities offer a degree or concentration in counseling; furthermore, major Christian universities have established majors or degree programs in psychology or Christian counseling. However, as this project focuses on a specific context of ministry and a plan to implement curriculum within that setting, the theoretical considerations will funnel through the need to apply concepts of biblical counseling in a small Baptist college setting. In order to produce the proper curriculum, other institutions within the same spectrum or design should be reviewed to find essential elements to create a thriving counseling curriculum. This not only represents a practice, which will help the researcher to understand the scope of the current existing counseling curricula but will also complete a task that is needed in order to fulfill TRACS requirements to add a concentration at WCBC successfully.

While WCBC presents a niche setting, elements can be taken from other college counseling programs to present a well-constructed curriculum. The theoretical foundations will be discovered by assessing three different colleges that offer counseling programs. For consistency, this examination will only consider schools under the guidelines of TRACS. As WCBC will not be seeking state-licensure, the programs will be examined are not designed for a student to obtain state licensure in counseling. The programs examined will also be on the master's level of learning, which extends beyond the baccalaureate or bachelor's degree.<sup>150</sup> The master's level of learning is concentrated, intensive study within a particular field such as

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<sup>150</sup> "Explanation of Degrees," Colleges and Universities, Study California, last modified 2024, <https://studycalifornia.us/colleges-universities/explanation-of-degrees/>.

biblical or Christian counseling.<sup>151</sup> The first institution to be evaluated is Southern California Seminary (SCS).

### Southern California Seminary

Southern California Seminary was established in 1946<sup>152</sup> and operates in El Cajon, CA, which is less than 200 miles from WCBC. There is symmetry between the mission of SCS and the mission of WCBC as SCS also desires to equip believers to assist their local churches through Bible-based ministry.<sup>153</sup> As a standing member of TRACS, they are granted to confer degrees on the levels of bachelor, master, and doctorate.<sup>154</sup> The most consistent degree SCS offers that would include comparable curriculum to the nature of this thesis is their Masters of Christian Counseling (MACC).<sup>155</sup>

The focus of the curriculum associated with this program (MACC) is to train students to be ready to fulfill the needs of both church and organizations established to come alongside of and assist the church.<sup>156</sup> Within their MACC degree, SCS offers a 48-unit program that includes biblical (9 units), interdisciplinary (12 units), counseling (21 units), and elective (6 units) courses.<sup>157</sup> Specifically focusing on their purely counseling curriculum for this specific degree, SCS offers the following courses: Theological Foundations for Counseling, Marriage and Family

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<sup>151</sup> “Explanation of Degrees,” Colleges and Universities, Study California.

<sup>152</sup> Southern California Seminary, “Who We Are,” <https://www.socalsem.edu/about/>, accessed December 15, 2023. Originally claimed the name Linda Vista Baptist Bible College and Seminary.

<sup>153</sup> Southern California Seminary, “Who We Are,” <https://www.socalsem.edu/about/>, accessed December 16, 2023.

<sup>154</sup> Transnational Association of Christian Schools and Colleges, “Membership Directory,” <https://tracs.org/directory/>, accessed December 15, 2023.

<sup>155</sup> Southern California Seminary, *2023–2024 Academic Catalogue* (San Diego, California: August, 2023), 131–32.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–32.

Counseling, Crisis Counseling, Fundamentals of Christian Counseling, Conflict Resolution, Faith Integration and Praxis, and the Christian Counseling Practicum.<sup>158</sup> In a simple analysis of these courses, there is certainly an obvious connection between theology and counseling within their curriculum.

### Luther Rice College and Seminary

The second school analyzed is Luther Rice College and Seminary (LR). Luther Rice is located in Atlanta, Georgia and has received both national accreditation (through TRACS<sup>159</sup>) and regional accreditation (through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges [SACSCOC<sup>160</sup>]). The mission of LR is comparable SCS and WCBC in that they are attempting to serve the church through the training of men and women; however, their mission broadens to both the church and the community and claims to focus on both “The ministry and the marketplace.”<sup>161</sup>

Luther Rice offers undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees and notably offers a graduate degree in Biblical Counseling.<sup>162</sup> Their program differs slightly from the MACC degree from SCS in that there are twelve fewer credits that must be completed for completion. The focus of the master’s program at LR is split between Bible and counseling courses; however, the core counseling classes have the greater portion of the curriculum. Of the 36 credits

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<sup>158</sup> Southern California Seminary, *2023–2024 Academic Catalogue*, 132.

<sup>159</sup> Transnational Association of Christian Schools and Colleges, “Member Institution Information,” TRACS, <https://tracs.org/directory/>. Original candidacy for Luther Rice College and Seminary was granted in 1986.

<sup>160</sup> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Institution Database,” <https://sacscoc.org/institutions>. Original candidacy for Luther Rice College and Seminary was granted in 2020.

<sup>161</sup> Luther Rice College and Seminary, “Mission Statement,” <https://www.lutherrice.edu/about-us/mission-statement>.

<sup>162</sup> Specifically, the degree is a Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling.

contained in the degree, the core counseling curriculum is allotted 24 credits.<sup>163</sup> The eight counseling courses are as follows: “Foundations of Counseling, Helping Skills; Marriage and Family Counseling; Issues, Ethics and Legal Concerns for Counseling, Crisis Counseling, and the Counseling Practicum.”<sup>164</sup>

### Bob Jones University

The third and final school assessed in this theoretical foundations section is Bob Jones University [BJU] in Greenville, SC. Much like Luther Rice, BJU has a dual accreditation and is also accredited by both TRACS and SACSCOC.<sup>165</sup> The philosophy of BJU and its founder, Bob Jones, Sr., was to hold to the primacy of Scripture and argued for the verbal inspiration of Scripture.<sup>166</sup> There remains a tie to this day between WCBC and BJU because of the fundamentalist heritage of BJU. Jones, Sr., a strong fundamentalist, stood in opposition to the threat against the inerrancy of Scripture and the workings of secular philosophy creeping into his organization.<sup>167</sup> Due to the fundamentalist foundations, BJU works as a college in which to analyze as its historic philosophy is parallel to the theoretical DNA of WCBC.

Bob Jones University has a seminary component, which produces both graduate and post-graduate degrees in religion and philosophy. Their graduate counseling curriculum leads toward the completion of a Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling (MABC).<sup>168</sup> The MABC program at

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<sup>163</sup> Luther Rice College and Seminary, “Degree Programs,” Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling, <https://www.lutherrice.edu/degree-programs/ma-in-biblical-counseling>.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> “Accreditation,” Academics, Bob Jones University, <https://www.bju.edu/academics/accreditation.php>.

<sup>166</sup> Adam Laats, “Forging a Fundamentalist ‘One Best System’: Struggles Over Curriculum and Educational Philosophy for Christian Day Schools, 1970–1989,” *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2010), 63.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Bob Jones University, “Biblical Counseling, MA,” Bob Jones Seminary graduate programs, <https://seminary.bju.edu/graduate-programs/biblical-counseling-ma/>.

BJU is a set curriculum of 41 credits with 24 credits focused on the core of the counseling courses.<sup>169</sup> The counseling classes at BJU are as follows: Sex Abuse Prevention & Response Training; Counseling Children and Adolescents; Theories of Counseling; Foundations of Biblical Counseling; Counseling Issues; Advanced Counseling Issues; Marriage & Family Counseling; Biblical Counseling Practicum 1; Biblical Counseling Practicum 2.<sup>170</sup> BJU states that the completion of this program will grant the requirements to earn a certification with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC).<sup>171</sup>

In the fourth Chapter of this report, the researcher will further divulge the counseling programs of study from these three institutions. Analysis will be made of the unique course listings for each of the programs and will be utilized in the development of the curriculum. TRACS guidelines require benchmarking of at least three institutions with similar programs.<sup>172</sup> These institutions will thus serve as the catalyst for the needed benchmarking in the creation of the counseling curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

The literature review has provided the foundation of the necessary path to move forward with the DMIN research project. Building a curriculum implements many avenues of thought and embraces the education surrounding a particular topic. Before curriculum design was discovered, the literature section reviewed the science of teaching (*pedagogy*) and revealed the

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<sup>169</sup> Bob Jones University, “Biblical Counseling, MA,” Bob Jones Seminary graduate programs, <https://seminary.bju.edu/graduate-programs/biblical-counseling-ma/>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.; Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, “Our Mission,” About, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/our-mission/>. The mission of this entity is as follows: “ACBC equips Christians to provide biblical solutions to the problems people face.”

<sup>172</sup> See Appendix I, question 3e.

main philosophical ideologies regarding education. Alongside the philosophical approaches to instruction, the review section also uncovered what the literature gathered regarding the true nature and purpose of education.

Regarding the development of a curriculum, the educator would do well to begin with the desired results in mind. The outcomes of a curriculum should be evident of a learning path and plan that is organized and structured for the success of students in distinctive learning arenas. The literature noted the goal-oriented nature of SLO's to any curriculum, which enables the individual student to navigate his or her academic excursion easily.<sup>173</sup> The literature also made mention of the means of obtaining data in order to produce various types of curricula. There were methods of success that derived from interviews with faculty and staff and other methods that retrieved data from the graduates of that university as well as the hiring employers of that same university's graduates.

The literature also demonstrated that comprehending and understanding the values of individuals is as essential as the counsel that a minister can give. The distinctiveness of the ministry counselor is important to realize as there is a trust factor between the ministry working and the people within their unique ministries. Due to this trust that has been implemented, the ability to demonstrate competence in areas of counseling that deal with the mind and emotions is extremely important. The literature provides forms and formats by which a ministry counselor can integrate specific therapies into his or her counseling. Fundamentally, there is a certain expression of the need for continued development within the realm of counseling and therapy amongst ministry counselors.

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<sup>173</sup> Kayoko Enomoto and Richard Warner, *Enhancing Student Learning Outcomes in Higher Education* (UK: Libri Publishing Ltd, 2023), 3.

The presented problem is that graduate ministry students at WCBC are not adequately trained to counsel advanced topics in their ministry setting. The literature shows that there is a need among ministry workers to be further equipped to handle some deeper counseling topics. Therefore, the purpose for this DMIN action research project is to develop a curriculum that equips WCBC graduate ministry students in advanced counseling issues. Which in turn should propel them to be equipped to handle the advanced counseling topics within their ministry setting.



### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

For nearly thirty years, WCBC has been training laborers in various capacities for ministry leadership. Within this range, the world has seen many unique challenges and changes in the DNA of society and culture. As a result of the massive societal overhaul, sin targeted the foundations of the human mind and emotions. The growing need for laborers who are cognizant of these changes and equipped to handle these variations has greatly multiplied. It would seem as though a ministry training school should be more involved in equipping graduate students with the ability to discern actionable remedies for mentally and emotionally troubled individuals. The intention of this research is to provide a curriculum that would prepare graduate students to counsel within a ministry setting. The construction of this curriculum was not built for licensure; but it is purposed to develop counseling aptitudes for those who plan to practice within the church. This chapter demonstrates the development and implementation of the methodology used to develop this curriculum. As a short summarization, the action research project was based upon qualitative research material, which included transcribed interviews, documentation of scholastic degrees, and content from California counseling content.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the specificities within this action research, it is only logical to confirm the path towards intervention and thematic analyzing of participant data. Without a path or plan of intervention, the proper research will be rushed or misapplied. It is of the utmost importance to

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle D. Young, Sarah Diem, *Handbook of Critical Education Research: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Emerging Approaches* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2024), 25. Young and Diem describe qualitative material as interviews, observations, cultural artifacts, documents, personal experience, and visual materials.

produce accurate research for this project as it may impact the lives of the current generation of graduate students but also graduate students to come. As a college, it is important to consider the miniscule details as they impact the potential success of future students. Therefore, every aspect of the path has been measured and accounted for to produce the most accurate results.

### **Intervention Design**

The natural tendency of every academic setting is to appear as an action research project. The instructor prepares his or her course; the students are recruited into the course; the curriculum is taught; and finally, the student's knowledge of the instructed material can be tested and tried through a myriad of different assessments. Just like this, a research project begins with research-oriented preparation, the recruitment of qualified participants, and the implementation and evaluation of the research. This research project started with the detailed research on the building of a curriculum and the contemporaries that existed within the specific biblical counseling education context. Next, the project moved forward into the researching of the graduate participants to determine the proper content for the curriculum. Finally, the project evaluated the content of the curriculum based on the mandates of the accreditor and the mandates of the state of California for a counseling curriculum. The phases of this project are illustrated in figure 3.1.

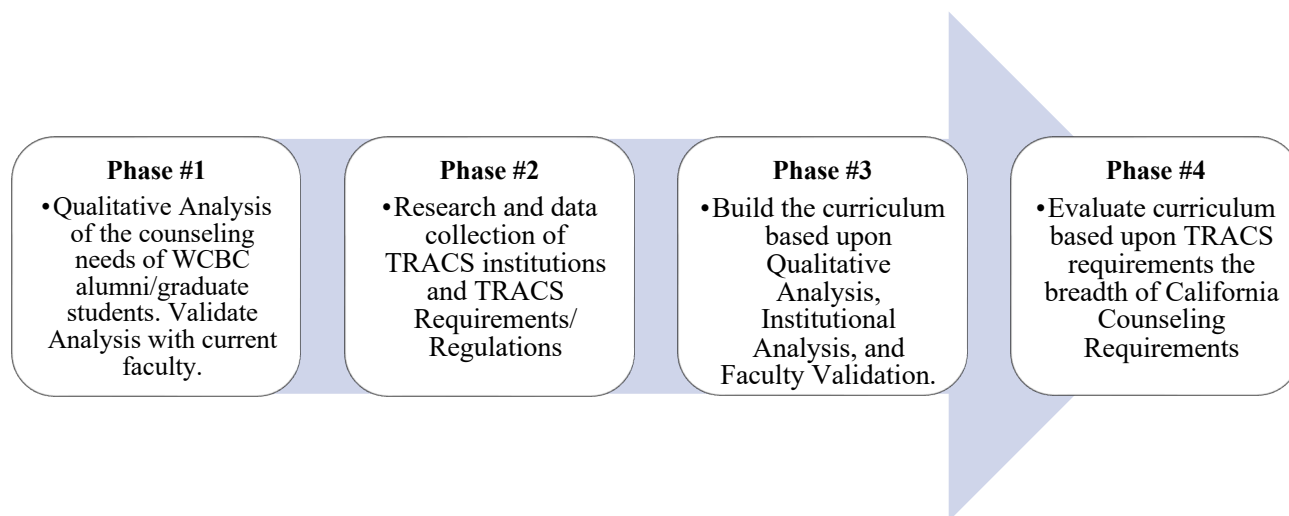


Figure 3.1. Project phases

### Phase One

The participants of any study are important to the cause of the research. Stringer states, “Preliminary interviews provide opportunities for participants to describe the situation in their own terms.”<sup>2</sup> When an individual can reflect upon an issue through their own paradigm, it often reveals an unknown variable to the researcher because the context of the participant. Stringer continues, “It is a reflective process that enables the interviewee to explore their experience in detail and to reveal the many features of that experience that have an effect on the issue investigated.”<sup>3</sup> The participants for the research study were confined to graduates of the bachelor’s or master’s program and current master’s students at WCBC. As the problem presented in the first Chapter relates to the training of WCBC students, it was only appropriate to base the research participation on this unique population strategically. The graduates and alumni of WCBC have a unique perspective within the confines of their ministry/life context that must

<sup>2</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (US, SAGE Publications, Inc, 2020), 124, Liberty University Online Bookshelf.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

be explored. Utilizing alumni surveys for successful course redesign has precedent as revealed in the literature review; thereby, this study proposed to utilize data collected from alumni to do the full developmental work of curriculum design.

As of the 2023 WCBC Commencement Ceremony, there are over three thousand graduates of WCBC and nearly one hundred active and inactive online graduate students.<sup>4</sup> The participants chosen needed to have some form of ministry position (e.g., pastor, associate pastor, evangelist, missionary, youth pastor, ministry director, Christian school teacher) experience. Participant names were screened to assess and confirm the participants. In order to reach out to this populace, permission was granted by the IRB and the mentor in charge of this research project.<sup>5</sup> A third essential allowance came directly from the necessary leadership team member of the college.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the initiation of the first phase of research, the design called for a signed consent form to be sent back to the researcher to continue the recruitment process.<sup>7</sup>

Upon approval from the three essential entities, a recruitment email was sent to the eligible and potential participants.<sup>8</sup> The email briefly described the project and the time necessary to complete the full extent of the research. Another form of communication to the alumni came through the WCBC Alumni social media pages.<sup>9</sup> The current WCBC Alumni Facebook page has 946 followers and provided an robust, interactive forum to recruit participants into the study.

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<sup>4</sup> John Goetsch, *2023–2024 WCBC Catalogue*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> See IRB Approval at the end of the document. IRB approval will also be discussed in “Implementation of Intervention Design: Phase One.”

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B for Permission Letter.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C for Consent Response Letter.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix D for Recruitment Email.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix E for Social Media Post.

Upon responses, the researcher determined the maximum amount of participants necessary to interview.

The next aspect of the design involved details regarding steps to participate. The researcher designed the project to send a consent form to all students who were willing to participate in the study.<sup>10</sup> The consent form features the type of research to be conducted, and the time commitment that was required of each participant. The strategy was for the consent form to be issued out through a digital signing forum and automatically placed in the researcher's Google Drive account. The digital signing company gave the participant the ability to have ease of signing the document while also being sent a copy of the document directly back to their email account.<sup>11</sup>

Once the participant consented to the research, the next step in the design was to schedule for the interview that would take place with the participant. The design was for the interviews to take place over Zoom, which provided the opportunity to collect several forms of data. The interview was to be guided by predetermined questions designed to assess the needs (within the counseling context) of WCBC graduates to develop a curriculum that best suits those needs.<sup>12</sup>

The concept of preassessment is vital educationally. For instance, instructors in a grade school setting will at times give a pre-quiz to find the students that are struggling as opposed to those who are more advanced in the particular subject.<sup>13</sup> While the preassessment is more beneficial for the struggling students, it has some benefits for most students. For example, if there is a negative commonality amongst several students on a question or a topic, the instructor

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for Participant Consent form.

<sup>11</sup> The researcher will use Dropbox Sign for all necessary signatures (<https://www.dropbox.com>).

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix F for Interview questions.

<sup>13</sup> Jeff Flygare, "Planning and Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom" (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2021), 46.

can make a mid-course adjustment in order to fit the needs of his or her class. Just like these preassessments, these video interviews served as the opportunity to address the counseling needs of the general population of WCBC graduates. Before a curriculum could be initiated, a general understanding of the needs of graduates must be obtained. The status of the researcher as a WCBC alum helped to give further insight into the instruction that each student receives as a student at WCBC. This made preparing interview questions more streamlined to assess the specific areas that the researcher thought would need exclusive focus.

Some of the questions that were asked of the alumni and graduate students regarded the demographic that they minister to more often from a counseling perspective. Other questions revolved around the type of counseling they conducted on a frequent basis (i.e., marriage counseling, crisis counseling, or moral counseling). Finally, some of the questions were designed to focus on the observed needs for future counseling issues that may occur. Realistically, each question gave opportunity for the researcher to analyze the most common counseling areas, the most problematic counseling areas, and the discernable future counseling areas. Each answer given would provide a valuable resource for building the curriculum.

Following the interviews, interview data was collected and transcribed. Having a transcribed copy enabled the data to be placed into a research database to funnel and filter through the responses given by each individual. Upon reception of the transcription, the researchers task was to read through each interview to find statements that are critical to the project.<sup>14</sup> Making connecting observations through statements made by the participants was critical to the accuracy of the results. These important statements made by the participants were

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<sup>14</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 196. Sensing recommends re-reading the data multiple times on different occasions.

then coded and placed into distinct categories that will aid in the establishment of commonalities amongst the interview participants. The software tool chosen initially for research was called Researchware, Inc. An illustration is provided below that will help the reader understand the designed flow for the collection of data leading to the analysis of data.

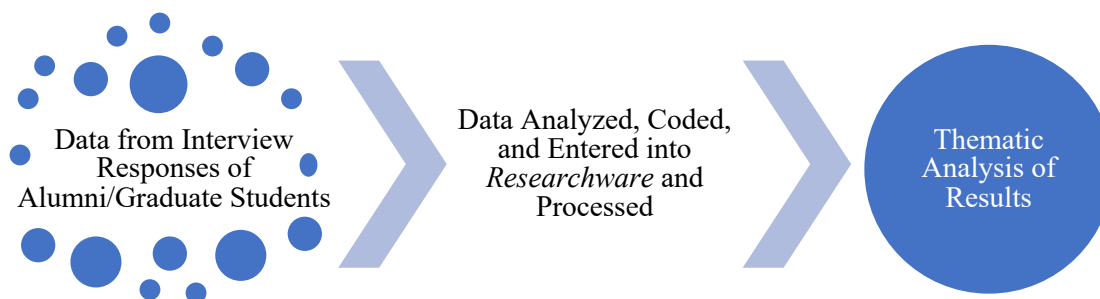


Figure 3.2. Interviews leading to analysis

The researcher initially planned to utilize *Researchware* to help code the data so that a compact summary could be examined of all of the data. The collective data furnished through this process was pivotal to ensure the outcome of the project would present successful product. The researcher utilized thematic analysis, which Sensing describes as, “The sorting, organizing, and indexing of the material that enables you to locate internally consistent patterns that often fit within existing knowledge.”<sup>15</sup> As the interviews were indexed and coded, the common themes and threads within the qualitative data produced results that identified needs of the participants and areas of strengths and weakness in the counseling aptitudes.

The collective data was kept in the researcher’s Google Drive, which can only be accessed by password. This collection and storage keeps a safe record of all that is done within the intervention. The drive ensured that the information had a cloud based backup in case of a user error and loss of the work that has been completed.

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<sup>15</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 198.

## Phase Two

Based upon the previous work compiled in the theoretical section, the second phase of research was initiated. In an educational setting, it is important to target the best practices and procedures in institutions of like status to produce a curriculum to the proper standard.<sup>16</sup> The second phase of this research project involved benchmarking procedures in order to apply the results of the thematic analysis in phase one to the benchmarking completed in phase two. The institutions discovered in the theoretical section provided this project a glimpse into a typical curriculum of a TRACS institute. The observation and evaluation of these institutions were based on the details placed on the institution's websites and their respective catalogs from the most recent academic year. The evaluation of the curriculum of the three institutions was measured against the needs of alumni and graduate students to produce a shell for a curriculum in which learning objectives and outcomes were placed. Learning objectives and outcomes were also based on the thematic analysis of the interviews and the study of outside institutions. More information on the development of objectives and outcomes will be produced in the section regarding implementation.

In 2011, California State University went through a revision of curriculum for the Master's of Business Administration degree.<sup>17</sup> Through this process, the university adopted four crucial principles that set a pathway for other universities who seek to revise or create curricula. The first principle is particularly needful in the current development of this project, "Administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and community partners must be involved in the

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<sup>16</sup> Tricia Bisoux, "Best Practices in Curriculum Design: What you should know and how you should proceed when you're revamping a business program," *AACSB International* (June 21, 2017), <https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2011/09/best-practices-in-curriculum-design>, Accessed December 18, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Terre H. Allen, David A. Home, Ingrid M. Martin, and Michael E. Solt, "Curriculum Revision and Change," *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development* vol 30, no. 1 (2011), 142.



curriculum revision process.”<sup>18</sup> Based upon this principle, the researcher sought input from certain members of the faculty and staff of WCBC who would provide validation towards the responses of the alumni and the research done in similar institutions. Based upon their expertise, the goal was that they provide qualified feedback, which could prove to validate the agenda proposed by the results of both the thematic analysis from the qualitative data and the research done regarding the comparable institutions.

In phase two of the intervention, the researcher also sought to meet the needs of TRACS to produce an accreditationally accepted curriculum. To accomplish this task, the researcher compiled and submitted the concentration addition form to demonstrate compliance with the institutional eligibility requirements.<sup>19</sup> The form itself contains seven major components with subcomponents as questions.<sup>20</sup> The plan was to work with the CAO of the institution to accurately fill out the form with the proper and pertinent information for full approval.

### Phase Three

Upon completion of the interviews and the processing of the analysis between the quantitative and qualitative, the third phase of the project commenced. In this stage, the researcher prepared the curriculum for the masters of religious education in biblical counseling. Building a curriculum can be parallel to building the housing in which learning takes place; the stronger the structure, the greater the opportunity will be for learning.<sup>21</sup> The primary intention of this intervention was to provide a strong curriculum to support the growing needs of the

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<sup>18</sup> Allen, Home, Martin, and Solt, “Curriculum Revision and Change, 146.

<sup>19</sup> The form will be filled out to demonstrate the compliance with TRACS standards but will not be submitted as this project does not necessitate implementation of the concentration.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix G for TRACS Concentration Addition Form

<sup>21</sup> Joanne Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2015), 23.

communities surrounding the WCBC alumni and graduate students. Once again, the plan was to incorporate the faculty of WCBC to provide support and involvement in establishing the necessary components of the counseling concentration.

The building of the curriculum involved a list of different tasks and would necessitate a step-by-step process of laying out course themes (based on the data collection in the research phases), envisioning learning outcomes, connecting learning outcomes with institutional objectives, and establishing the course syllabus. Within the subject of organizing curriculum, Angela Lalor stated, “A quality curriculum will organize units of study around centers that are worthy of the time and energy set aside for their pursuit and that reflect the overall intent and purpose of the curriculum.”<sup>22</sup> The following figure gives a visual overview of the cycle that was used for creating each course within the curriculum:

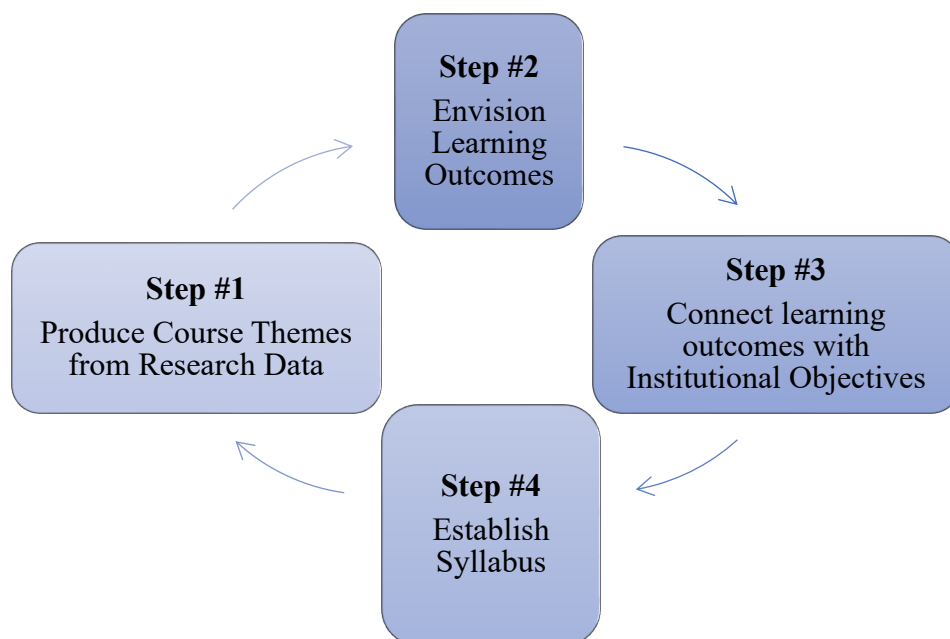


Figure 3.3. Curriculum cycle

<sup>22</sup> Angela Di Michele Lalor, *Ensuring High-Quality Curriculum: How to Design, Revise, or Adopt Curriculum Aligned to Student Success* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2017), 12.

In order to remain consistent with the other concentrations in the MRE program, the curriculum included the addition of the four core classes, which include Research and Writing, Advanced Hermeneutics, Servant Leadership, Spiritual Formation, and Discipleship.<sup>23</sup> These core classes provide the foundation for the MRE degree and help assist the core structure of the concentration. The curriculum will also run parallel in credit count (33 credits) to the existing Master's concentrations.<sup>24</sup> A fifth class named "Apologetics and Worldview" was added with the inclusion of the MRE core and the counseling curriculum. This will be a course shared by the MRE in Biblical Studies as well as the concentration being created. This parallel structure will enable the academic office to insert the counseling concentration into the MRE program

#### Phase Four

The final phase of the intervention includes assessing the existing material surrounding the California requirements regarding the counseling curriculum. While this project is not designed to build a licensure program, it will be essential to evaluate what California is requiring (from a course content perspective) of their licensed counselors based upon the need of the region. It must be restated and stressed that the master's concentration developed through this research was prepared for ministry servants within the local church, not licensed professional mental health counselors. In addition to the core educational content that must be completed, licensed counselors, particularly in California, must endure over three thousand hours of clinical supervision, pass an ethics and law examination, and complete thirty-six credits of continuing education every two years.<sup>25</sup> As examined in the theological foundations, the philosophy,

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<sup>23</sup> Lalor, *Ensuring High-Quality Curriculum*, 115–16.

<sup>24</sup> West Coast Baptist College, *2023–2024 College Catalogue*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> "License Requirements," Licensing, California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors, <https://calpcc.org/pages/license-requirements>.

boundaries, and goals of a mental health counselor are much different than those counselors of a pastoral or ministerial nature.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, much of what is being required in the content of the California educational requirements was not essential to add into the curriculum; however, it provided a clear third metric to utilize to evaluate the curriculum at hand. The goal was to create a curriculum that provided for needs within the current climate, and it would be detrimental to the data not to analyze California's given requirements at minimum for the breadth of content that could be included. The following figure displays how the main collections of information will be relational to the curriculum:

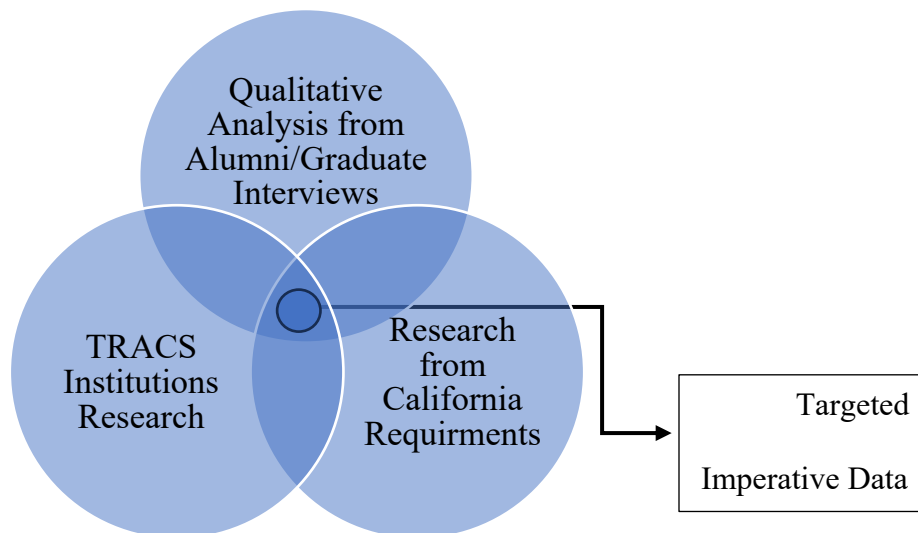


Figure 3.4. Relationships between the data

As figure 5.1 displays, some data or information was unique to that particular entity. Between the three researched units in this table, there was a portion in the middle, ultimately determining the information to be included in the curriculum. If there is information that is not within targeted portion of this graph it was not considered less valuable; but it was not planned to

<sup>26</sup> Pan, Jen Der, Deng, Tsai, and Yuan, "Issues of Integration in Psychological Counseling Practice from Pastoral Counseling Perspectives," 154.

be essential for the completion of the curriculum. The final table in this section displays the sequence of weeks that was prepared to guide and direct the researcher. Each section of weeks will contain portions of the four-phase intervention plan.

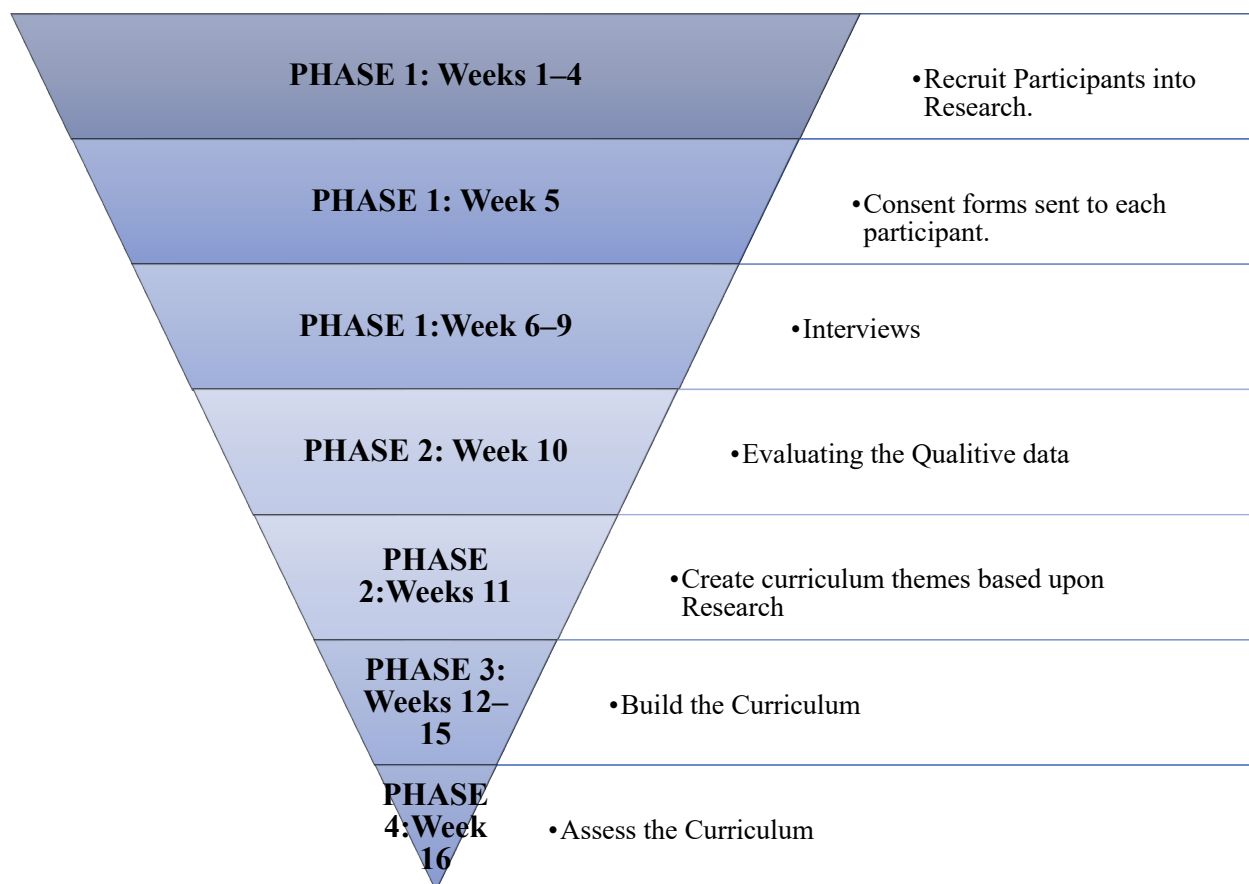


Figure 3.5. Week-by-week research schedule

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

The first element of this intervention was successfully completed as approval was met from the IRB on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>27</sup> The project was marked as exempt as no human subjects would be utilized for study outside of gathering information from those who choose to participate. The research was cataloged as “Quality Improvement,” and the researcher was

<sup>27</sup> See IRB Approval.

granted permission to move forward by his mentor, Dr. Todd Hardin. The project sought to implement the design that was detailed in the previous section in order to obtain data from three sources- alumni interviews, curriculum of similar programs, and California counseling content. Those three collective sources of data were triangulated to obtain the essential criteria needed to build the curriculum that would be beneficial for the use of the graduate program at WCBC.

Upon received approval to move forward with the project by both IRB and Dr. Hardin, a permission request was sent to the Chief Academic Officer of WCBC on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>28</sup> The request form asked for permission to contact WCBC alumni and current WCBC graduate students. After some discussion and some clarification of purpose, the CAO of WCBC determined that it would be more prudent for an email to go out to all alumni and current graduate students from the institution's Mailchimp account instead of being sent from the researcher's account. The approval for recruitment was granted on January 17, 2024.<sup>29</sup> The alumni office then worked with the registrar's office to obtain the proper names of those qualified to participate in the study. By the beginning of February, 2024, the stage was set to begin recruiting in the participants for the interviews.

### Phase One

At the very onset of the research process, an email was sent out by the alumni office to all WCBC alumni and current graduate students on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.<sup>30</sup> Even with this delay in the overall plan for recruitment of participants, the response of the prospective participants was immediate. Within the first seventy-two hours, sixty-eight alumni responded that they would

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<sup>28</sup> See appendix D for the Permission Request form.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix D.

participate in the research. The main form of response to the request to participate was email correspondence with very few text responses. The early responses of the alumni participants allowed for the researcher to immediately send out the “Participant Consent Form”<sup>31</sup> through Dropbox Sign. Originally, the design of the implementation was to send the consent forms to participants at the end of collecting names of participants. Due to the early delays caused by unforeseen schedule limitations, the researcher sent out the consent forms as the participants responded so that the research progress could continue.

The signature service, Dropbox Sign, proved to be a simplified route of sending the necessary form for the participants to sign. Forty-nine forms were collected within the first week of recruitment, and sixty-one forms were signed within the first month. The pace at which the consent forms were collected allowed the researcher to begin forming the schedule of interviews immediately. Upon receiving notice of the signed consent form, a follow-up email was sent, which included a link to the researcher’s Calendly schedule, which enabled the participants to scan and select a time that worked best for their schedule. Calendly provided the essential tools to ensure that the partakers of the study were given the link into the meeting (via Zoom) and an automated email reminding them of the interview time and location.

### **Recording the Interviews**

Zoom’s platform was chosen due to the ease of access and familiarity by most individuals. During the height of the pandemic, the Zoom app had 450 million downloaded applications and 350 million daily meeting participants.<sup>32</sup> An account was established on Zoom’s

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<sup>31</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>32</sup> Mansoor Iqbal, “Zoom Revenue and Usage Statistics,” *Business of Apps*, January 8, 2024, <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/zoom-statistics/>.

Pro plan, which enabled the researcher to record beyond the forty-minute limit. The plan also allowed for each interview to undergo transcription services which would be essential to the next steps of the project. The transcription services of Zoom would become a problem later in the phases of the project which will be discussed in a later section.

Between the dates of February 8<sup>th</sup> through March 15<sup>th</sup>, thirty-six interviews took place through Zoom's video services. The interviews were guided through fourteen questions were generated to discover the counseling needs of the alumni participants. Ultimately the questions were established in such a fashion to conclude a basic understanding of the participants needs in their active ministry context. The research questions were designed to assess the following information from WCBC alumni: the current counseling routines and issues addressed; the areas in which the participants felt unequipped to counsel (based upon their training from WCBC); and, finally, the counseling needs that these participants foresee arising in the near future.

### **The Participants**

West Coast Baptist College graduates fill several different roles within the sphere of full-time/vocational ministry and non-vocational ministry. As counseling can happen within any type of ministry setting, the researcher elected not to limit the participants to a unique role within the ministry. During the interviews, the researcher asked each participant their current role in the ministry. Within the responses of the participants, the two largest positions that were represented by the participants were that of pastor and assistant pastor.<sup>33</sup> The next largest grouping was of Christian educators who taught across a wide spectrum of learning levels which would include early childhood through the graduate levels of higher education. Only three of the thirty-six

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<sup>33</sup> "Assistant Pastor" includes all participants in a pastoral role that was of an associate nature (this includes youth pastors/leaders).



alumni were not in a vocational ministry setting. The following figure displays the unique positions that were represented by the thirty-six alumni participants:

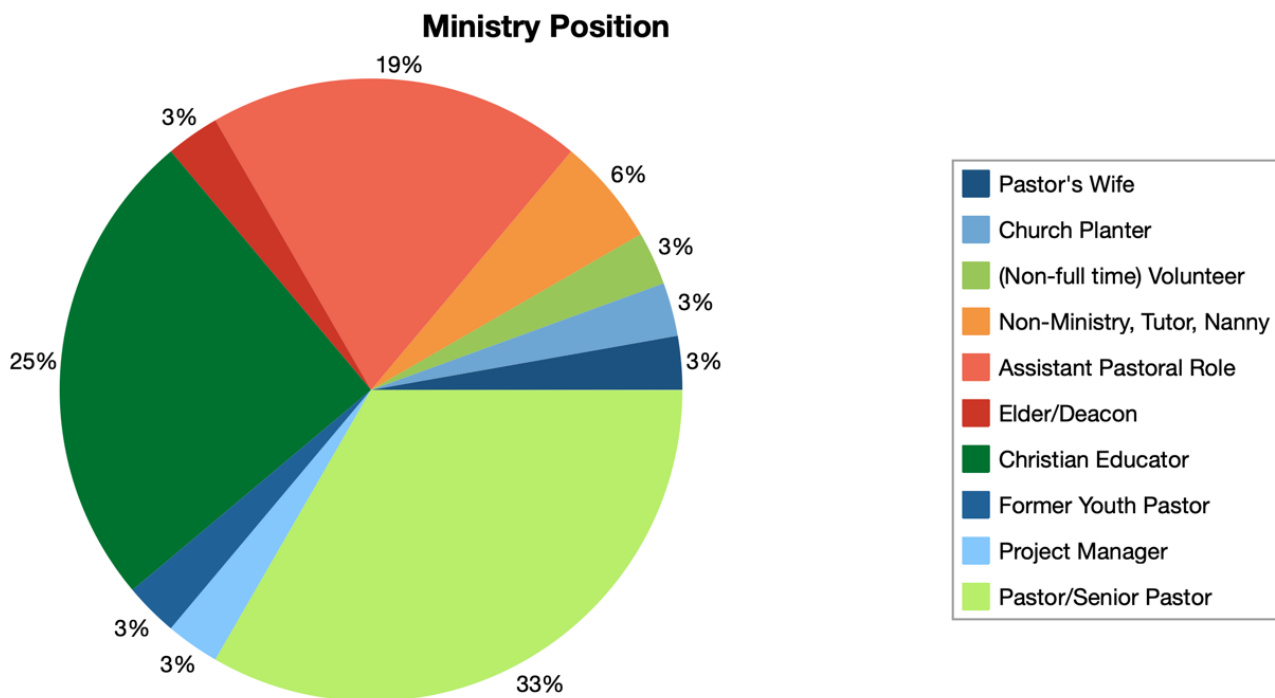


Figure 3.6. Ministry position

### Transcriptions of Interviews

After the Interviews were completed, the researcher found that the transcriptions created by the *Zoom* processing were inadequate to gather the necessary data. Ultimately, the transcripts were not accurate and required a massive amount of editing and some redaction. Considering this setback, a different service was utilized to produce more concise and accurate records of the participant interviews. The 'Sonix Ai' was selected for the use of the interview transcription services. The first step in the process was to upload each lecture recording to the Sonix data cloud and within less than ten minutes, all recordings were transcribed. Unfortunately, due to technical errors, one of the alumni interviews was deleted and therefore was not included within

the transcription carryover; however, the remaining thirty-six interviews were transcribed with few corrections needed.

Upon downloading the transcription of each interview, a title was placed upon each transcription. This given title, “Research Interview,” remained the same for each interview record with the exception of numbering. Each transcript was given a unique number ranging from one through thirty-six. Once the interviews were fully transcribed, described, and downloaded, the researcher was able to start the next part of the process within the first phase of the project.

The researcher committed to analyze the qualitative material of the transcripts thematically. In order to analyze the data that existed from the transcripts of the interviews effectively, the researcher transitioned to utilize a qualitative coding tool to collect and analyze common themes and threads in the interviews. Originally, the design was to place the transcripts into the Hyper Research software and use the coding tools to analyze the data; however, another tool was presented that enabled the researcher greater ease of access, better coding capabilities, and faster results. The qualitative analysis tool that was chosen was called MAXQDA, which is a software that enables uploading of documents and gives the user the power to code segments of each document to fit the necessary context.

### **Coding the Interviews**

As the code development process began, the researcher blended approach to the coding process. After the initial reading of the transcriptions, the researcher started with a “Top-down” approach of deductively establishing a set of main codes. The purpose of establishing these initial codes was to present structure to the demographic nature of some of the questions and to collect specific answers for the interview questions that were categorical. These pre-established

demographic codes included the following: “Continued education” (yes or no), “Time spent counseling” (<5 or 5+); and “Ministry position”. The other pre-established codes were called “Current Counseling Issues,” “Unequipped to counsel,” “Future counseling Issues,” and “Essential education for counselors.” The next codes that were established were sub-codes under each category and were inductively produced based upon the description of the participant. If a participant described counseling situations that they currently or historically have counseled through, the researcher would code that interview segment with the “Current Counseling issues” code and establish a sub-code within that category that fit the description of the participant. This process is descriptive coding and involves utilizing a word or phrase to encapsulate the description within the segment.<sup>34</sup>

After processing several interviews, the researcher used the same sub-codes to place within the transcripts and even created further sub-codes of the original sub-codes. Sub-codes such as “Marriage and Relationships” also had subcodes that dealt with most relationship type counseling. For example, pre-marital, parenting, extended family issues, and outside relationships. The sub-code of “Trauma/Crisis” included the internal sub-codes of “Abuse” and “Religious based Trauma.” These internal sub-codes would provide the necessary data to assess the needs of the participants fully. The coding process was a tedious work but produced the proper visual data to present the needs of alumni into visual form formally. Upon the completion of the coding process, phase one of the implementation was complete. <sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “The Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data,” Guide, Delve Tool, last revised 2024, <https://delvetool.com/guide>.

<sup>35</sup> A complete listing of all codes and subcodes can be found in Appendix H.

## Phase Two

Upon completion of the interviews, an intensive investigation into like-accredited institutions began with the goal of collecting data from three separate institutions. This phase of the research required the researcher to select the institutions best suited to benchmark against. After the institutions were selected, there was ease in attaining the information needed to collect the proper data.

### **Data Gathering from Institutions**

The theoretical section provided three institutions (LR, BJU, SCS) as a focal point. A table depicting how the courses were listed and how those courses aligned within the represented institutions can be seen in the results chapter of the thesis. Ultimately, this data set proved helpful as it established a common theme and pattern within similar institutions. The element of institutional review was also helpful in understanding the differences in approach to the counseling curriculum. It would be odd in purpose and practice for each program curriculum to be the same in every area. Observing the differences and the similarities helped with navigating potential important inclusions to the WCBC curriculum.

Developing the curriculum began with the course mapping, which was concluded from the triangulation of the three data sets. From the course mapping, the researcher was able to research deeper into the data which enabled the development of descriptions for each course. The final piece to the development of the courses was building out the desired outcomes or objectives for each of the courses. Part of the implementation was finding the harmony between the mission of the college, the institutional objectives, and objectives from both a concentration level and a course level. Each of the classes were outlined for the curriculum maintained at least five course

objectives that coincided on all institutional levels.<sup>36</sup> As the syllabi were created, the researcher allowed space for an instructor to implement his or her assessment tools to accomplish the desired outcome of the course.

### TRACS Requirements

The final aspect of phase two was observing the needs of TRACS in establishing a concentration. Appendix G is the concentration or program change document that must be filled out by the Chief Academic Officer of each institution. The guidelines include (but are not limited to) providing sample Syllabi<sup>37</sup>, obtaining and proving advisory board approval of new programs and concentrations, and displaying proof of benchmarking against at least three comparable programs. Each question will be filled in completely and verified by a TRACS Employee before the completion of this project.

### Phase Three and Four

The third phase of the project could potentially be defined as the data validation phase. While data has been gathered and coded across the previous phases of the project, phase three involved the development and substantiation of the research. The main sources of corroboration of the research were qualified faculty members and members of the advisory board. One group provided substantiation from a theoretical perspective and the other from an authorization perspective. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, credentialed faculty met regarding the proposed curriculum and provided substantive feedback and verification of the outline of the course mapping for the

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

proposed curriculum. This feedback and verification then enabled the CAO to present the curriculum to the advisory board of the college, which received full approval on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Phase four is the final validation proof of the proposed curriculum coming from TRACS' team. The completed prospectus was completed and sent to TRACS on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for verification and approval. This action on behalf of the researcher and WCBC is the final implementation of the project. The outcomes of this verification will be discussed in the results chapter of this project.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The collective results of the gathered interviews divulge the counseling experiences of each participant. Through discussions with the participating alumni of WCBC, the researcher was able to unveil insights, concerns, and conclusions from the given experiences of alumni in a myriad of ministry contexts and positions. This section serves as the extensive review into the data gathered from the ministry landscapes of each participant. Graduates of a school or university are the product of the educational services. As a father or mother may delight in the noble actions of their child, so a university takes great pride in the achievements of its graduates. The natural tendency of an organization is to focus on its strengths and many colleges would point to the success of its alumni as a sign of strength. This data, however, is not intended to show the strength of the organization. Quite literally, these interviews put on a full display of an area of weaknesses within WCBC. The data, given through the voice of the product, is intended to expose the areas of weakness in the advanced topics are central to counseling. Only when a problem is placed on display can the solution be created.

### **Research Results**

One of the greatest parts of any project begins with the voice of the participants within the project itself. Each of the participants provided above and beyond what was requested within the interview and allowed for maneuvering from question to question. The interviews took place with the alumni would set the stage for the first portion of the data connection within the triangulation, which includes the curriculum assessment and the California requirements for a

licensed counselor. The beginning of this section deals specifically with the alumni portion of the research.

### Education Beyond WCBC

The question of continued education arose early within the interview to later clarify the level of understanding of counseling situations before their educational journeys beyond WCBC. Most of the participants had explored advanced degrees beyond WCBC. The desire to continue education is obviously part of the journey that each individual must make. However, as this study is focused upon the areas of need within the curriculum at WCBC, it is important to note how many individuals pursue education beyond WCBC and how many of them had a counseling focus. The following figure shows the exact number of participants who continued education after their time at WCBC:

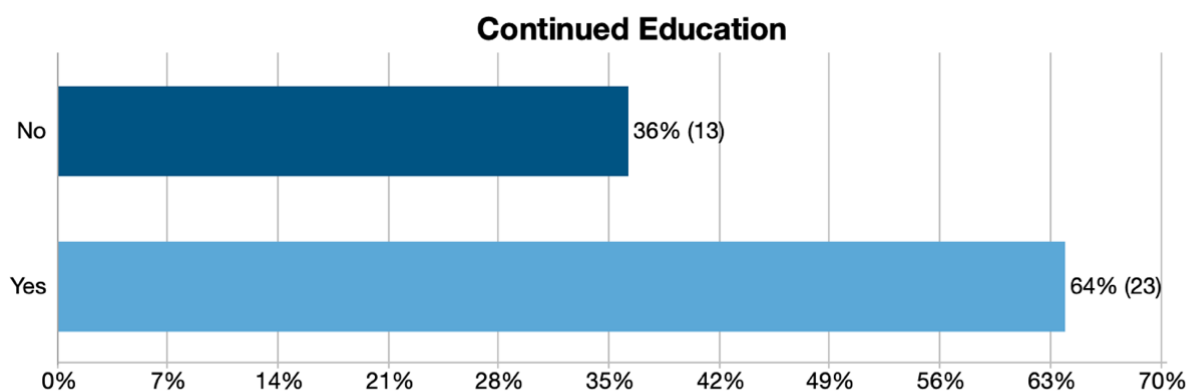


Figure 4.1. Continued education of participants

Among those who did pursue education beyond WCBC, the vast majority stated they went into fields under the canopy of theological studies (i.e., ministry, biblical studies, divinity). While it is not necessarily unknown that alumni pursue theological studies beyond WCBC, it is note-worthy for further study as every bachelor's student at WCBC will complete a minimum 32



credits worth of theology and Bible. The figure below shows the fields of study that the graduate participants pursued beyond their conferred degree from WCBC.

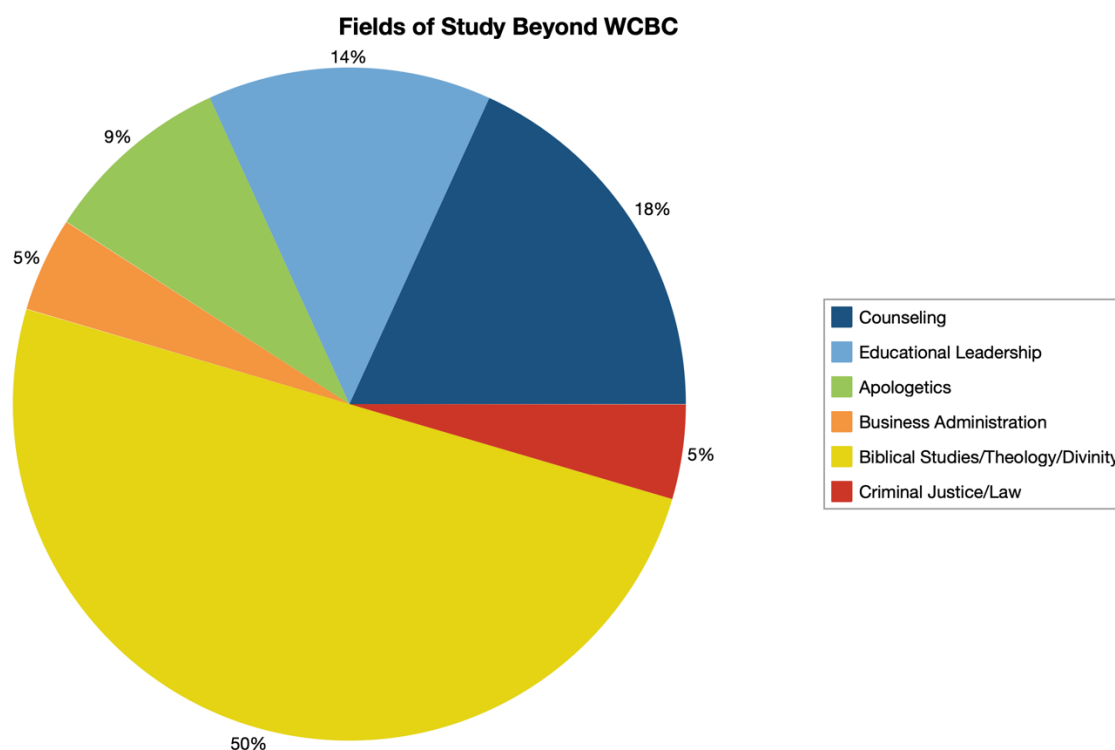


Figure 4.2. Fields of education beyond WCBC

Beyond the fields that would be considered within the realm of biblical studies, the second highest degree pursued beyond WCBC was in the field of counseling, followed by the fields in educational leadership and apologetics. Ultimately, graduates are predominately staying within the fields that can be used in a ministry setting. However, continuing education in the field of counseling can reveal a particular feeling of inadequacy in the training received at WCBC in this field.

#### Counseling Routines and Competency

The questions that followed simple demographic inquiries were directed towards the counseling routines and challenges of the participants. The participants were asked to give an

estimated amount of time that they spend counseling individuals in their ministry context on a weekly basis. The results were categorized as less than five hours weekly (<5) or five hours or more weekly (5+). Collectively, those who identified as pastors or senior pastors were more likely to counsel for five hours or more throughout the week. The following figure shows the breakdown by positions and their estimated counseling hours spent throughout the week:

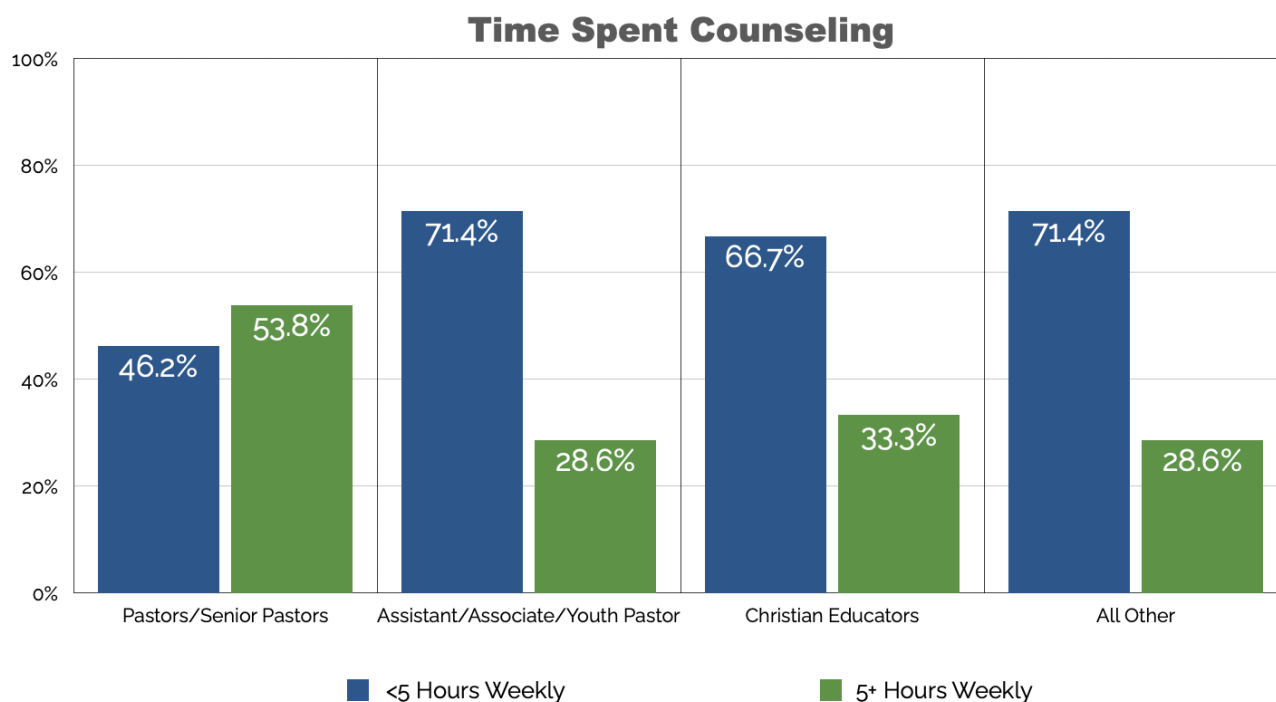


Figure 4.3. Time spent counseling among different vocation groups

Within the time each participant spends in a counseling relationship, typically some topics will arise more than others. These topics were presented by each participant within every interview. Many of the topics were central to the core of relationships, others were based upon the context of the ministry servant. For instance, one participant whose ministry is based in Seattle mentioned this as a particular common topic that arises in counseling:

Here in Seattle, drug addiction. I mean, drugs are pretty much legalized across the board in Seattle. And because of that, I deal with a lot of people that have

essentially, for all practical purposes, ruined their lives up to this point with hardcore addictions to hardcore drugs...<sup>1</sup>

This displays a unique element of what a ministry servant may deal within the specific context of the ministry in which he or she is placed. Ultimately, addictions are a problem that fits into many different contexts; however, this alumni chose to highlight this issue in an effort to bring light to a very difficult set of counseling situations.

A common theme that saturated this portion of the interviews was relationships and marriage. One of the graduates serving in Cambodia mentioned their involvement in relationship counseling due to the breakdown of the traditional home in Cambodia.<sup>2</sup> In a separate interview, the researcher asked about the type of questions or topics arise consistently in the moments of counseling. The participant who serves in a Spanish ministry said the following about his counseling experience in a Hispanic culture:

*[Relating to those in the forty-five-year-old range]* You know, what do I do with my teen? What do I do with the future of my family?... Uh, the reason that is so prevalent or ... things that that I counsel most is because in the Hispanic culture. From a Hispanic, even people that live in Mexico, that they never were taught or they never know how to deal with kids or teens. So from their background, they just- they assume that the kids will look at them and just do everything they say. But that comes from a culture that has no other influences. For example, if you grew up in El Salvador and you grew up in a little shack basically the size of my office with your six brothers and sisters and your mom and dad, you really didn't have teachers to teach you. You went to school, but then it was too far or they needed money so they started working. So by, you know, age 9 or 10, they were not in school anymore. They were doing whatever Mom and dad said. And it was all about work rather than relationship. And because you didn't have any other influences, the kids ended up being just like the parents, mostly... The kids get outside influences way more than they did back in their home countries. And the kids are not turning out to be like their parents, and they're wondering why? And what do I do? Because I'm doing exactly what it was done to me. So why are my kids not turning out like I am or like I did?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Research Interview #1

<sup>2</sup> Research Interview #21

<sup>3</sup> Research Interview #15

Ultimately, the cultural and local setting plays a pivotal portion in what type of situations or counseling care will be required; however, relationships and marriage were topics that were well saturated across all contexts. Figure 4.4 displays what types of counseling in which the interviewees participate. The “Marriage and Relationships” code was used most consistently in the current counseling context (48 percent of all coded segments regarding “Current Counseling Issues”).

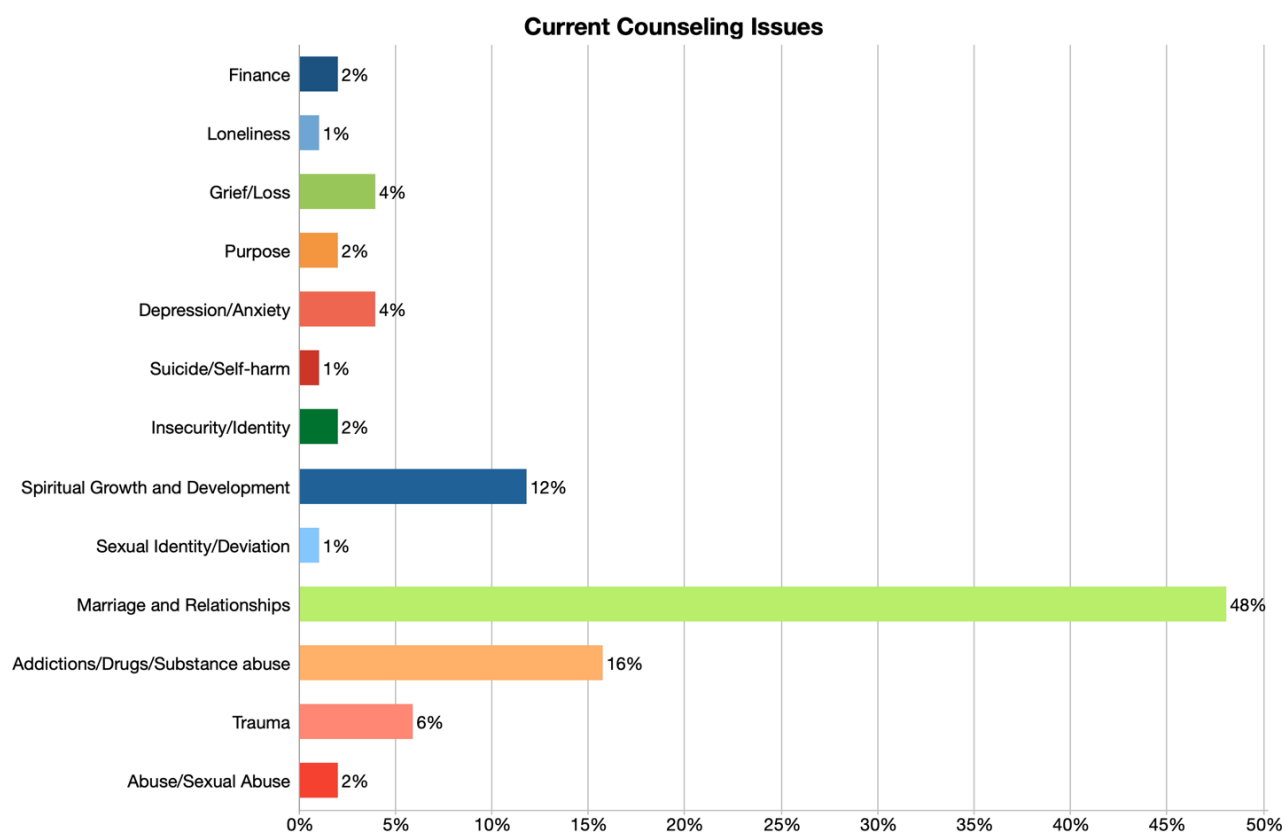


Figure 4.4. Current counseling issues

The next section of the interviews dealt with the areas in which the participants felt ill-equipped (based on their training at WCBC) to give counseling care. This area becomes the most crucial area of data as it pertains directly to the problem that was presented within the first

Chapter of the thesis. The next figure gives evidence from the perspective of the participants of which counseling topics are trouble points for WCBC alumni.

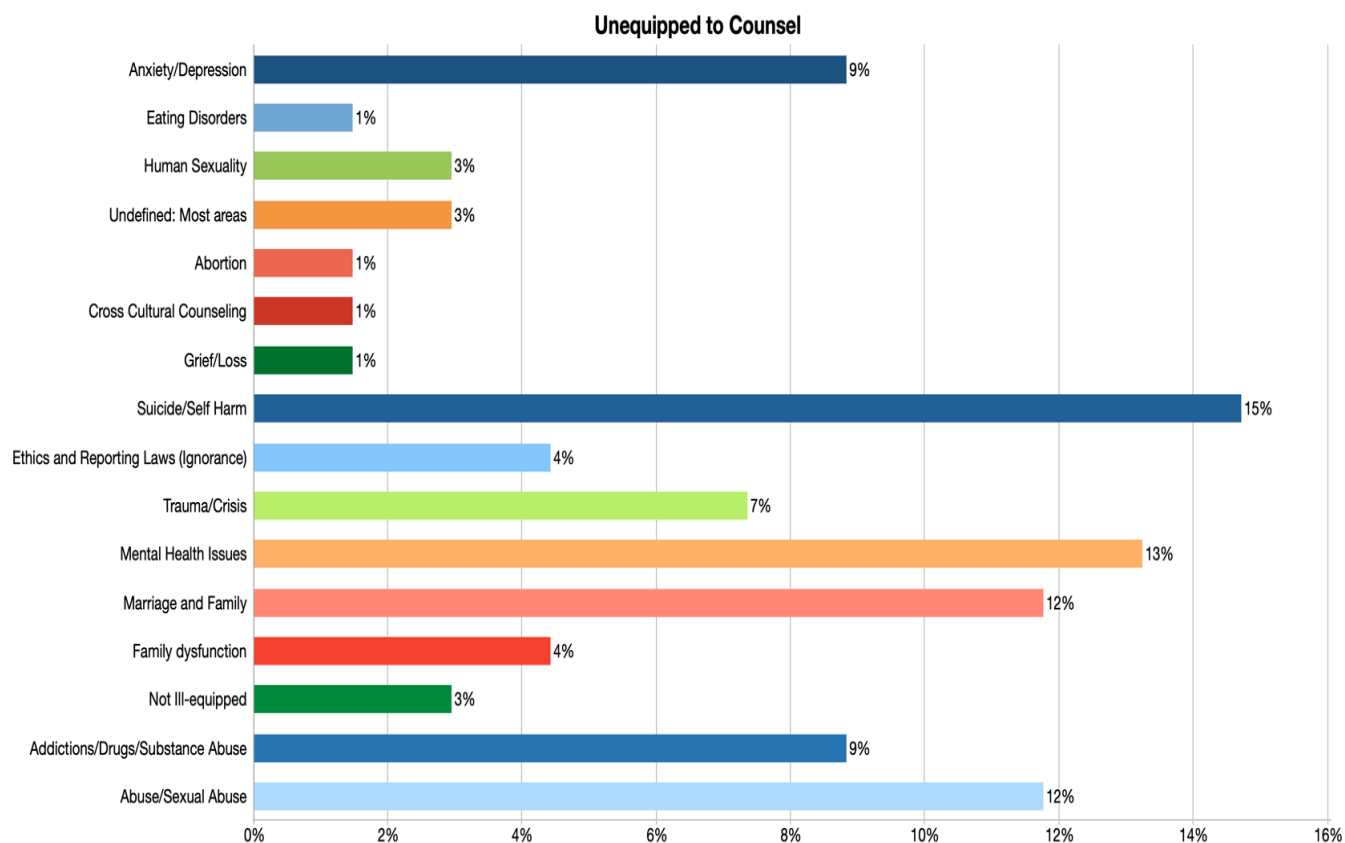


Figure 4.5. Unequipped to counsel

While there was an obvious bulge in the data regarding current counseling issues, the areas in which the alumni participants were inadequate were not as defined. Clearly leading area of inadequacy among the participants by percentage of coded segments was “Suicide/Self-harm.” The word “Suicide” appeared in 52.8 percent of the interviews and was most declared by those who are not in a Pastor or assistant pastoral role. Regarding the area of suicide, one participant mentioned the following in response to which areas they felt ill-equipped to counsel:

Well, um, in all realities, I always ill-equipped in myself. Um, I’ve told people in our church that if there’s something that they’re dealing with and I’m not confident in immediately in helping them, you know, I would, you know, I mean, again, when it deals with suicide, you know. My military training kicks in there,

you know, right off the bat I would- if I'm not comfortable doing it- I would get some help immediately.<sup>4</sup>

Not only did this participant mention the fact that they were uncomfortable with the topic of suicide, but they also mentioned the feeling of inadequacy altogether. This correlates with what another alumni pastor mentioned regarding counseling, “My wife and I talked about this the other day. She’s like, I didn’t think you could counsel anybody when you got your bachelor’s degree... she’s like, ‘I had no confidence in you.’”<sup>5</sup>

The researcher finally turned the conversation towards what counseling areas would the ministry servant need to prepare for that will arise within the next five to ten years. Once again, there was an answer that was more-well saturated than the other responses:

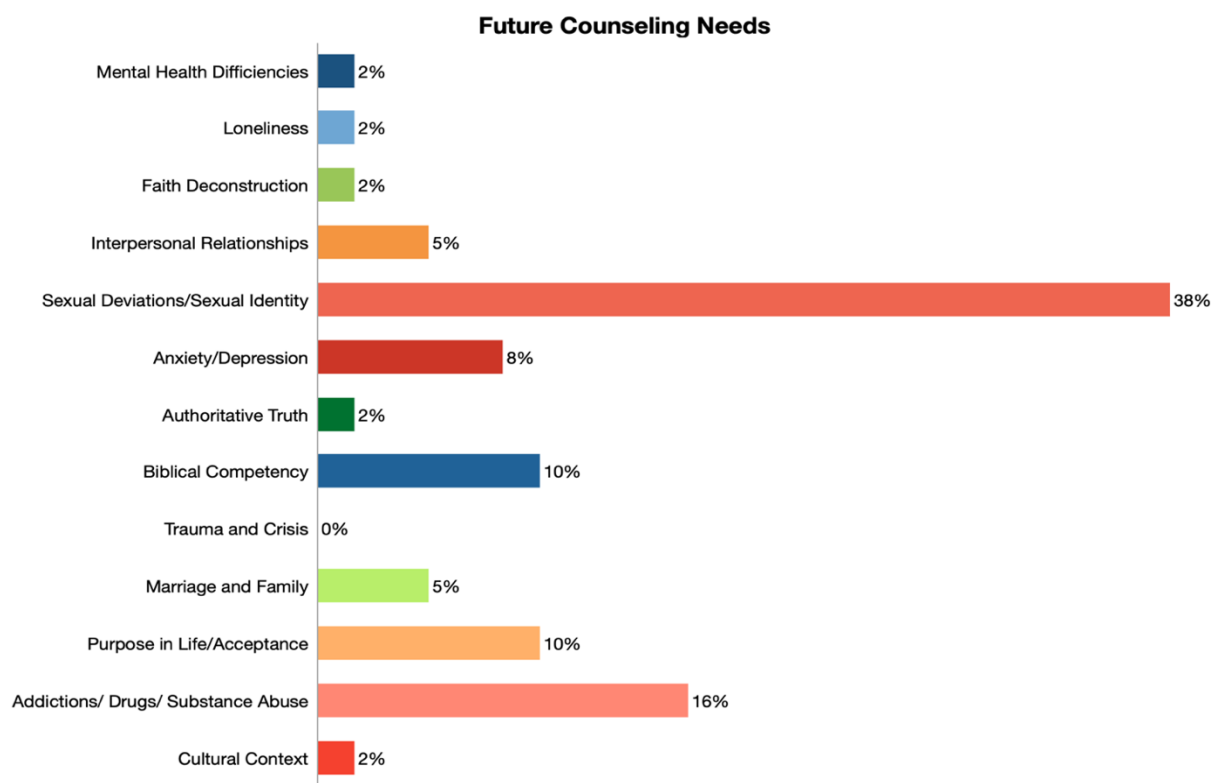


Figure 4.6. Future counseling needs

<sup>4</sup> Research Interview #35

<sup>5</sup> Research Interview #30

Throughout the interview process, most interviewees did not hesitate when asked what counseling topics would be prevalent in the next five to ten years. Most of the participants immediately went to the problems surrounding gender confusion and sexual deviations. Along with this theme was the needed response of ministry servants towards the LGBTQIA agenda. Ultimately, the participants felt as though it would be widespread and would need to be handled through counseling care in the church. The discussions were directed at observing what the Bible states about the genders and God's plan for sexuality and marriage.

While other areas were identified, the three most important data pieces from the interviews were the need to recognize the current counseling routines and provided care; the areas in which alumni feel unprepared to provide counsel; and the perspective of alumni regarding the needs that will arise in future counseling. As all of this data was collected, the researcher was able to compare these three areas with data from the curriculum that exists at like-accredited institutions. The next set of data that will be displayed is the results of benchmarking with the institutions the researcher examined in the theoretical section of this report.

### Institutional Review

This portion of the results is focused on collected data coming from observing institutions with the same accreditor as WCBC. As the researcher examined Southern California Seminary, Luther Rice Seminary, and Bob Jones University, there were notable similarities and notable exceptions within each course listing. Each of the degrees on display have the following characteristics:

1. Each is led by an institution/university accredited by TRACS.
2. Each program is a Masters (post-bachelors) level program.
3. Each program is specifically in counseling with a perspective on ministry service.

The main vehicle for examining these degrees in counseling was the individual websites and catalogues of each unique university or institution. The researcher developed a table in which each unique name of a class within the curriculum between the three institutions was placed. The table included the names of each institution and marked which institutions retained that course title within their given counseling curriculum. Each class in the table represents a unique name and description of a course. Often there were courses that carried different titles but had matching and synonymous descriptions, these classes were placed under one name in the table. The reader may observe the table that was created below. The courses that are included in the curriculum of a particular school receive an “x” within the school’s given column.

**Table 4.1. Course curriculum across similar institutions**

<b>Name of Class</b>	<b>SCS</b>	<b>LR</b>	<b>BJU</b>
Advanced Counseling Issues (cultural, psychological, legal)		x	x
Conflict Resolution	x		
Counseling Children & Adolescents			x
Counseling Issues (anxiety, depression, guilt)			x
Counseling Practicum 1	x	x	x
Counseling Practicum 2			x
Crisis Counseling	x	x	
Foundations of Biblical Counseling	x	x	x
Helping Skills		x	
Marriage and Family Counseling	x	x	x
Methodology in Counseling	x	x	
Sex Abuse Prevention & Training			x



Theories of Counseling	x	x	x
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Within these courses, the reader will observe that there are thirteen definite and unique class listings between the three schools, and of those listings, four carry a triple inclusion between the three institutions. This represents a trend and should be considered for the curriculum development. The following figure can display an accurate illustration of the percentages of each school and how they correlate:

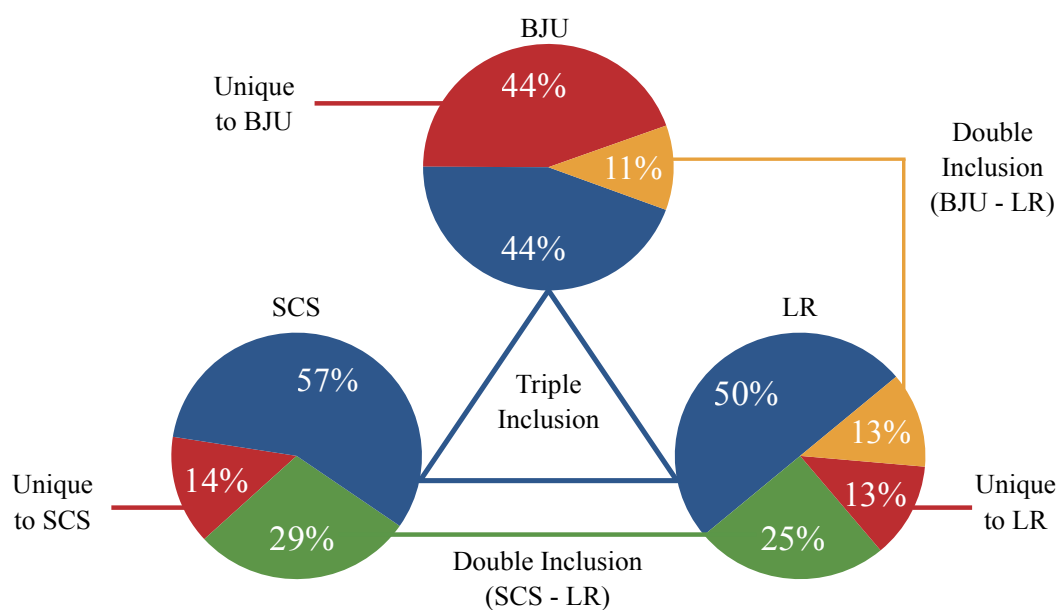


Figure 4.7. Course inclusion pie chart

The similarities between Luther Rice and SCS are the strongest of the three schools, while BJU comprises the most unique degree. Nearly half of each degree carries a strong parallel between all three schools, which provides the context for further discussion of what should be included within a counseling curriculum. While each school has its own context in which it operates, as observed by the counseling interviews, there is an importance that is observed of those topics that carry across local settings and environments.

The following classes were included in the core curriculum across the three colleges: Theories of Counseling, Foundations of Biblical Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling, and Counseling Practicum. In the section to come, it will be important to consider the classes that are parallel through these programs, as this data will provide insight into understanding how to design the curriculum's scope and sequence. As with any research project, it is important to comprehend the body of work that exists regarding literature and practice that add to the general subject fully.<sup>6</sup> The classes listed between these existing institutions put an objective display of what could be essential to add to a new curriculum in the same field or discipline.

#### Review of California Requirements

The location and culture of a church or ministry are needed to understand the values of people. As so, understanding the ordinances of governing bodies within that location is instrumental way of understanding the need of the individuals within the region. West Coast Baptist College makes no apologies for the place of its residency, and therefore, the researcher can view what the state requires for counseling licensure as relevant data to add to the data triangulation. While the college has no desire (currently) to seek licensure from the state regarding counseling authority, it can be noted that the data from the required core of learning would be a suitable third preset in the data analysis.

The researcher was able to locate the core learning aptitudes that are necessary for licensure for a professional counseling in the state of California through the California Association for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (CALPCC). The requirements in

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<sup>6</sup> Douglas H. Clements, "Curriculum Research: Toward a Framework for 'Research-Based Curricula,'" *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* vol. 38, no. 1 (2007), 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30034927>.

California lie in four separate areas: overall degree units (master's or doctoral level), including core content areas, advanced coursework (counseling practicums, which include clinical supervision), and separate units and exams in California law and ethics.<sup>7</sup> This section will solely use the requirement of the core content areas for the measurement of data needed.

An individual seeking licensure in California must complete a minimum of sixty-credit hours of graduate-level counseling education.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, in addition the minimum level of education needed, a licensed clinical mental health worker must also complete three thousand supervised clinical hours, pass an ethics and law exam, and complete a minimum of thirty-six continuing education hours every two years.<sup>9</sup> Within the initial sixty hours of graduate-level instruction, California has provided thirteen content areas are essentially what the state considers essential in the core educational content for counseling care.<sup>10</sup> If these areas are crucial to the governing bodies in California, it should be significant as a relevant data source for establishing a curriculum at WCBC. While licensure is not the goal of the curriculum and will not be accomplished through the completing of the degree, the breadth of counseling material is helpful to assess alongside of the interview results and the results from the evaluation of the (non-licensure) programs of other similar institutions. The following table presents the thirteen core content areas and the description given specifically by the CALPCC:

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<sup>7</sup> "Guide to Educational Requirements: Associate Professional Clinical Counselor," Board of Behavioral Sciences (Revised February, 2023), 2.

<sup>8</sup> "License Requirements," Licensing, California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors, <https://calpcc.org/pages/license-requirements>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Guide to Educational Requirements," 2.

**Table 4.2. California core content areas and description**

Core Content Area	Description
1. Counseling & psychotherapeutic theories & techniques	The counseling process in a multicultural society, an orientation to wellness and prevention, counseling theories to assist in selection of appropriate counseling interventions, models of counseling consistent with current professional research and practice, development of a personal model of counseling, and multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, and disasters.
2. Human growth and development across the lifespan	Normal and abnormal behavior and an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior.
3. Career development theories & techniques	Career development decision-making models and interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development.
4. Group counseling theories & techniques	Principles of group dynamics, group process components, developmental stage theories, therapeutic factors of group work, group leadership styles and approaches, pertinent research and literature, group counseling methods, and evaluation of effectiveness.
5. Assessment, appraisal, & testing of individuals	Basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, statistical concepts, social and cultural factors related to assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups, and ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments and techniques in counseling
6. Multicultural counseling theories & techniques	Counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, identity development, promoting cultural counseling theories social justice, individual and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse and techniques populations, and counselors' roles in eliminating biases and prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.
7. Principles of the diagnostic process	Differential diagnosis, and the use of current diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the impact of co-occurring substance use disorders or medical psychological disorders, established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders, and the treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care.
8. Research and evaluation	Studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, the use of evaluation research to inform evidence-based practice, the importance of research in advancing the profession of counseling, and statistical methods used in conducting research, needs assessment, and program evaluation.

9. Professional orientation, ethics & law in counseling	Professional ethical standards and legal considerations, licensing law and process, regulatory laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice, counselor-client privilege, confidentiality, the client dangerous to self or others, treatment of minors with or without parental consent, relationship between practitioner's sense of self and human values, functions and relationships with other human service providers, strategies for collaboration, and advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impeded access, equity, and success for clients.
10. Psychopharmacology	The biological bases of behavior, basic classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications so that appropriate referrals can be made for medication evaluations and so that side effects of those medications can be identified.
11. Addictions counseling	Substance abuse, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, major approaches to identification, evaluation, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse and addiction, legal and medical aspects of substance abuse, populations at risk, the role of support persons, support systems, and community resources.
12. Crisis or trauma counseling	Crisis theory; multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, or disasters; cognitive, affective, behavioral, and neurological effects associated with trauma; brief, intermediate, and long-term approaches; and assessment strategies for clients in crisis and principles of intervention for individuals with mental or emotional disorders during times of crisis, emergency, or disaster.
13. Advanced counseling & psychotherapeutic theories and techniques	The application of counseling constructs, assessment and treatment planning, clinical interventions, therapeutic relationships, psychopathology, or other clinical topics.

These thirteen core areas present the third article of the data triangulation that can be used to build the courses necessary to support the needs that WCBC graduates will encounter in their various ministry settings. To create the proper curriculum all three data sets must be analyzed together to find the standout topics and themes in order to produce a well-structured curriculum. The final portion of this section will review the process of interpreting the data and providing the necessary inclusions to the counseling material.

### **Data Analysis**

In this portion of the research, the researcher must determine the relationships between the three sources of data to produce an effective curriculum considering the needs of WCBC

students, the relevance across institutions, and the measure of importance based upon the local context of the college. The benchmarking across institutions proves effective in assessing the validation of what other institutions are doing to give their students essential counseling education. The California content areas provide the third element of triangulation in providing contextual importance to the data received from the alumni interviews and the analysis of the institutions. These three data points prove the essential listing of a curriculum for ministry students at a California Institution.

The data reveals that the first class that would be essential to place within the counseling curriculum would be a class that discusses the foundations and theories of counseling. The like-institutions all included a foundations class, which can be an equivalent to the only existing course in the MRE program entitled “Advanced Biblical Counseling.” Due to timing, the title of this course could not be changed in this catalog year for the college; however, beyond this catalog year, the class will be relabeled to be entitled, “Foundations of Biblical Counseling.” For this project and the full completion of the curriculum, this class will be known as “Foundations of Biblical Counseling.” The objectives in this current class will be adjusted to fit the needs essential to what the data reveals as necessary objectives.<sup>11</sup> The content in California requires a class that details legal and ethical considerations, which will be a core objective of the foundations class. A broad introduction to multicultural counseling, listening skills, and discernment will be a pivotal portion of this course

Based purely upon the current counseling routines of alumni and the benchmarking done at other institutions, it seems fairly palpable that a class in “Marriage and Family Counseling” would be essential to providing needful capacity for ministry servants. This class would involve

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix I for more details concerning course objectives.

both pre-marital counseling training as well as counseling through family dysfunction. The description of this course reveals that this class would explore the complex details of the realm of personal relationships within the marriage and family unit and beyond. The ultimate goal of the course would be to train students to counsel families and individuals through interpersonal relationship topics.

The response of the alumni regarding their areas of insufficiencies were slightly scattered; however, the answers can fit into several main entities, which include trauma and crisis; anxiety, depression, and other mental health struggles; marriage, family, and relationships; and addictions. As the topic of marriage, family, and relationships has already been covered, the curriculum can look to see what other areas were centrally covered by the data points. Trauma and crisis education both aligned once again with the like-institutions and California Content Areas; therefore, it was determined to add a class regarding counseling Trauma and Crisis. The objectives would align with California content as students will receive crisis and trauma assessment training and be instructed on how to intervene in the lives of those who are troubled.

Within the validation meeting with the faculty, as the researcher presented the data, it was suggested that a class be constructed covering several mental health subjects. Ultimately, the suggestion was to cover them in such a way that successfully presented the problem and diagnosed the proper procedure to help successfully counsel the one who is suffering. The class would be called “Problems and Procedures” and would cover mental health arenas such as addictions, anxiety, depression, grief, and loss. The class would uncover the problematic area and would provide helpful responses and solutions. While this class would likely become multiple different classes in track or degree that would lead to licensure, WCBC is not seeking

that level of qualification. Furthermore, due to the limitation of credit hours within the concentration this curriculum will seek to cover the material through this single course.

The Fifth class was due to the overwhelming response of the participants regarding the questioning about future counseling issues. Over and over, the interviewees responded claiming that they thought the issue of human sexuality would continue to be on the rise. From issues regarding sexual deviation to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or others (LGBTQIA+) agenda. This overwhelming response was hindered in the data flow only by the like-institutions, which did not seem to offer a class in human sexuality; however, one of the California core content areas is regarding human development across life. The researcher determined the overwhelming response of the participants and the validation of the California content areas proved enough to apply a class entitled “Human Development” to the course listing. This class would apply theories of Human development as well as God’s purpose in design and sexual orientation, ultimately fitting the needs of future alumni. The course description specifies that the course thoroughly explore the *imago Dei* as expressed through human sexuality and identity. Ultimately, this will enhance the students’ ability to counsel issues that may arise in the future from those who struggle with gender dysphoria and God’s purpose in creating them to be either male or female.

The final course addition was a needful capstone class to mark the end of the training and bring together all of the content within the concentration. Based on California’s requirements and the all three of the like-institutions, a counseling practicum would be the proper fit for this class. The counseling practicum requirements will be seen in the included syllabi.<sup>12</sup> The Counseling Practicum will be constructed slightly different than the previously courses in that the practicum

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix I.



will take place over fourteen weeks rather than the traditional seven. The nature of the course will prove to be difficult, and thereby, the college has determined that more time will be able to fulfill the given objectives of the course.

These six courses will be the concentration course path for the MRE in Biblical Counseling and will be added to the four core classes MRE program.<sup>13</sup> A fifth addition to the core classes, Apologetics and Worldview, was determined for this concentration that would be shared by both the biblical studies concentration. Thereby, the six concentration classes are as follows: Advanced Biblical Counseling; Problems and Procedures; Marriage and Family Counseling; Trauma and Crisis Counseling; Human Development; and Counseling Practicum.

### **Summary of Results**

The researcher was justified in the presented problem at the beginning of the project. WCBC graduates have surely revealed through their admission that they have several advanced areas of inadequacy in counseling. Ultimately, this has guided them to pursue continued education elsewhere or refer to another when the problem becomes too much for their expertise. This led the researcher to compile the topics necessary for the curriculum. Along the way, the researcher encountered several anticipated and unanticipated moments in the data collection. This section serves as the high-end view of some of those moments.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

The most pleasant surprise within the data collection stage was the speed at which the participants volunteered and responded. This was unanticipated and set up the speed at which the

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<sup>13</sup> Advanced Hermeneutics, Apologetics and Worldview, Spiritual Formation and Discipleship, Servant Leadership, and Research and Writing

interviews could be scheduled and the completion of the entire body of interviews. The participants were also extremely open in responses to the myriad of questions. They provided the researcher with a plethora of data for coding and adding to the research. Ultimately, the participant interviews, while part of the over grand scheme of the research, worked surprisingly well and brought about the perfect alignment with the corresponding data. One of the unexpected delights was in hearing from several of the participants how needful the degree would be in the current climate. One participant who serves in a large city area with multiple other like-faith churches said the following: “We could probably pay and hire a full-time person to do counseling between just our 3 or 4 churches. We could easily fund one and keep them very busy.”<sup>14</sup> This lends towards the needfulness of the training that will take place and ultimately towards the curriculum’s implementation. These types of responses were the verification that the research was needful.

Another unexpected outcome was the alumni's response to back-to-back questions regarding future counseling needs and essential needs for future counselors. Ultimately, the interviewer asked the participants what counseling topics would be on the rise within the next five to ten years and what they thought would be essential in the education of those who would be counseling in the future. Before the interviews took place, the anticipated outcome would have been that these two questions would provide a similar answer; however, this was not the result. The figure below displays the responses to the question regarding essential education for counselors:

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<sup>14</sup> Research Interview #25

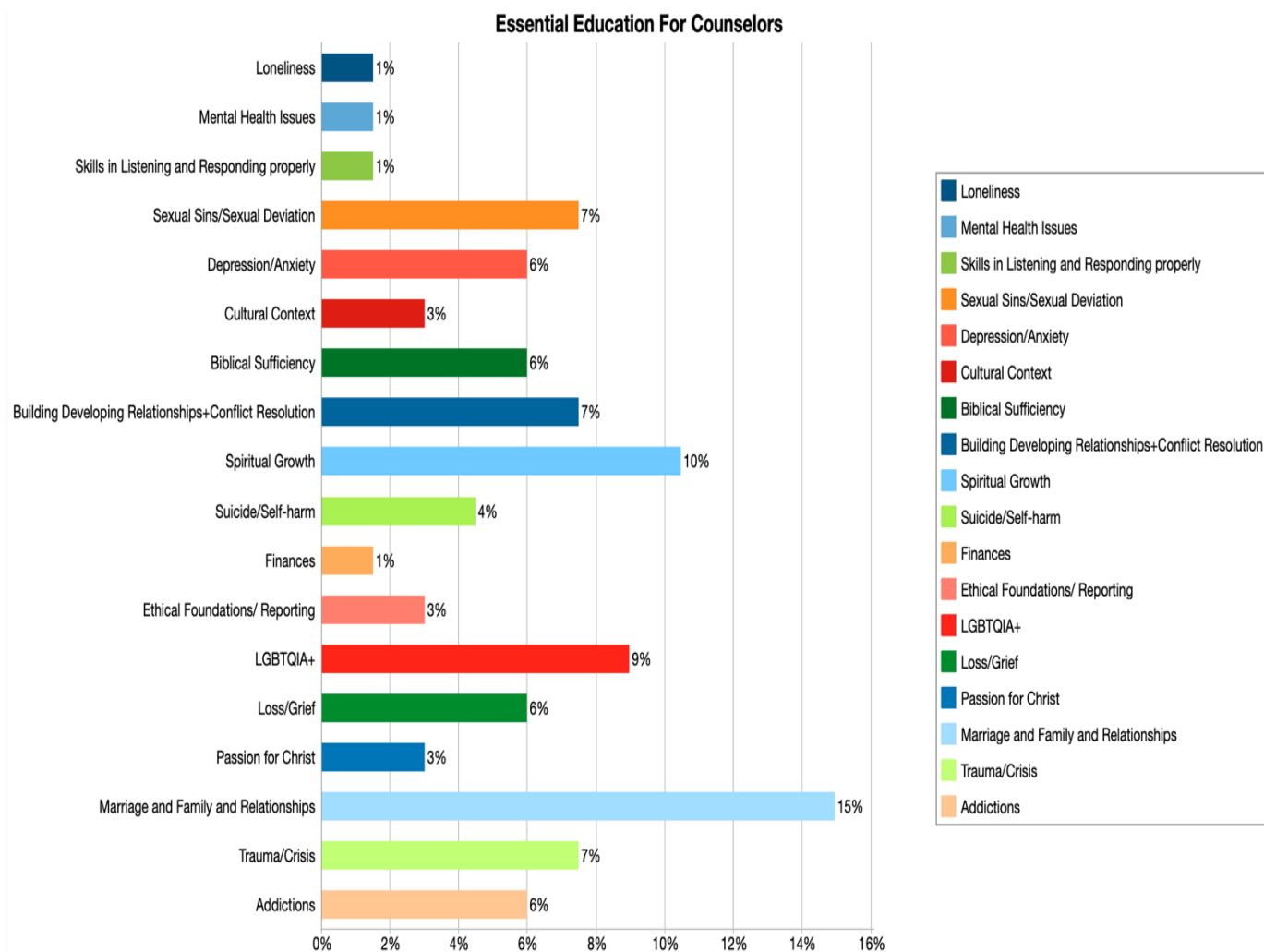


Figure 4.8. Essential education for counselors

If the reader were able to analyze both charts 4.6 and 4.8, they could easily see a more wide-spread, in-vivo like response from the participants, which created some confusion on the part of the researcher. Once more, the anticipated result was that these two questions would provide the similar response; however, the responses were typically different and varied based upon the individual participant.

The third unanticipated outcome was realistically the lack of responses in the current counseling subdivision dealing with depression or anxiety. This outcome will be discussed at length in the final Chapter; yet, from a bird's eye-view, this seemed to be counter intuitive based

upon the review of the literature and current climate regarding depressive behavior amid all ages. As a result of this relatively quiet front regarding depression and anxiety, other unexpected topics came to the forefront of each of the topics.

### Anticipated Outcomes

The researcher found that some of the responses of the alumni were particularly common among the position groups. For instance, the list of topics mentioned by senior pastors was more widespread than those listed by Christian Educators. In the same comparison, 20 percent more pastors spend 5+ hours each week counseling than the Christian Educators. These types of outcomes based on the occupations were relatively more anticipated.

Another major anticipation on behalf of the researcher was that the current counseling routines included counseling the topics of marriage and relationships more than any other topic. Based upon the interaction that each being has with another, most problems stem from interpersonal relationships and thereby need the intervention of wise counsel. Marriage is the greatest form of one of these types of relationships and typically engulfs the time of most ministries. It was no surprise and anticipated that this topic would arise so often in most subdivisions.

The final anticipated outcome was the approval of the TRACS team with regard to the establishment of the developed curriculum at WCBC. On June 7, 2024 a request for an addition of a concentration was submitted to TRACS.<sup>15</sup> The curriculum that was developed (including the syllabi for the new counseling courses) was included within the form.<sup>16</sup> The president of TRACS

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix G for the TRACS Concentration Addition form.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix I for the Counseling Courses Syllabi.

received the request for the addition, and on July 15, 2024, the counseling concentration for the MRE program was approved for implementation at WCBC.<sup>17</sup> The curriculum will start in full use beginning September 2024.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this study show conclusive evidence of the necessary features of a counseling curriculum is designed to equip each learner to be adequately prepared for the situations that will arise within the ministry setting. The researcher was able to receive this utilize this data to conclude a course mapping and learning outcomes for each facet of the counseling curriculum. The revealed data from the participants demonstrate the success of this project and contributes towards the long-term success of those who will learn to counsel through the problems in years to come.

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix J for TRACS Approval Verification.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to develop a curriculum that equipped West Coast Baptist graduate ministry students to increase counseling competence. The research that supported the purposes was significantly driven by the problem of the thesis. Ultimately, the problem presented was the lack of counseling training the WCBC graduates received through their degree. This assumed problem was revealed to be factual through the interviews that took place with the research participants. Since the curriculum needed to be developed, the researcher surmised that the participants of the study needed to be those who are in the ministry, particularly those who have already experienced of the current curriculum. As examined in the results section, the participants acknowledged a myriad of insufficiencies in their training regarding counseling, which included areas such as depression and anxiety, trauma and crisis, self-harm and suicide, and others.

The research solidified the need for a counseling curriculum and the course mapping crucial to the concentration within the MRE program at WCBC. The project was verified on three different levels. First, the faculty of WCBC verified the areas of coverage within the project. Second, the advisory board approved the implementation of the project. Third, TRACS approved the sufficiency of the concentration to be accredited by their institution. These elements of verification allowed the researcher to label the project as a success.

The following section is committed to the implications, applications, and limitations of the researcher. The researcher will also provide topics of consideration for those searching to

engage in further research within the broader arena of counseling education or counseling within the ministry context.

### **Research Implications**

The conclusions drawn from the sources were measured against best practices in similar schools and counseling content in California for validity. Out of this triangulation, a curriculum was established for WCBC masters students, which will expand the counseling aptitudes of incoming students for years to come. The implications can be summarized in the following subsections.

#### Continued Education

One of the prevailing components of this project was the need for continued education among those in the ministry. The true gospel minister must never stop learning and growing in faith and truth. The literature examined earlier in the project outlined this thought and the areas of weakness in the participant's ability to counsel certain topics demonstrated the need to continue growing specifically in counseling education. Each ministry worker must determine whether they will be content in the areas of weakness existing in their spectrum of knowledge or if they will commence in a journey of growth consider continuing their education. Realistically, the core of this project is in the sphere of continuing education as the curriculum built was established on a master's level instead of an undergrad or high school level. Thereby the principal concept of this thesis was the need for those in ministry positions to continue their excursion towards growing in knowledge of how to use the gospel to see lives transformed in counseling.

### Counseling and Ministry

The first implication is that counseling is a part of the fundamental Baptist ministry for years to come. Based on the responses of the alumni, each of the participants was engaged in some type of weekly counseling situation (formal or informal). Counseling is a large element of what happens within churches, and based upon the research committed to this project, counseling will be a large element in the years to come. The researcher concludes that in the future (if not already), ministries will likely be hiring full-time counselors to engage the counseling needs within the congregation. Positionally, this staff member will likely be in some form of pastoral authority; however, the researcher believes that this member of staff can be on any level of staff and be effective. The ministry is a breeding ground for the problems of people and therefore counseling will become a major element of what is done within the ministry setting.

If a full-time staff member is not hired to be the counselor for the congregants of churches, pastors will take on a greater counseling role within the next five to ten years. In the results section, it was discussed that pastors are more likely than any other ministry position to counsel 5+ hours weekly. This number is expected to rise based upon the continued rise of problems among all people groups. The researcher concluded that the pastoral counselor will become as vital in the next ten years as the senior pastor role.

### Ethical Dilemmas

Each church and ministry will need to determine how it will handle counseling those with gender dysphoria. Due to the nature of legal ramifications that are rising in different states over gender-affirming counseling, each church must be cognizant of the way it handles these affairs while still abiding with the ever-living truth of God's Word. The project revealed that more participants think that sexual deviation/identity problems will arise over the next five to ten



years, which will inevitably create problems legally for the local church. This conclusion was drawn based upon the sheer volume of times that it was mentioned by the alumni participants.

The issue of ethical boundaries is going to become a predominant concern if counseling continues to function in a local church environment. While ministries do not have to operate typically within the same rules and limitations of licensed counselors, it would do well for all ministers to understand and value cultural norms within ethics and legality of counseling. An implication of this research project is the acknowledgment that counseling will be taught to ministers, and thereby, ethical norms in the counseling arena must be recognized and understood.

### **Research Applications**

In a study that covers the sphere of several topics including counseling and education, various applications can stem from the project. The applications can be practiced in the saturated arena of curriculum design and development or in the needs of local church's counseling ministries. The applications can even stem to the regular practices of local fundamental churches. The findings of the researcher that can be applicable in other areas are located in the following sections.

#### **Promotion of Further Counseling Services in the Church**

One of the obvious promotions of the project is the increased regular service of counseling in the local church setting. The aim of the research is to create a curriculum that would be helpful for ministry servants in counseling. Ultimately, the curriculum will not only provide the knowledge of how to counsel advanced topics but put its students in the proper positions to apply their skills. This will create an environment furthering the regular action of individual or group counseling care in the local church. With future graduates of WCBC

completing an MRE in counseling, potential hires would include those designated specifically for counseling within certain ministries. The enhancement of individual propensities for counseling within ministry positions will have an effect on regular services that are provided by the church.

#### Higher Education Curriculum Development Based upon Alumni Data

The researcher hopes that this curriculum study will not only lend itself towards the ministry from a counseling perspective but also can be applied to educational fields. The nature of curriculum development is a vast topic and needs not to be amended or transformed; however, this research could be a helpful model in the development or modification of curriculum of an institution. Ultimately, utilizing the graduates of one's own institution as the guiding beacon of change in curriculum is the basis of this research and can be applied in most settings. Institutions are typically communicating with alumni to retain their support. The greatest difficulty in applying this research in this capacity is that WCBC serves a vocational-type setting and does not focus on the variety of topics. Instead, WCBC has limited major programs, and every single graduate is trained with Bible ministry as his or her focus. However, small vocational-type settings can use the model provided within this study.

This research also provides the road map towards ministries that would like to establish counseling seminars or courses that can provide lay-people or outside ministry workers with the ability to study some of the widerer topics. The data collected through the participants is truly what ministry workers see weekly and should serve as a guiding light for other ministries to follow suit.

### **Research Limitations**

Within every project or research study, elements come into play that enhance the researcher's ability to apprehend data or limit the researcher's ability. The limitations are often not a mark of failure within a study but represent a wider gap yet to be uncovered in a similar field. Often, these gaps create recommendations for further research in the future. This section demonstrates the limitations of study in this project.

### **Course Limitations**

The five added classes to complete the curriculum in biblical counseling were imperative to the curriculum based on the collected data. The unfortunate limitation of this project was the MRE degree. As mentioned at multiple times throughout the project, the MRE program is comprised of thirty-three credits and eleven courses. Out of those existing courses, five would be labeled as core curriculum. The limitation existed in the open opportunities to add courses that the researcher considered a valuable to the program. As revealed in the results section, there were many deficiencies of the alumni in the area of counseling aptitudes; however, relatively few areas could be covered with the curriculum. While the problems and procedures class set out to assess addictions and provide solutions, a separate course wholly devoted to caring for those with addictions would have been a valuable inclusion. In addition to a separate course on addictions, a separate course navigating the difficulties surrounding anxiety and depression would have also carried a significant importance. Due to the limitation of the MRE structure, the researcher could only include those items that proved to be imperative.

### Implementation of Curriculum

The nature of this study was to produce an effective curriculum for developing the counseling skills of WCBC graduate students. The measurement of effectiveness provided the limitation within the study. The measurement of effectiveness was based upon the testimony of the alumni participants, the benchmarking across institutions/California, and the verification of TRACS. One distinct limitation was the inability to see the curriculum in action in a classroom setting. The study was successful in the researcher's ability to surmise the content of the curriculum based on the three data points; however, the researcher was limited in the implementation of the given curriculum. This limitation was mentioned at the beginning of the project. Still, it should be mentioned at the conclusion as a gentle reminder that the design of this project was to be based upon the testimony of WCBC alumni in the ministry and not of students in a particular class.

Another element of this limitation was the limit of authority with regard to the researcher and the organization. While the college was more than accommodating and offered the researcher the utmost support, there are elements of authority in the academic requirements to add a concentration that had to be factored. Another project may allow a researcher to construct and implement a curriculum; however, considering WCBC is an internationally known accredited institution, that freedom was limited. The primary illustration of this limitation would be the class titled, "Advanced Biblical Counseling." The research could use a foundations course to strengthen biblical counseling. Due to time limitations, the name of this class could not be changed in the catalogue year; however, the plan is to have the course name changed by the implementation of the next catalogue year.

The speed of completion was often the greatest limit as all permissions took time to run their natural course through the college leadership. Realistically scheduling difficulties were the

main thrust of this limitation. Every meeting that needed to be rescheduled was often a setback in at least a week of work. While this is not an unknown challenge to most research projects, it was one of the greatest limitations in curriculum development.

### Denominational Borders

The research is also limited from a denominational standpoint. While this is purposeful on the part of the researcher, as part of the greater element of research, it must be noted that this research was done to be set in a Baptist setting. WCBC is a school that is solely Baptist and intends to produce graduates who work in solely Baptist environments. This is a vital element of what makes WCBC the organization that it stands to be today. The researcher acknowledges the committed stance of the college; however, It would be research-worthy to compare across denominational settings some of the results of the interview among ministry workers. The limitation of this study is that those who were interviewed were predominately in a Baptist setting, and therefore, the researcher could not delineate across denominational borders. Interviewing ministry leaders from various denominational settings could provide additional awareness for the needs in religious circles outside of Independent Fundamental Baptists (IFB). Ultimately, the project was to produce a curriculum strictly for college and thereby for members of IFB churches so the essence of the project would change entirely if this was not a given limitation.

### Ethnic Gaps

The ability to connect with individuals from multiple areas on a map was not of great difficulty for the researcher. One major limitation, however, that prevented the researcher from being able to collect varied information was the lack of diversity amid the ethnic groups of the

participants. The researcher was able to collect data from all areas of the United States and even several foreign countries; however, assessing the questions from an ethnically distinct level was a limitation of the data collection. Only four of the participants were not identified as Caucasian or white. Of those four who identified as different ethnic groups, two were Asian, and two were Hispanic or Latin American. Not a single individual who was identified as African American or black would be included in the study. By not having a single ethnic group within a research study, the voice of that particular ethnicity is completely missing. This missing voice could reveal some relevant and pertinent information that can only be provided by that ethnicity.

### **Further Research**

In every quest for truth, there are alternative ideas, concepts, and questions arise and can be explored. This quest proved to have a similar effect. New questions came to the forefront of study that peaked the researcher's imagination and interest. One such example came in the form of understanding what issues are currently being assessed and helped in local churches. As figure 4.4 demonstrates, "Marriage and Relationships" dominates the current focal point of all the counseling among alumni; this is likely not a surprise. However, what did come at a surprise to the researcher was the lack of counseling in depression and anxiety. Ultimately, the astonishment came due to the number of individuals who claimed to have episodes of major depression. The National Institute of Mental Health released statistics that claim that in 2021 alone, 8.3 percent of adults (ages eighteen and above) suffered from at least one major depressive episode and 20.1 percent teenagers under the age of eighteen suffered a major battle with depression.<sup>1</sup> The impact of depression does not exclude Christians. The question comes, if nearly one out of every ten

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<sup>1</sup> "Major Depression," Mental Health Information, National Institute of Mental Health, last modified July 2023, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression>.

adults and two out of every teenager are suffering from at least one major depressive episode, why was this topic lower than 5 percent among the topics currently addressed by alumni?

The literature showed that many faith-oriented people seek out their faith leaders for mental health struggles. Therefore, one would likely conclude that the statistics should prove to be much higher in the realm of depression. As observed in the result section, this is certainly not the case. With the majority of participants engaged in fundamental Baptist churches, is there a stigma within fundamentalism, which proves to discourage depressed individuals from seeking care within the church? Are those members of local churches who suffer from major depression afraid to be labeled negatively from a spiritual standpoint? The consideration of many evangelical groups is that depression is a negative effect the implications of sin.<sup>2</sup> For instance in a study published in 2011, it was observed that Baptist senior pastors recognized the biological causes for mental health imbalances; however, these same pastors, depression and anxiety was more due to spiritual factors (sin or a lack of faith) than biological factors.<sup>3</sup> For those in the conservative fundamentalist circles, this perception is common. Due to the influence of nouthetic counseling, it has often been perceived that depression does not require a medical diagnosis but that of spiritual transformation, and thereby treats depression with more prayer and Bible reading.

The recommendation for study would be for an individual to observe the perceptions of IFB ministers and parishioners regarding mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. How is care given in this specific setting? How do those who come to receive counsel feel about

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Lloyd, ““His Main Problem Was Not Being in a Relationship with God’: Perceptions of Depression, Help-Seeking, and Treatment in Evangelical Christianity,” *Frontiers in Psychology* vol. 13 831534, (Apr. 2022), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Stanford and David Philpott, “Baptist Pastors Knowledge and Perceptions of Mental Illness,” *Mental Health Religion and Culture* vol. 14, no. 3 (March 2011), 289.

the way they are perceived? Do these individuals who struggle have further anxiety letting those who carry oversight of soul-care know of their mental state? The trepidation can be caused by a feeling of ‘embarrassment’ to admit to a real inward struggle, a struggle, which seems to be contrary to the feelings of joy and peace recognized in others. Could there be great pressure placed on outward appearances requiring someone with great humility to admit to an inward problem? These are some considerations that can further be studied to understand the state of depression or the lack thereof within the IFB movement.

A second recommendation of study would be to examine the scenarios and outcomes of those who feel they have been abused from a religious standpoint due to the religious leadership structure. Within the interview process, the participants mentioned a myriad of mental struggles of congregants (as displayed in the results section), and a commonality stood out enough to mention. Religious trauma was mentioned in several interviews and the root cause was due to the leadership structure of certain church organizations in the conservative circles. Michelle Panchuk addresses spiritual or religious trauma and discusses the manifestation of this trauma when, “[People] come to God asking for bread, but who seem to have received stones and serpents in its place.”<sup>4</sup> She investigates the source of religious trauma and finds that hermeneutical malpractice can be a source of furthering the hurt of those suffering from trauma and can lead to the furthering of shame and abuse done in the church.<sup>5</sup> Why is hermeneutical malpractice tolerated in the “house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”? (1 Tim. 3:15, KJV)

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<sup>4</sup> Michelle Panchuk, “The Shattered Self: A Philosophical Exploration of Religious Trauma,” *Res Philosophica* vol 95, no. 3 (2018), 505.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Panchuk, “Distorting Concepts, Obscured Experiences: Hermeneutical Injustice in Religious Trauma and Spiritual Violence,” *Hypatia* vol 35, no 4 (2020), 621.



The toleration seems to be among the congregants who will not diligently search and interpret the scripture as God desires for all believers (Acts 17:11). In this area of laziness, they allow leaders to occupy positions of authority, and this authority begins to usurp the trust of those congregants who are going through life's fiercest difficulties. Rather than use the tool of Scripture, they become the tool who wield verses taken out of place and context to further their own wisdom and power.

As mentioned in the sections detailing the limitations of the study, a further suggestion by the researcher is for a future researcher to interview ministry workers across various gospel preaching denominations regarding their counseling routines. The further study would reveal denominational differences in how many hours ministers spend counseling weekly, what topics are continuously being covered, and which areas need more training. In addition to the counseling routines of the ministry leaders of other denominations, it would be helpful to get a glimpse into which denominations churches are more likely to refer individuals to outside counsel for things beyond their expertise.

One of the interview questions asked to the alumni participants referenced having a referral routine and a list of those to contact when a counseling situation may exceed the aptitude of a particular counselor. Of all the alumni who participated, few could fully explain their referral process. One of the participants mentioned, "I do believe a referral process is absolutely critical, but I'm unfortunately not able to describe it in my ministry context."<sup>6</sup> While some interviewees had a fixed process of referring difficult cases to the proper places, others would admit a similar lack of certainty or knowledge of a defined referral process. This leads right into the final recommendation for future study.

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<sup>6</sup> Alumni Interview #7

Fundamentalism is as much a social identity as it is a theological position. Martin Marty claims, “Fundamentalism, involving as it does some ten to twenty million Americans, is obviously a social phenomenon and demands interpretation as such.”<sup>7</sup> The fundamentalist groups, as noted within the introduction, can be identified as those who have firmness and dogmatism in their beliefs.<sup>8</sup> Such rigidity, often keeps individuals from adopting views and beliefs from outside of their religious social construct.<sup>9</sup> It would be a valuable study to understand the complexities of the fundamental Baptist social structure and how that construct seems to impede ministry leaders from making recommendations or referrals from outside of their community. The study could be conducted in such a way to analyze these churches based on their leadership. For instance, what percentage of churches with a younger leadership staff is more open to exploring referrals in comparison to those churches led by older leaders. Another factor could be the setting of the church. Are churches in the northeast more likely to refer outside of the church or less likely to refer outside of the church than those in other portions? These types of analytics could provide good insight to the cultures of churches in varied settings.

Earlier in the project, the researcher summarized the unique theories of biblical counseling, which included the differences between nouthetic counseling, biblical counseling, and faith-based integration in counseling. The recommendation would be to analyze the levels of trust of ministry leaders in fundamental Baptist churches of the discipline of psychology. The potential fear of the practice of psychology, even from Christian psychologists, could be a movement towards what Adams’ calls Freudian or Rogerian philosophy.<sup>10</sup> The word

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Marty, “Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon,” *Review & Expositor*, vol. 79, no. 1 (1982), 19.

<sup>8</sup> Wanting Zhong, Irene Cristofori, Joseph Bulbulia, Frank Krueger, and Jordan Grafman, “Biological and cognitive underpinnings of Religious Fundamentalism,” *Neuropsychologia* vol. 100 (2017), 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 268.

“compromise” is a negative term among most fundamentalist. Thereby, for a fundamentalist to embrace psychology, or refer others to those practicing psychology, they are from Adams’ perspective leaning into the tutelage of Freud and Rogers. John Carter believes that Adams’ perspective comes from a naïve understanding of psychology and further believes Jay Adam’s philosophy reveals his failure to understand the original works of Freud and Rogers.<sup>11</sup> Carter continues to state, “Adams’ theory of nouthetic counseling is deficient on both biblical and psychological grounds.”<sup>12</sup>

While Carter is extreme in his rebuke of Adams’ works and Adam’s concept of nouthetic counseling, there is on the opposite spectrum, and there is an extreme fear of applying anything but Scripture towards man’s psychological deficiencies. This move away from Scripture towards science brings back into view what was discussed in the first Chapter about the anxiety among fundamentalists to trust anything other than the words found within the Bible. The recommended study would be to analyze the fundamentalist’s view of the integration of psychology and develop a method of which neither tears at the foundations of another’s work or neglects proven and applied sciences in the discipline of psychology.

### **Summary**

The church is a sanctum of truth, love, and support which flows from its creator and redeemer, Jesus Christ. The three characteristics of truth, love, and support are the foundations of what makes counseling a truly Christ-like function. Through listening skills and understanding, individuals can feel the support they need to bear their spiritual, emotional, or physical issues or

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<sup>11</sup> John Carter, “Adams’ Theory of Nouthetic Counseling,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, vol 3, no. 3 (1975) 154.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

complications. Through patience and sacrifice, the counselor lovingly carries the burdens of another. Finally, through truth, the Scriptures can be implemented to bring liberty to those who are in bondage. This summarizes the task of the biblical counselor. More importantly, this perfectly summarizes the example that Christ left. He listened and understood the hurting, He lovingly bore the burdens of others, and He spoke truth to bring liberty to those who were in bondage. This example must be followed and taught by all who will hold the banner of Christendom.

As observed, the education of biblical counselor is crucial to the upholding the mission of the church. If the church is not counseling individuals back to the truths of Scripture, those same individuals will find answers in all the wrong places. The main flow and concept of this project is passing along the truth to willing and able individuals who can support and love others in through the counseling session. When truth effectively passes from one individual to the next, proper implementation of that knowledge can ensue. The truths developed from this research have provided the proper apparatuses to allow truth to be effectively transferred to students who will be able to love, support, and instruct those who will come seeking for proper counsel.

## APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT

### Consent

**Title of the Project: Ministry Counseling Curriculum**

**Principal Investigator:** Nicholas Piervicenti, DMin. Candidate, Liberty University.

#### Invitation to be part of a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a graduate of West Coast Baptist College or a current graduate student. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose for this DMIN action research project is to develop a curriculum that equips West Coast Baptist graduate ministry students in advanced counseling issues. The main attributing factor of this purpose is the need for better counseling education amongst Baptist ministry workers.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a scheduled phone interview lasting between 30–45 minutes
2. Participate in an internet-based survey which should take between 15–20 minutes.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include furthering the counseling knowledge of ministry workers so as impact local congregations with trained counseling laborers in individual communities.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

### How will personal information be protected?

Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Research data will be stored on a password locked computer. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Necessary academic information from the course will be kept private and stored in the academic office drive.

### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or West Coast Baptist College. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Nicholas Piervicenti. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him through text or call at [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [REDACTED].

### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

**Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

**APPENDIX B: PERMISSION REQUEST**

December 29, 2023

Dr. Tobi England  
Chief Academic Officer  
West Coast Baptist College  
4010 E. Lancaster Blvd  
Lancaster, CA 93535

Dear Dr. England,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry. The title of my research project is "Ministry Counseling Curriculum: Building a Counseling Curriculum for Higher Education Ministry Students." The purpose of my research is to develop a curriculum that equips West Coast Baptist graduate ministry students in advanced counseling issues.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at West Coast Baptist College and utilize your current student and alumni listings to recruit participants for my research.

Participants will be asked to complete a phone interview survey and a short internet-based survey.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. I have provided a template for you to utilize.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Piervicenti  
DMin Candidate



**APPENDIX C: PERMISSION RESPONSE**

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Nicholas Piervicenti  
DMIN Candidate  
Liberty University  
1971 University Blvd  
Lynchburg, VA 24515

Dear Nicholas Piervicenti

After careful review of your research proposal entitled "Ministry Counseling Curriculum: Building a Counseling Curriculum for Higher Education Ministry Students," We have decided to grant you permission to receive and utilize our current graduate student and alumni listing for your research study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- We will provide our membership list to Nicholas Piervicenti, and Nicholas Piervicenti may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in his research study.
- We grant permission for Nicholas Piervicenti to contact current West Coast Baptist College graduate students and West Coast Baptist College Alumni to invite them to participate in his research study.
- We will not provide potential participant information to Nicholas Piervicenti, but we agree to send his study information to West Coast Baptist College graduate students and West Coast Baptist College Alumni on his behalf.

Sincerely,



Tobi England, PhD  
Chief Academic Officer  
West Coast Baptist College

**APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT LETTER/EMAIL**

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to develop and implement a curriculum that equips West Coast Baptist graduate ministry students in advanced counseling issues, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be at minimum a bachelor's graduate from West Coast Baptist College or a current student in the graduate program of the College. Participants will be asked to participate in two surveys the first will be an internet-based survey and the second will a survey conducted over the phone. It should take approximately one hour to complete both of the surveys. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me by emailing [REDACTED] or by texting/calling [REDACTED].

A consent document will be emailed three weeks before the beginning of the course. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before the start of the course.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Piervicenti  
DMin. Candidate

[REDACTED]

**APPENDIX E: SOCIAL MEDIA POST**

ATTENTION WCBC Alumni: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to develop a curriculum that equips West Coast Baptist graduate ministry students in advanced counseling issues. To participate, you must be a graduate of West Coast Baptist College or a graduate student. Participants will be asked to participate in two surveys, which should take about an hour. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click on the link below and fill out the necessary information or contact me through email at [REDACTED]. A consent document will be provided approximately three weeks before the beginning of the course. Participants who complete the course will receive one graduate credit for the work that they put into the course.

**APPENDIX F: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS****PHONE INTERVIEW SURVEY FORMAT**

DATE: TBD

TIME: TBD

INTERVIEW ADMINISTRATOR: Nicholas Piervicenti

PARTICIPANT:

**Prayer****Phone Interview Questions**

1. What year did you graduate from West Coast Baptist College?
2. In which country, state, and city are you currently serving?
3. How would you define your current role in ministry?
4. How long have you been in your current ministry position?
5. What types of education (if any) have you pursued beyond your education at West Coast Baptist College?
6. How many hours do you spend in any type of counseling per week?
7. What age groups do you spend counseling the most?
8. From a counseling perspective, what type of topics consistently arise?
9. Which topics do you feel ill-equipped to counsel?
10. What are your thoughts on group counseling?
11. What (if any) types of curricula do you use to counsel individuals?
12. What types of counseling issues do you foresee arising in the future?
13. What counseling topics do you feel are necessary in the training of ministry servants?
14. Explain your referral process (if applicable).

**Closing Remarks (Gratitude Expressed)****Closing Prayer**

**APPENDIX G: TRACS CONCENTRATION ADDITION FORM**

**Prospectus Checklist for a 2.9 Institutional Change – The addition or deletion of a concentration / area of emphasis within an approved educational program.**

1a - Provide a detailed description of the proposed change including the nature and purpose of the proposed change in relation to the institution's mission and objectives.

1b - What location(s) will be impacted by the proposed change?

1c - What is the planned date of implementation for the proposed change?

1d - What is the projected number of students to be impacted by the proposed change?

1e - Who is the primary target audience for the proposed change?

1h - Describe how the proposed change impacts current planning and assessment processes.

2a - Provide evidence that the institution has obtained all approvals/authorizations required for the proposed change, including Board approval and governmental and/or other agency authorization as appropriate.

2b - Provide evidence that the institution's Board and other relevant constituents were involved in the review and approval of the proposed change.

2c - Discuss the rationale for the proposed change including an assessment of need and, as appropriate, a market analysis, and a competition/differentiation analysis.

3a - Indicate the name of the program, the credential to be awarded upon completion (A.A., B.S., Ph.D., etc.) and the total number of units required for completion.

3b - Present a scope and sequence for the program including course numbers, name, course descriptions, and units to be awarded per course noting new courses.

3c - Provide a course syllabus template or sample syllabi for new courses for the program.

3d - Provide course syllabi for Distance Education courses reflecting the requirement for regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor.

3e - Provide documentation demonstrating that the program has been benchmarked against comparable programs offered at a minimum of three other accredited institutions.

4a - Provide a complete roster of current faculty employed and/or identified faculty positions for future employment to teach in the program.

4b - Demonstrate how faculty course loads in the proposed program, as well as course work in existing programs, will be impacted by the proposed change.

4c - Provide evidence of faculty involvement in the processes for program and course review and approvals as related to the proposed change.

5a - Describe the library/learning resources currently available as well as those that will be needed to support the proposed program. If current resources are insufficient, provide an action plan for securing the necessary resources.



6a - Describe the institution's physical facilities and the equipment that is available to support the proposed change as well as those that will be needed to support the proposed change. If current facilities and equipment are insufficient, provide an action plan for securing the necessary facilities and equipment.

6b - Assess the impact that the proposed change will have on the current facilities and equipment available for existing programs and services.

7d - Detail the anticipated overall financial impact of the proposed change, including start-up and first year costs and break-even analysis.

**APPENDIX H: CODEBOOK****Codebook System**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>SEGMENTS CODED</b>
1 Continued Education	13
1.1 No	13
1.2 Yes	23
2 Referral Process (+)	19
3 Essential Education For Counselors	32
3.1 Loneliness	1
3.2 Mental Health Issues	1
3.3 Skills in Listening and Responding properly	1
3.4 Sexual Sins/Sexual Deviation	5
3.5 Depression/Anxiety	4
3.6 Cultural Context	2
3.7 Biblical Sufficiency	4
3.8 Building Developing Relationships+Conflict Resolution	5
3.9 Spiritual Growth	7
3.10 Suicide/Self-harm	3

3.11 Finances	1
3.12 Ethical Foundations/ Reporting	2
3.13 LGBTQIA+	6
3.14 Loss/Grief	4
3.15 Passion for Christ	2
3.16 Marriage and Family and Relationships	10
3.17 Trauma/Crisis	6
3.18 Addictions	5
4 Current Counseling Issues	39
4.1 Finance	2
4.2 Loneliness	1
4.3 Grief/Loss	4
4.4 Purpose	2
4.5 Depression/Anxiety	4
4.6 Suicide/Self-harm	1
4.7 Insecurity/Identity	2
4.8 Spiritual Growth and Development	12
4.9 Sexual Identity/Deviation	1
4.10 Marriage and Relationships	16

4.10.1 Pre-Marital Issues	2
4.10.2 Extended Family Issues	3
4.10.3 Divorce	1
4.10.4 Parenting	6
4.10.5 Marital Issues	11
4.10.6 Outside Relationships (Boss, Friends, Coworkers)	8
4.10.7 Unsaved Spouse	2
4.11 Addictions/Drugs/Substance abuse	16
4.12 Trauma	6
4.13 Abuse/Sexual Abuse	2
5 Age Groups in Counseling (+)	32
6 Time Spent Counseling	23
6.1 5+	14
6.2 <5	22
7 Graduation Year	34
8 Purpose	1
9 Ministry Position	22
9.1 Pastor's Wife	1
9.2 Church Planter	1

9.3 (Non-full time) Volunteer	1
9.4 Non-Ministry, Tutor, Nanny	2
9.5 Assistant Pastoral Role	7
9.6 Elder/Deacon	1
9.7 Christian Educator	9
9.8 Former Youth Pastor	1
9.9 Project Manager	1
9.10 Pastor/Senior Pastor	11
10 Unequipped to Counsel	56
10.1 Anxiety/Depression	6
10.2 Eating Disorders	1
10.3 Human Sexuality	2
10.4 Undefined: Most areas	2
10.5 Abortion	1
10.6 Cross Cultural Counseling	1
10.7 Grief/Loss	1
10.8 Suicide/Self Harm	10
10.9 Ethics and Reporting Laws (Ignorance)	3
10.10 Trauma/Crisis	5

10.11 Mental Health Issues	9
10.12 Marriage and Family	8
10.13 Family dysfunction	3
10.14 Not Ill-equipped	2
10.15 Addictions/Drugs/Substance Abuse	6
10.16 Abuse/Sexual Abuse	8
11 Future Counseling Needs	42
11.1 Mental Health Deficiencies	1
11.2 Loneliness	1
11.3 Faith Deconstruction	1
11.4 Interpersonal Relationships	3
11.5 Sexual Deviations/Sexual Identity	23
11.5.1 Gender Confusion	7
11.6 Anxiety/Depression	5
11.7 Authoritative Truth	1
11.8 Biblical Competency	6
11.9 Trauma and Crisis	0
11.9.1 Abuse	1
11.9.2 Religious Based Trauma	2

11.10 Marriage and Family	3
11.11 Purpose in Life/Acceptance	6
11.12 Addictions/ Drugs/ Substance Abuse	10
11.12.1 Sexual Addictions	2
11.12.2 Social Media/Gaming	6
11.12.3 Drugs/Substances	4
11.12.4 Pornography	1
11.13 Cultural Context	1

### **Coding List**

1 Continued Education

1.1 No

1.2 Yes

2 Referral Process

3 Essential Education For Counselors

3.1 Loneliness

3.2 Mental Health Issues

3.3 Skills in Listening and Responding properly

3.4 Sexual Sins/Sexual Deviation

3.5 Depression/Anxiety

3.6 Cultural Context

3.7 Biblical Sufficiency

3.8 Building Developing Relationships+Conflict Resolution

3.9 Spiritual Growth

3.10 Suicide/Self-harm

3.11 Finances

3.12 Ethical Foundations/ Reporting

3.13 LGBTQIA+

3.14 Loss/Grief

3.15 Passion for Christ

3.16 Marriage and Family and Relationships

3.17 Trauma/Crisis

3.18 Addictions

#### 4 Current Counseling Issues

4.1 Finance

4.2 Loneliness

4.3 Grief/Loss

4.4 Purpose

4.5 Depression/Anxiety

4.6 Suicide/Self-harm

4.7 Insecurity/Identity

4.8 Spiritual Growth and Development

4.9 Sexual Identity/Deviation

4.10 Marriage and Relationships

4.10.1 Pre-Marital Issues



4.10.2 Extended Family Issues

4.10.3 Divorce

4.10.4 Parenting

4.10.5 Marital Issues

4.10.6 Outside Relationships (Boss, Friends, Coworkers)

4.10.7 Unsaved Spouse

4.11 Addictions/Drugs/Substance abuse

4.12 Trauma

4.13 Abuse/Sexual Abuse

5 Age Groups in Counseling (+)

6 Time Spent Counseling

6.1 5+

6.2 <5

7 Graduation Year

8 Purpose

9 Ministry Position

9.1 Pastor's Wife

9.2 Church Planter

9.3 (Non-full time) Volunteer (Children, Teens, Media, etc.)

9.4 Non-Ministry, Tutor, Nanny

9.5 Assistant Pastoral (Role Includes: Associate, Singles, Assimilation, Adult Ministry)

9.6 Elder/Deacon

9.7 Christian Educator

9.8 Former Youth Pastor

9.9 Project Manager

9.10 Pastor/Senior Pastor

## 10 Unequipped to Counsel

10.1 Anxiety/Depression

10.2 Eating Disorders

10.3 Human Sexuality

10.4 Undefined: Most areas

10.5 Abortion

10.6 Cross Cultural Counseling

10.7 Grief/Loss

10.8 Suicide/Self Harm

10.9 Ethics and Reporting Laws (Ignorance)

10.10 Trauma/Crisis

10.11 Mental Health Issues

10.12 Marriage and Family

10.13 Family dysfunction

10.14 Not Ill-equipped

10.15 Addictions/Drugs/Substance Abuse

10.16 Abuse/Sexual Abuse

## 11 Future Counseling Needs

11.1 Mental Health deficiencies

11.2 Loneliness

- 11.3 Faith Deconstruction
- 11.4 Interpersonal Relationships
- 11.5 Sexual Deviations/Sexual Identity
  - 11.5.1 Gender Confusion
- 11.6 Anxiety/Depression
- 11.7 Authoritative Truth
- 11.8 Biblical Competency
- 11.9 Trauma and Crisis
  - 11.9.1 Abuse
  - 11.9.2 Religious Based Trauma
- 11.10 Marriage and Family
- 11.11 Purpose in Life/Acceptance
- 11.12 Addictions/ Drugs/ Substance Abuse
  - 11.12.1 Sexual Addictions
  - 11.12.2 Social Media/Gaming
  - 11.12.3 Drugs/Substances
  - 11.12.4 Pornography
- 11.13 Cultural Context

## APPENDIX I: COUNSELING COURSES SYLLABI

### BC 501 Human Development

*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

Assigned Instructor

#### Course Description

Human development and sexuality investigate a process of transformation in the life of individuals expressed through the emotional, volitional, mental, social, and spiritual elements. Students will analyze theories of human development as compared with God's Word. A deep dive into *imago Dei* as expressed through human sexuality and identity will help the student counsel individuals into God's plan for sexual identity and behavior.

#### Course Objectives

	The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	Institutional Objectives	MRE Concentration Objectives
1	Identify different theories of human development and analyze them in comparison to God's Word	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2
2	Develop a theological explanation for God's intention of human development	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	1, 2
3	Understand <i>imago Dei</i> and how it applies to human development	1, 5, 6	1, 2
4	Develop strategies for counseling those struggling with sexual identity	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
5	Navigate the cultural elements that may affect the sexual appetites or attitudes of an individual back towards the truth of God's Word and design.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
6	Apply listening and hermeneutical skills for each counseling session.	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2

#### *Institutional Learning Objectives:*

1. Articulate and defend the historic faith and biblical worldview.
2. Apply information literacy skills, including research and critical thinking.
3. Demonstrate competency in applied skills and the creation of works appropriate for the communication of the gospel to unbelievers.
4. Exemplify a servant-leadership model of Christian ministry through the local church.
5. Exhibit a comprehensive academic knowledge appropriate to the level of the degree.
6. Communicate truth effectively through applicable modalities.

*Master of Religious Education Biblical Counseling Objectives:*

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theological foundations relevant to counseling practices
2. Evaluate counseling frameworks and procedures effective for facilitating growth in various counseling issues
3. Exhibit an understanding of legal and ethical principles with regard to the practice of biblical counseling

### **Course Requirements**

*The given Instructor will complete this section with assignments relevant to the course objectives and the Course hour credit equivalency.*

### **Spiritual and Academic Integrity**

**Attendance Policy:**

Online course attendance is recognized by each student's weekly assignment submissions through Canvas (the Learning Management System [LMS]).

**Academic Honesty:**

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## BC 502 Crisis and Trauma

*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

Assigned Instructor

### Course Description

This course covers various human crisis and trauma aspects and demonstrates appropriate intervention strategies. Students will explore the topics of natural and man-made disasters augmenting human crises and will understand the trauma's impact and effects. The class will explore suicidal ideation and self-harm, and early intervention.

### Course Objectives

	The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	Institutional Objectives	MRE Concentration Objectives
1	Develop and understanding of crisis intervention through the funnel of case studies	2, 5	2
2	Discuss all theories related to trauma and crisis as it relates to the lens of Scripture	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2
3	Analyze the crisis that may follow natural and manmade disasters and determine the proper actions as a biblical counselor.	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2
4	Identify those who exhibit signs of suicidal ideation and apply the proper intervention (including making proper referrals).	2, 5, 6	2, 3
5	Discuss the effects of trauma in the realm of human development.	2, 5, 6	2

#### *Institutional Learning Objectives:*

1. Articulate and defend the historic faith and biblical worldview.
2. Apply information literacy skills including research and critical thinking.
3. Demonstrate competency in applied skills and the creation of works appropriate for the communication of the gospel to unbelievers.
4. Exemplify a servant-leadership model of Christian ministry through the local church.
5. Exhibit a comprehensive academic knowledge appropriate to the level of the degree.
6. Communicate truth effectively through applicable modalities.

#### *Master of Religious Education Biblical Counseling Objectives:*

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theological foundations relevant to counseling practices
2. Evaluate counseling frameworks and procedures effective for facilitating growth in various counseling issues

3. Exhibit an understanding of legal and ethical principles with regard to the practice of biblical counseling

## **Course Requirements**

*The given instructor will complete this section with assignments relevant to the course objectives and the course hour credit equivalency.*

## **Spiritual and Academic Integrity**

### Attendance Policy:

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### Academic Honesty:

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several times a week. Your grade in the course depends on your attentiveness to the instructors and adherence to their directions. You are responsible for knowing the syllabus, assignment deadlines, school policies, and all instructor communication with you and your classes.

## BC 511 Problems and Procedures

*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

Assigned Instructor

### Course Description

This course develops the student's understanding of emotional and mental issues, problems these present, and procedures to help. Special attention will be given to situations such as addictions, depression, and anxiety. The student will be taught biblical assessment methods, treatment planning, and intervention techniques

### Course Objectives

	The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	Institutional Objectives	MRE Concentration Objectives
1	Articulate the power of the gospel within counseling arena	1, 3, 5, 6	1, 2
2	Thoroughly discuss the effects of various mental, social, emotional, and spiritual problems.	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2
3	Discern through listening the root of problems while counseling	5, 6	1, 2
4	Determine the proper counseling procedures to implement in areas of addictions, depression, anxiety, etc.	2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2,
5	Discern a course of action for problems extending beyond the ability of the counselor	5	2, 3

#### *Institutional Learning Objectives:*

1. Articulate and defend the historic faith and biblical worldview.
2. Apply information literacy skills, including research and critical thinking.
3. Demonstrate competency in applied skills and the creation of works appropriate for the communication of the gospel to unbelievers.
4. Exemplify a servant-leadership model of Christian ministry through the local church.
5. Exhibit a comprehensive academic knowledge appropriate to the level of the degree.
6. Communicate truth effectively through applicable modalities.

#### *Master of Religious Education Biblical Counseling Objectives*

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theological foundations relevant to counseling practices
2. Evaluate counseling frameworks and procedures effective for facilitating growth in various counseling issues
3. Exhibit an understanding of legal and ethical principles with regard to the practice of biblical counseling

## Course Requirements

*The given instructor will complete this section with assignments relevant to the course objectives and the Course hour credit equivalency.*

### Spiritual and Academic Integrity

#### Attendance Policy:

Online course attendance is recognized by each student's weekly assignment submissions through Canvas (the Learning Management System [LMS]).

#### Academic Honesty:

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assignment deadlines, school policies, and all instructor communication with you and your classes.

## BC 512 Marriage and Family Counseling

*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

Assigned Instructor

### Course Description

Marriage and Family Counseling explores the complex details of the realm of personal relationships within the marriage and family unit and beyond. Students taking this course will examine relational issues from a biblical perspective and will learn how to counsel the unique happenings ranging from marital issues to family dysfunction.

### Course Objectives

	The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	Institutional Objectives	MRE Concentration Objectives
1	Understand and articulate God's plan for marriage and family.	1, 3, 6	1, 2
2	Develop a premarital counseling curriculum that covers the major facets of marriage.	2, 5, 6	1, 2,
3	Identify issues in the marriage and apply proper hermeneutical strategies as a solution towards marital crisis.	1, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
4	Develop an understanding of complex family situations and apply solutions in the counseling session.	1, 2, 5	1, 2, 3
5	Apply analytical listening skills in each counseling session to determine the root issues of each relationship.	2, 5	1, 2

#### *Institutional Learning Objectives:*

1. Articulate and defend the historic faith and biblical worldview.
2. Apply information literacy skills, including research and critical thinking.
3. Demonstrate competency in applied skills and the creation of works appropriate for the communication of the gospel to unbelievers.
4. Exemplify a servant-leadership model of Christian ministry through the local church.
5. Exhibit a comprehensive academic knowledge appropriate to the level of the degree.
6. Communicate truth effectively through applicable modalities.

#### *Master of Religious Education Biblical Counseling Objectives:*

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theological foundations relevant to counseling practices.
2. Evaluate counseling frameworks and procedures effective for facilitating growth in various counseling issues.

3. Exhibit an understanding of legal and ethical principles with regard to the practice of biblical counseling

## **Course Requirements**

*The given instructor will complete this section with assignments relevant to the course objectives and the Course hour credit equivalency.*

## **Spiritual and Academic Integrity**

### **Attendance Policy:**

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instructors and adherence to their directions. You are responsible for knowing the syllabus, assignment deadlines, school policies, and all instructor communication with you and your classes.

## BC 552 Counseling Practicum

*Fall 2024 Syllabus*

Assigned Instructor

### Course Description

The counseling practicum functions as the capstone course for the counseling concentration. This course is designed to provide the students with a comprehensive synthesis for the learning and skills they acquired in the program. Students will be given opportunities to demonstrate and apply their counseling skills under the guidance of a qualified Christian counseling professor, enhanced with peer learning through interaction with other students.

### Course Objectives

	The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:	Institutional Objectives	MRE Concentration Objectives
1	Analyze all counseling sessions from a theological perspective	1, 2, 5	1, 2
2	Evaluate all emotional, mental, social, and spiritual issues and prescribe the proper solution	2, 5, 6	1, 2
3	Discuss different methodological counseling procedures and their effectiveness	2, 5, 6	1, 2
4	Incorporate theory as a biblical counselor into practice in a counseling setting.	2, 3, 5, 6	1, 2,
5	Record and document notes throughout a counseling setting for practical and ethical reasons.	2, 5	2, 3

#### *Institutional Learning Objectives:*

1. Articulate and defend the historic faith and biblical worldview.
2. Apply information literacy skills, including research and critical thinking.
3. Demonstrate competency in applied skills and the creation of works appropriate for the communication of the gospel to unbelievers.
4. Exemplify a servant-leadership model of Christian ministry through the local church.
5. Exhibit a comprehensive academic knowledge appropriate to the level of the degree.
6. Communicate truth effectively through applicable modalities.

#### *Master of Religious Education Biblical Counseling Objectives*

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theological foundations relevant to counseling practices
2. Evaluate counseling frameworks and procedures effective for facilitating growth in various counseling issues



3. Exhibit an understanding of legal and ethical principles with regard to the practice of biblical counseling

### **Course Requirements**

*The given instructor will complete this section with assignments relevant to the course objectives and the Course hour credit equivalency.*

### **Spiritual and Academic Integrity**

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**APPENDIX J: TRACS APPROVAL VERIFICATION**

TRANSNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
CHRISTIAN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
*Meeting a Higher Standard*

July 15, 2024

Paul W. Chappell, President  


Dear President Chappell:

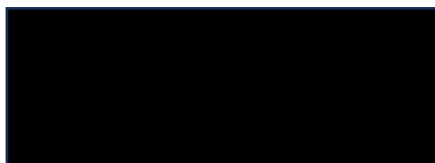
After my review of the supporting documentation and based upon the staff recommendation, I give my approval of the following proposed institutional change submitted by West Coast Baptist College (WCBC):

- To add a counseling concentration to the currently approved Master of Religious Education (MRE, 33 semester credit hours).

WCBC submitted a complete proposal for staff review, addressing all the required items in the Prospectus Checklist. WCBC Board of Directors approved this proposed change on May 7, 2024, as evidenced in Board minutes provided by the institution.

According to TRACS procedures, I will present this approval as information at the fall 2024 Accreditation Commission meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the TRACS office.  
Sincerely,



## APPENDIX K: CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### Summary

God has designed mankind to be equipped with an incredible mind that is divided into that which is both rational and relational. Jonathan Kim writes to specify the differences between the rational and relational mind and how faith interweaves both that which is experienced and also processed theoretically. Ultimately, the two aspects of the intellectual structure (relational and rational) are called schema and thema. The rational structure of intellect is often regarded as the schema, while the relational dimension is called thema.<sup>1</sup> While the schema is involved with current rational, thema is involved in that which has roots in experience and observation rather than theory or logic.

The author details several authors and how they theorize the development of the human mind. Specifically, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's theories of intellectual development are featured in Kim's chapter. Piaget's theory was summarized by the author in three terms: organization, adaptation, and stages.<sup>2</sup> In organization, individual in attempts to understand their own environment systemizes reason through various methods of outlines and other concepts which make networks between thoughts and ideas. Organization leads to adaptation which leads from assimilation, to accommodation, to (finally) equilibration and the growth of intellect which comes in stages. Piaget's stages or levels of thought include reflective thinking, intuitive thinking, concrete thinking, and abstract thinking. Reflective and intuitive thinking happen in the earliest stages of life with reflective thinking referring to intellect based upon sensory skills and perceptions and intuitive thinking recognizes symbols and the individual begins social

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Kim, James R. Estep, *Christian Formation : Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Prague: B&H Publishing Group), ProQuest Ebook Central, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

interactions and behaviors. As the individual moves through the stages, concrete thinking allows the individual to adapt to logic and utilize logic in problem solving scenarios. The final stages for Piaget represent abstract thinking which denotes the ability of an individual to think and perceive critically and create opinions and speculations.

Vygotsky's theorization centers upon the individual's historical and social context. The major influencer of intellectual development is the afore established society of the individual. Society creates the uneven foundation of the of intellectual development of that individual. Vygotsky includes "zones" of development within his theory to establish the intellectual growth that an individual can experience. These zones include the zone of actual development, which notes the current intellectual standing of that individual; the zone of potential development, which indicates the intellectual "ceiling" of the individual; and the zone of proximal development, which involves what is required of the individual to maneuver from actual to potential. His theory does not include the same stages or steps towards intellectual growth; but indicates two layers of thought, higher and lower thought. Lower thought includes that which is analytically produced and stationary while higher thought produces that which indicates thoughts in motion and has the ability to transform an individual's thinking and enable intellectual growth.

While both of these authors seem to take a stronger approach on opposite approach on their importance of schema vs thema, Christian formation is rooted in the balance of both the rational and relational dimensions. From a perspective that lies heavily on the schema dimension, a rational and intellectual understanding of theology and the Lord is foundational and essential for Christian growth and development. On the opposite spectrum, the thema perspective sheds light upon the needful relational or experiential element of the faith. Kim provides a model of Christian formation that involves both the schemata and themata dimensions of thought towards

truth being both comprehended (schema) and apprehended (thema). He further wisely articulates, “What people need is a holistic nurture from which the complete knowledge of faith is conceived and perceived.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Growth Among the Participants**

The participants within the action research study will be challenged both rationally and relationally. Within the nature of counseling lies both the analytic aspects of thinking and relational or empirical elements of development. Additionally, theological perspectives will be analyzed to engage the participants to understand the biblical elements of the theories that will be produced. The participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon their opportunities within a counseling environment and respond based on their aptitudes within a counseling setting.

While bestowing this information, engaging analytical thinking, and encouraging comprehension is essential for participant involvement, illumination is the project’s ultimate goal. Illumination is more than the thought process; but the participant’s engagement in biblical counseling. The participants will be able to see counseling issues from more than an informational perspective. These participants will have the opportunity to collectively help the researcher implement change so that the information gathered can be put into place and students can learn to grow and transform into wise counselors. James articulates that growth is not simply the acknowledgment of truth but acting upon that truth (Jas 1:25).

### **Measurement of Development**

Chapter three of the research action plan reviews several tools to help measure the effectiveness of the thesis actions; but each tool also lends help towards measuring the

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<sup>3</sup> Kim and Estep, *Christian Formation : Integrating Theology and Human Development*, 1897c.

intellectual development and Christian formation of each participant. As Kim mentions in his chapter regarding intellectual development, growth takes place through the ability of the participant to engage in problem-solving questions and conversations.<sup>4</sup> Each partaker of the research will participate in an interview, which allows the participant the opportunity to assess his or her current counseling routines and difficulties. These routines will speak into the current will range from loneliness amongst adolescents to counseling an adult through a crisis situation. The participant will need to engage analytical thought and process that thought through a clearly relational situation. The opportunity for these participants to engage in essays is to help them to incorporate what they have gathered informationally into a practice.

Kim also encourages the reader to practice dialogue among learners.<sup>5</sup> This will be practiced through the interview process. Each participant will interview and report on their own level of understanding of the discipline of counseling. This self-reflection allows the participant to consider his or her ways and consider their educational needs. Ultimately, the hope is for some of the participants to understand their weaknesses and seek to obtain more instruction to satisfy the needs of their weaknesses. This allows the participant to engage in their growth over their dependency on an instructor.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kim and Estep, *Christian*, 1897b.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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**IRB APPROVAL****LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 20, 2023

Nicholas Piervincenti  
Todd Hardin

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY23-24-828 Developing a Graduate Level Counseling Curriculum for West Coast Baptist College

Dear Nicholas Piervincenti and Todd Hardin,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46.102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

**For a PDF of your IRB letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page.**

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair*  
**Research Ethics Office**