

204: A Christocentric Model for Counseling: Developing a Biblical Foundation

**Ian F. Jones, Ph.D., Ph.D.
AACC National Conference**

Orlando, Florida

September 16, 2021

Thursday, 4:15-5:30 p.m.

Description & Learning Objectives

- **Description:** *This workshop will examine the biblical foundation and historical roots of Christian counseling, including unique features and historical examples. The role of faith and spirituality will be explored in the development of a Christocentric model of counseling. The workshop is designed, in particular, for licensed professional counselors working with Christian clients.*
- **Participants will:**
- Identify biblical characteristics and historical examples that contribute to the uniqueness of Christian counseling.
- Study the role of faith and spirituality in effective counseling.
- Examine a uniquely Christian approach to counseling.

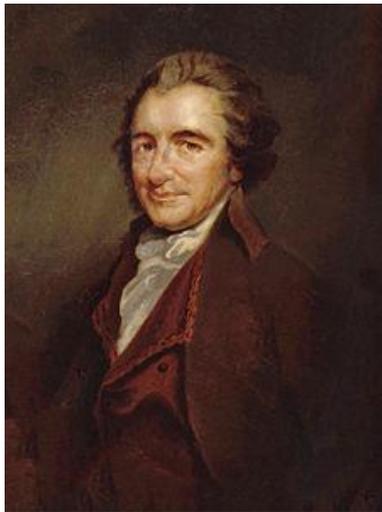
Soul Care in the Modern World

- Shift to a Predominantly Secular Society
- Rise of Psychological Man
- Fragmentation of Culture and Personality
- Loss of Christian Counseling & Pastoral Care Identity

THE
AGE
OF
REASON;
BEING
AN INVESTIGATION
OF
TRUE AND FABULOUS THEOLOGY.

BY THOMAS PAINE,
SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CONGRESS
IN THE AMERICAN WAR,
AND AUTHOR OF THE WORKS ENTITLED,
COMMON SENSE, AND RIGHTS OF MAN, &c.

PARIS:
PRINTED BY BARROIS.
LONDON: Sold by D. I. EATON, at the COCK AND SWINE,
No. 74, Newgate-street.
1794.
PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.



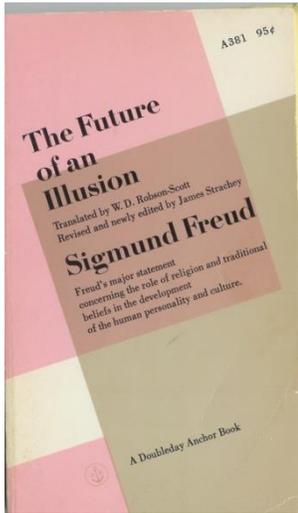
Soul Care and Culture: Historical Overview

- The move to the secular state (of mind)
- Shifting forces in the 19th Century
- Age of Enlightenment
 - Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1795, 1807)
 - Challenges institutionalized religion
 - Bible is just literature
 - No miracles
 - Reason replaces revelation
 - Advocates Deism and natural religion

Soul Care and Culture: Historical Overview



- **Loss of the sacred (Desacralization)**
 - Auguste Comte (1798-1857)
 - *The Positive Philosophy* (1830-1842)
 - Three historical stages in law of human development:
 - Theological or fictitious
 - Metaphysical or abstract
 - Scientific or positive
 - Changes in definitions
 - Psychology—study of soul → study of mind (formerly the soul) → study of human and animal behavior
 - Freud and Norlie



Freud (1927)

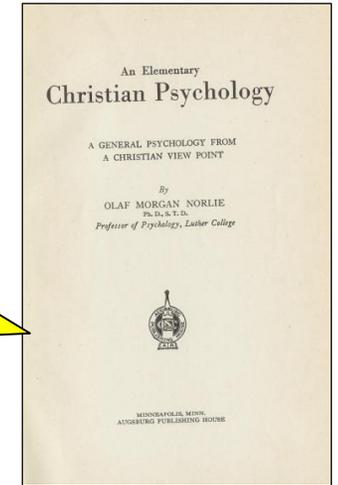
Naturalistic
worldview

- Freud: Religion is an obsessional neurosis and an illusion to protect against anxiety
 - Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*.

Which book is the more “scientific”?

Norlie (1924)

Christian
worldview



- Norlie: “This book employs the method and material of philosophy and science wherever these do not conflict with the clear teachings of the Bible, the revealed, inspired, authoritative and infallible Word of God.”
- Olaf M. Norlie, (1924) *An elementary Christian psychology: A general psychology from a Christian view point* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House).

The Triumph of the Therapeutic

USES OF FAITH AFTER FREUD

Philip Rieff

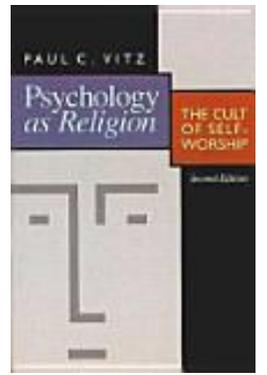


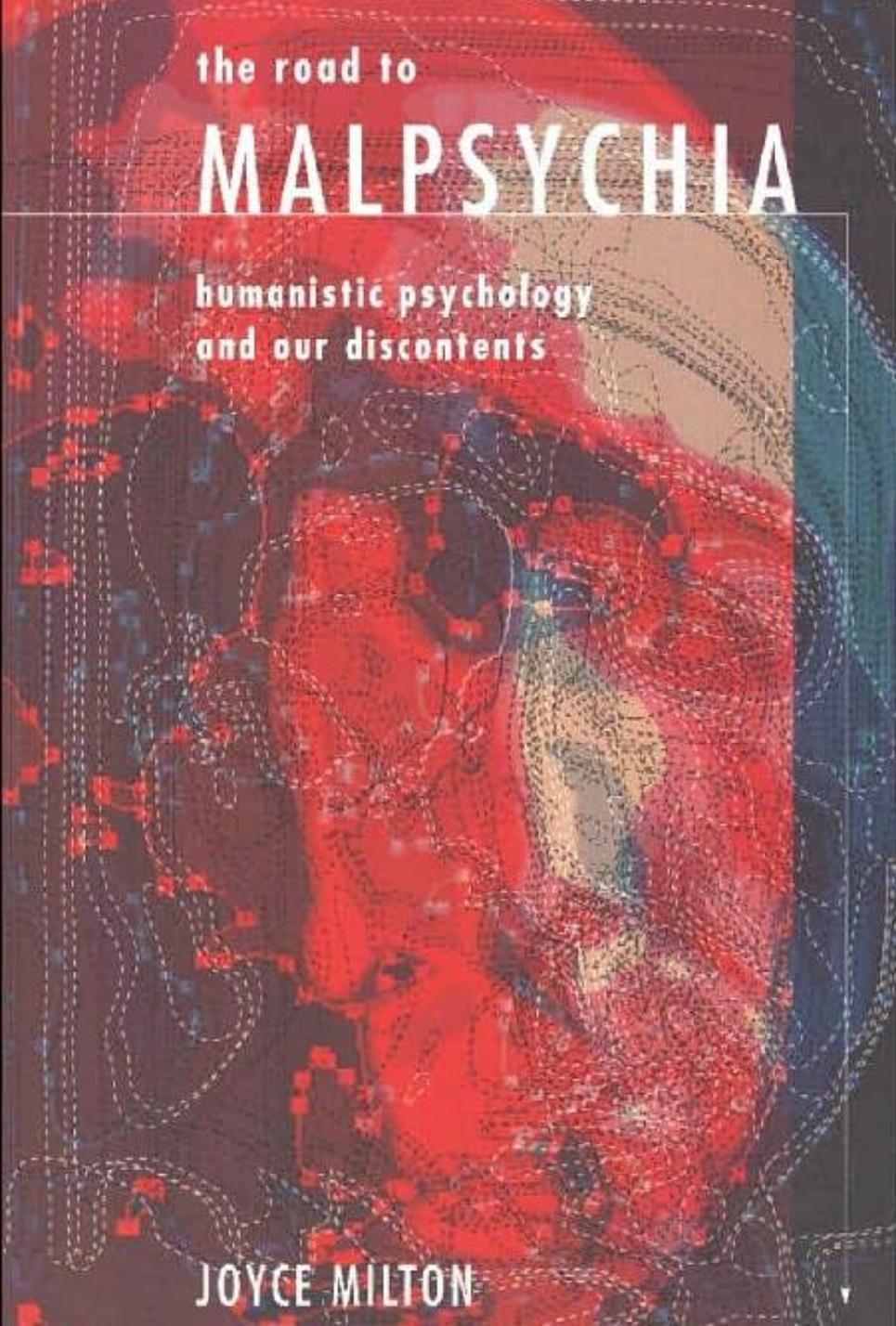
Rise of Psychological Man

- Philip Rieff: Argues that the 20th Century gave rise to the emergence of “Psychological Man” and the “triumph of the therapeutic.”
- Freudian terms have become part of our everyday language.
 - E.g., Freudian slip
 - Philip Rieff (1966), *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud*. New York: Harper & Row.

Rise of Psychological Man

- Paul C. Vitz (1977/1994), *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.
 - A critique of the self-worshipping and narcissistic character of modern psychology.
 - Modern psychological theories of human motivation and personality assume that “reward for the self (i.e., egoism) is the *only* functional ethical principle. In short, psychology’s deep commitment to narcissism, egoism, self-worship, the individual, isolated self—or, as I call it, ‘selfism’—has been thoroughly demonstrated” (p. xi).
 - “As the title suggests, it will be argued that psychology has become a religion: a secular cult of the self. By this I mean an intensely held worldview, a philosophy of life or ideology. More specifically, contemporary psychology is a form of secular humanism based on the rejection of God and the worship of the self” (p. xii).



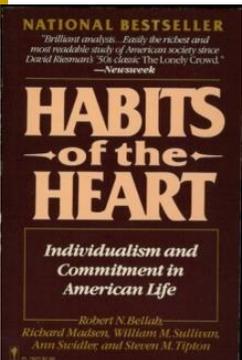
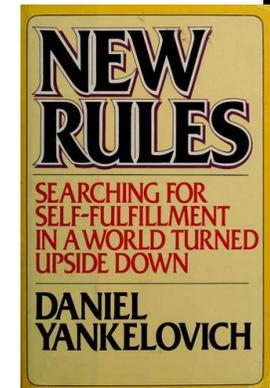
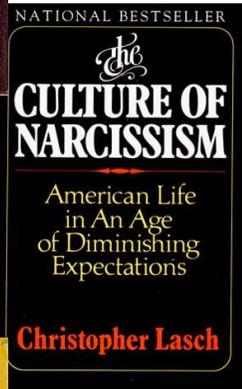
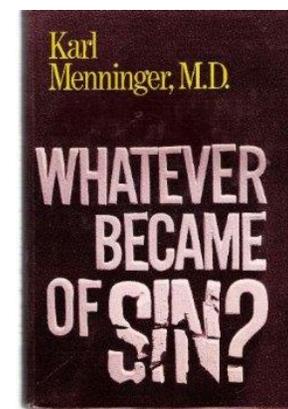


Rise of Psychological Man

- Joyce Milton (2002), *The Road to Malpsychia: Humanistic Psychology and Our Discontents*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.
 - Rise of relativism and human potential movement's long assault on American culture.
 - Abraham Maslow, Ruth Benedict, Timothy Leary, Carl Rogers

The Culture of Narcissism

- Karl Menninger (1973). *Whatever Became of Sin?* New York: Hawthorn Books.
- Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).
- Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Random House, 1981).
- Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985, 2007).



19th-20th Centuries: Humans Were Redefined

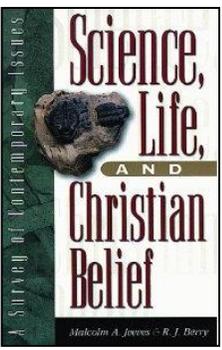
Mike McGuire, Ph.D.

- **Humans** were reduced to complex, social animals, who have no spiritual existence (from the Christian perspective, humans were “dehumanized”)
- **Human knowledge (science)** became limited to what is gathered by the senses, analyzed logically, and tested empirically (there is no room for revelation)
- **Human moral standards** became the product of social systems or the preference of individuals.
- No **afterlife** so that the only consequences for one’s behavior are limited to this life.

19th-20th Centuries: Humans Were Redefined (Cont.)

Mike McGuire, Ph.D.

- All **religious and spiritual experiences** must be explained in terms of irrational or non-rational feelings. One can speak of humans being religious and of the studying religion, but within this worldview, one cannot speak intelligibly of any particular religion being true.
- **Psychology** is now conceptualized from within a naturalistic interpretive framework. Any non-naturalistic psychologies are perceived of as so mired in philosophy and theology that they are considered mere speculation and superstition



Undisclosed Worldviews & Assumptions

- “A Christian embarking on a career as a psychotherapist has to face many serious issues. For example, some of the personality issues on which the practice of psychotherapy is based ***depend upon undisclosed and often un-Christian presuppositions about what life is all about, such as what should be the primary goal of life and what is the greatest good to which humankind should aspire.***”
 - ❑ Malcolm A. Jeeves & R. J. Berry. *Science, Life, and Christian Belief* (Baker Book House, 1999), 209-210.
 - ❑ Christian counselors need to use biblical wisdom in assessing and developing approaches to counseling.
 - ❑ This requires an active faith, and a knowledge of the Bible, hermeneutics, and theology, as well as counseling psychology and scientific research.

Christian Soul Care: Losing Our Biblical Identity

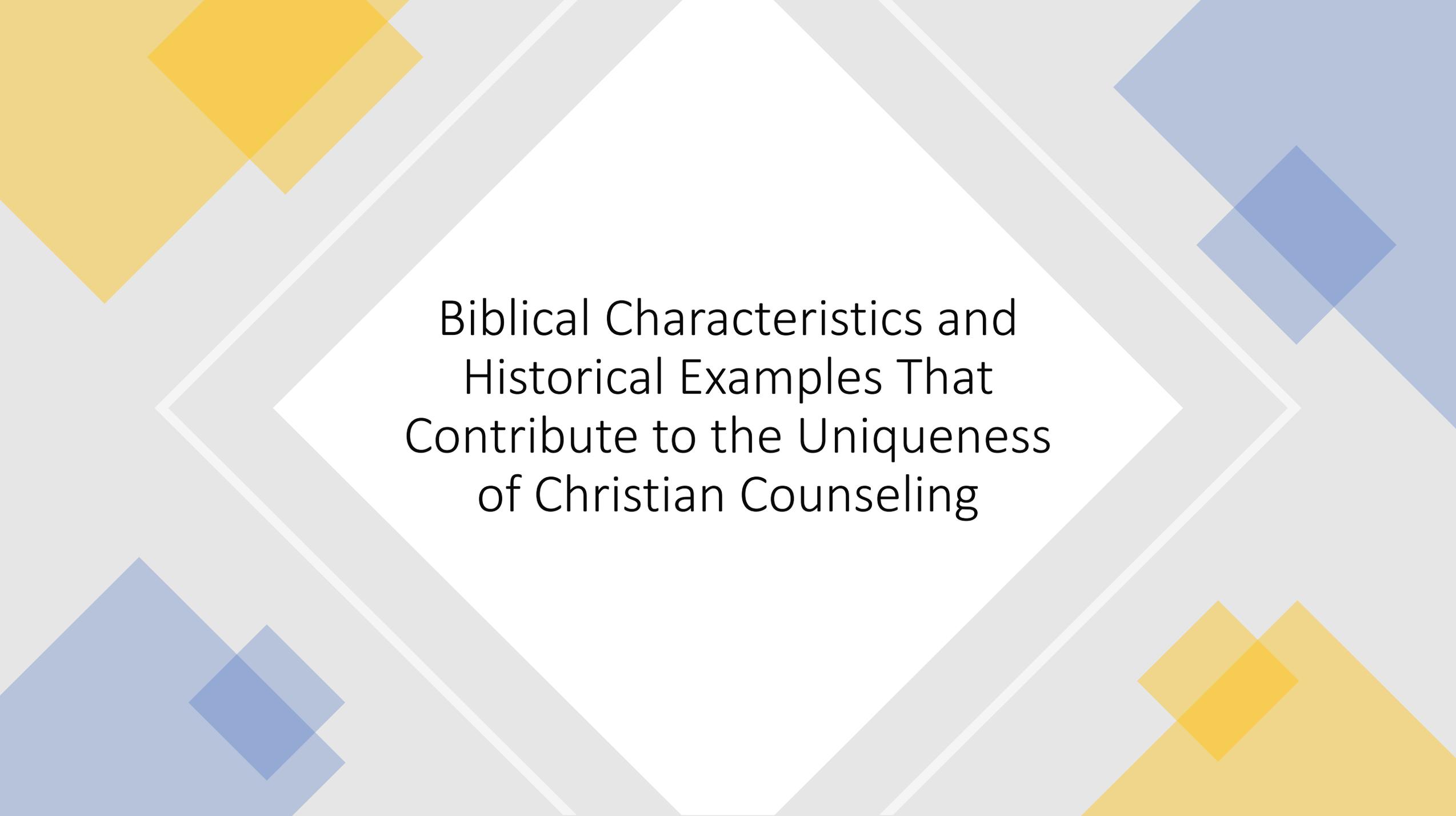
TABLE 1
 Representative Nineteenth-Century Pastoral Writers:
 Frequency of References to the Classical Pastoral Tradition

	SHEDD (1879) Presbyterian	FAIRBAIRN (1875) Scottish Presbt.	HOPPIN (1884) Congregationalist	BRIDGES (1829) Church of England	KOESTLIN (1895) Lutheran	GLADDEN (1891) Congregationalist	KIDDER (1871) Methodist	TOTAL
CYPRIAN	-	1	1	6	2	-	1	11
TERTULLIAN	2	1	2	1	1	-	-	7
CHRYSOSTOM	1	2	6	13	6	3	2	33
AUGUSTINE	9	1	1	37	2	2	1	53
GREGORY	-	-	1	6	2	1	-	10
LUTHER	6	1	4	22	11	5	1	50
CALVIN	8	1	1	25	3	2	1	41
BAXTER	8	7	2	37	3	3	1	61
HERBERT	1	1	4	19	1	4	1	31
TAYLOR	2	1	3	7	2	2	-	17
Totals	37	16	25	173	33	22	8	314

TABLE 3

Representative Twentieth-Century Pastoral Writers:
Frequency of Reference to Modern Psychotherapists

	HILTNER	CLINEBELL	OATES	WISE	TOURNIER	STOLLBERG	NUTTIN	TOTAL
FREUD	8	8	9	1	9	5	69	109
JUNG	10	6	1	0	13	3	12	45
ROGERS	19	18	4	6	0	26	28	101
FROMM	8	6	0	9	0	1	3	27
SULLIVAN	5	4	5	5	0	1	2	22
BERNE	0	19	6	0	0	1	0	26
Totals	50	61	25	21	22	37	114	330



Biblical Characteristics and
Historical Examples That
Contribute to the Uniqueness
of Christian Counseling

Origins of Counseling: Where Do We Start?

- In the Beginning...
 - A closed system of biological evolution
- In the Beginning...
 - Freud?
 - Wundt?
 - (This is the view of most secular texts)
- Christian counseling rests on a unique foundation

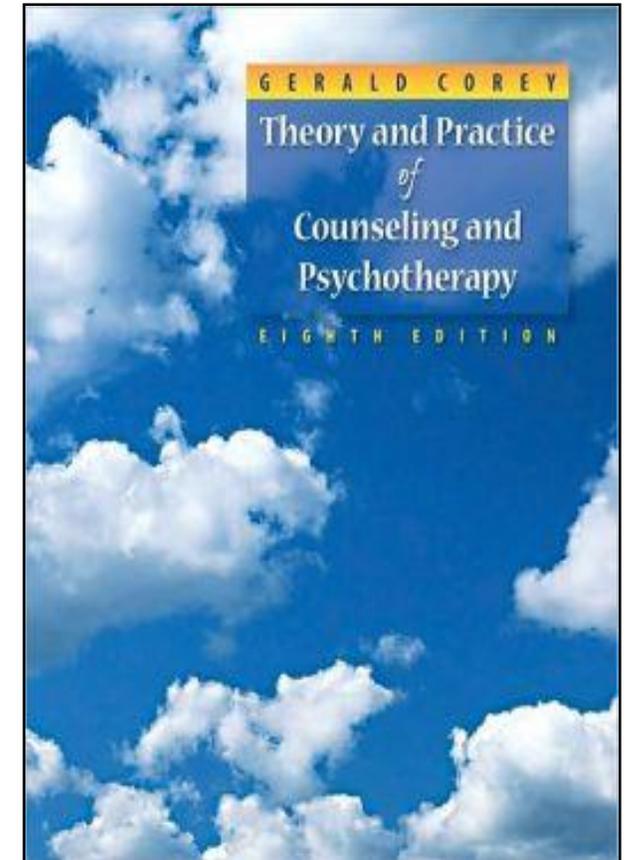
Counseling Theory: Where Do We Start?

Textbooks invariably begin with the late 19th Century

E.g., Gerald Corey, *Theory & Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*:

- **Table of Contents**

- Ch. 1 Introduction and Overview 2
- Ch. 4 Psychoanalytic Therapy 90
- Ch. 5 Adlerian Therapy 132
- Ch. 6 Existential Therapy 167
- Ch. 7 Person-Centered Therapy 196
- Ch. 8 Gestalt Therapy 222
- Ch. 9 Reality Therapy 257
- Ch. 10 Behavior Therapy 280
- Ch. 11 Cognitive-Behavior Therapy 316
- Ch. 12 Family Systems Therapy 365



1. Unique Worldview

- “...implies the objective existence of the trinitarian God whose essential character establishes the moral order of the universe and whose word, wisdom, and law define and govern all aspects of created existence.”
 - David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 260.
- A Christian worldview begins with God and His revelation in history (Creation, fall, redemption, consummation).

2. Unique Origin and Identity

- Genesis tells us that we are created by God.
 - We need God, but He does not need us
 - The Trinity models ideal relationship
- We are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28, 31)
 - Uniqueness of our creation and identity. God “formed (*yyatsar*— ייצר) man of dust from the ground” (Genesis 2:7)
 - Humans are unlike any other creation—we are both material and immaterial
 - All humans have value and worth—a foundational principle for Christian counseling.
- We are designed for relationship—with God & relationship with others

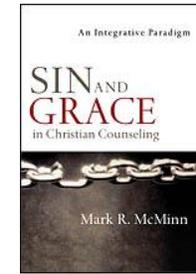
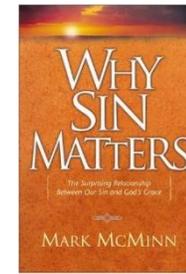
Counseling People Who Are Created in the Image of God

- Image bearers are valuable in the eyes of God
- Image bearers should be treated with respect
- Image bearers have gifts, abilities and creative skills
- Image bearers seek relationships
- Image bearers seek control and power
- Counselors honor God by:
 - Valuing and respecting their counselees
 - Finding ways to engage the gifts and abilities counselees in biblical ways
 - Looking for opportunities to help counselees grow in relationship to God and love of neighbor
 - Assisting counselees to place themselves (their control and power) in submission to the will of God

Understanding the Human Condition

- The biblical worldview:
 - We are fallen—the effects of sin, evil, and the curse
 - Sin permeates (pollutes, corrupts) our lives (physical, spiritual, cognitive, emotional, relational, behavioral)—all we are and do is damaged by sin (Rom. 3:10-18)
 - Even our world is cursed (Gen. 3:17)
 - Sin leads to suffering, either directly (through active wrongdoing) or indirectly (through victimization or the sins of others)
 - The redemptive promise of God’s grace (“...not of works”)
 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is *not* from yourselves, it is the gift of God— *not by works*, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9)

Sin & Christian Counseling



- Christian counselors:
 - Acknowledge the comprehensive and devastating consequences of sin in all areas of life in both the counselor and counselee
 - Recognize the importance of relying on Christ and the grace of God in their own lives. (God has not abandoned us—1 John 1:9)
 - Understand that God’s universal grace restrains sin (providing benefit to both the saved and the lost—Matt. 5:44-45), and his saving grace provides the only means for eternal salvation
 - Seek to offer aid to both believers (assisting them to grow in Christ) and unbelievers (loving even enemies [Matt. 5:44], being salt and light [Matt. 5:13-16], demonstrating benevolence [Mark 14:7])
 - Assess and respond to the spiritual condition of the counselee (saved or lost) and look for ways to bring the light of Christ and His Word to the counseling encounter

3. Unique Authority

- Unique Authority
 - The Ultimate Truth Source: God, Revelation, and His Word

What is your Authority or Source Criteria for Truth?

- Naturalism's ultimate sources:
 - Science (modernism)
 - Self (postmodernism)
- Biblical source: Word of God—His Revelation to us
 - Truth as supernatural and objective
 - Not a denial of observation and the value of scientific investigation

*Science Can't
Answer Life's
Ultimate
Questions*

THE
LIMITATIONS
OF
SCIENTIFIC
TRUTH

NIGEL BRUSH

The Limitations of Scientific Truth

- Scientific research is a valuable tool for Christian counselors, but it must never become a tyrant, dictating truth.
- Nigel Brush shows that, while science makes tremendous contributions to our society, it has temporal, logical, cultural, spatial, and empirical limitations, and it is unable to produce absolute truth, superior truth, or answers to life's ultimate questions, and it should not be used as the final authority in areas of Christian doctrine.

Calvin: The Value of Research and Science

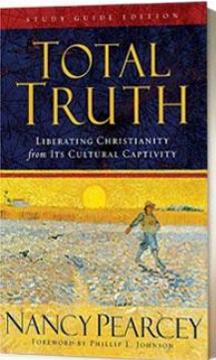
- 15. Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears.
- . . . Therefore, since it is manifest that men whom the Scriptures term carnal, are so acute and clear-sighted in the investigation of inferior things, their example should teach us how many gifts the Lord has left in possession of human nature, notwithstanding of its having been despoiled of the true good.
 - Calvin, J. (1845-1846). *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Trans. by H. Beveridge. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845-1846. (II, ii, 15).

Calvin: The Value of Research and Science

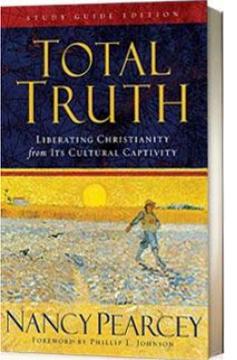
- This remarkable section emphasizes three ideas which bear a vital relationship to theology and apologetics (the systematic defense of Christianity): (1) Even unregenerate men uncover and enunciate a considerable amount of truth. (2) Wherever truth appears, we should recognize that its only fountain is the Holy Spirit. (3) We should therefore humbly accept truth wherever found (including that found in the writings of unregenerate men), receiving it with gratitude as from the hand of God.
 - Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (1997). *Institutes of the Christian religion*. Translation of: *Institutio Christianae religionis*.; Reprint, with new introd. Originally published: Edinburgh : Calvin Translation Society, 1845-1846. (II, ii, 15). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Trusting Our Senses (Research & Observation)

- “The concept of creation or design is the crucial assumption that believers of the nineteenth century overlooked when they thought the sciences could proceed without any distinctively Christian presuppositions. Apart from the doctrine of creation or design, there is no basis for trusting that the ideas in my mind have any correlation to the world outside.”
- “The non-Christian pursuing his research has no choice but to rely on his senses, just as everyone else does; but he has no philosophical *basis* for doing so. He is being inconsistent with his own worldview.”
(p. 315)
- Nancy Pearcey (2004). *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.



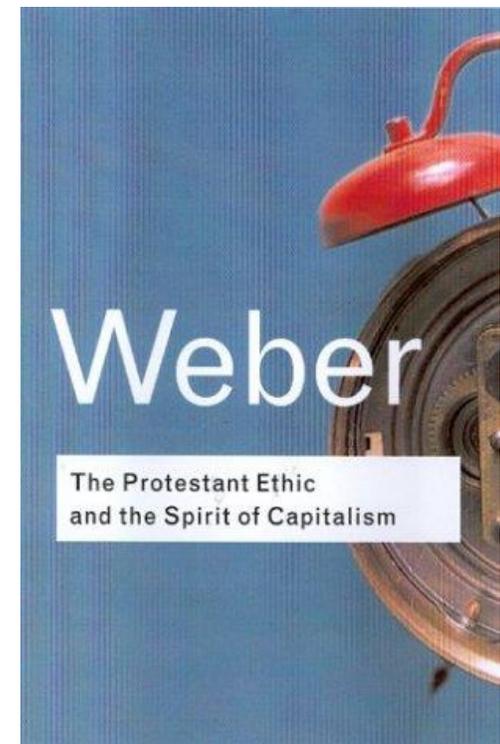
Biblical Basis of Observation



- “How, then, can we explain the trustworthiness of our senses?”
- “The only adequate basis for our confidence is the biblical teaching that there is a Creator who designed our mental capacities to function reliably in the world He created. The doctrine of creation is the epistemological guarantee that the constitution of our human faculties conforms to the structure of the physical world. As Alvin Plantinga writes, it is part of the ‘human design plan’ to trust our own sense perceptions.” (p. 315)
- Nancy Pearcey (2004). *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

4. Unique Preparation

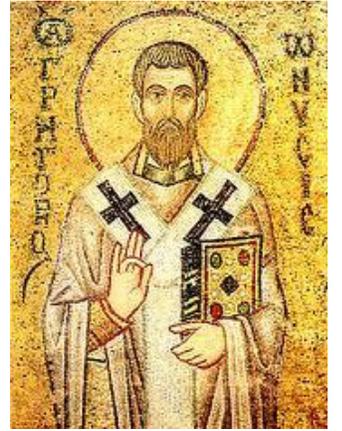
- Christian counseling as a calling, not just a job
- Luther and the Reformation view of calling
 - Priesthood of the believer
 - Luther's view of "calling" (Beruf).
 - The Called applies to all Christians (not just ordained priests).
 - Applies to all honorable work, profession, trade, occupation, business. All work and activity directed toward honoring God
 - Results in work of higher quality (& quantity) to glorify and honor God



5. A Unique Perspective: Who Are you and What Is your Purpose?

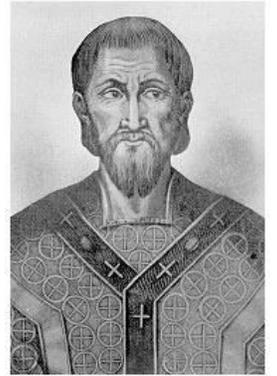
- Basic Questions in Life:
 - *Who are you?*
 - *Who am I and what is my purpose? (Why am I here?)*
- In the biblical worldview, our life story is part of a bigger story, with an Author/Creator, a beginning, and an end that gives life meaning and purpose.
- (Note: Science is ill-equipped to answer these questions)

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)



- **Finding purpose in a tragedy:**
- “A blind unmeaning occurrence can never be the work of God, for it is the property of God, as the Scripture says, to ‘make all things in wisdom’.”
 - Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants’ Early Deaths*.
- History is not arbitrary, and life is not ultimately meaningless

Chrysostom (347-407)



John Chrysostom

- **Finding Hope in Tragedy:**

- In his *Letter to a Young Widow*, he offered hope to the bereaved by pointing out that, no matter how tragic the circumstances appear, such events are the means by which the mercies of God are revealed.

Seeking God's will & Purpose

- Christian counseling seeks God's will and purpose and brings godly hope to every counseling encounter
- Christian counseling recognizes that we do not live in a meaningless world of chance and fatalism; instead, we live in a world under the control of God, who has a plan and ultimate purpose
- We seek the Kingdom of God

6. Historical Church Resources



Care of Souls

- *Cura animarum*, *Seelsorge*, cure of souls, care of souls, counseling, and psychotherapy are some of the terms that have been used in reference to the practice of helping people deal with problems and difficulties in living, and they reflect the rich ministry of historical pastoral care.

Care of Souls

- Thomas Oden studied examples of classical pastoral care strategies, approaches, and techniques and argued that many anticipate modern psychotherapies and views on the psychological dynamics of the will.
 - Thomas C. Oden, *Classical Pastoral Care*, vol. 3, *Pastoral Counsel* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994).
- Andrew Perves observes that there is “a general lack of awareness among pastors today of the ecumenical evangelical Christian pastoral practice that was concerned above all with people in their relationship with God.”
 - His book by explores the classical tradition in pastoral theology in the works of Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Martin Bucer, and Richard Baxter.
 - Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 5.

Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective

The art of pastoral care, a rich and distinct tradition
—from primitive Christianity to the present —

WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH & CHARLES R. JAEKLE

Pastoral Care Functions

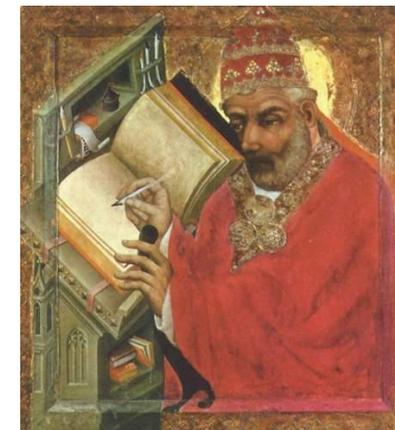
- Clebsch & Jaekle (1964)
 - Healing
 - Sustaining
 - Reconciling
 - Guiding
- Bob Kellemen, *Spiritual Friends: A Methodology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction* (2007)

HISTORICAL CARE GIVING

The Ante-Nicene Church (A.D. 100-A.D. 325)

- ***Importance of confession (exomologesis)***
 - Discipline within the church body stressed confession and repentance (*metanoia*). Such confession usually required public penance for serious sins, a period of exclusion from communion, and formal absolution and restoration—the whole process being called *exomologesis*.

Gregory the Great (540-604)



Book of Pastoral Rule

Insights and techniques (found in contemporary therapies):

- Behavior modification techniques (including regular and consistent positive reinforcement of desired behaviors)
- Awareness of self-deception and rationalization (uncovering unconscious and hidden motivation [Ezek. 8:7-13])
- Importance of body language in care giving
- Accurate empathy, unconditional acceptance, self-congruence
 - Thomas Oden, *Care of Souls in the Classical Tradition*, pp. 58-59.

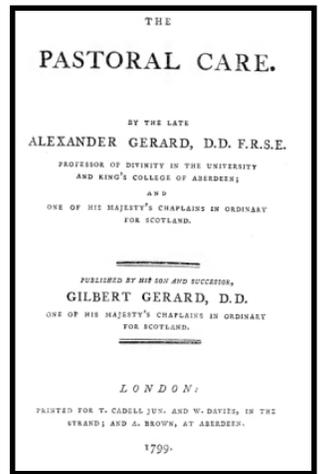
Martin Luther (1483-1546)



- Cognitive restructuring (how to overcome melancholy and negative thoughts):
 - Challenge the negative thought (“That’s not Christ”)
 - Replace the negative with positive affirmations of faith
- “Act as if” —when dealing with oppression and fear, act as though you have the victory in Christ
 - “But the best counsel is this: Do not struggle against your thoughts at all, but ignore them and **act as if** you were not conscious of them. Think constantly of something else, and say: ‘Well, devil, do not trouble me. I have no time for your thoughts. I must eat, drink, ride, go, or do this or that.’ In like manner say: ‘I must now be cheerful. Come back tomorrow.’”
 - Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, p. 90.

Alexander Gerard (1728-1795)

- Alexander Gerard was professor of divinity in the University and King's College of Aberdeen.
 - His book *The Pastoral Care* contain his lectures.
- Chapter One addresses the private duties respecting individuals
 - The chapter contain nine sections that address private instruction, private exhortation, counseling, visiting the afflicted, reproof, convincing, reconciling differences, and care of the poor.
 - Gerard viewed counseling as branch of private exhortation, but it is “so peculiar in its nature as to deserve a separate illustration,” and he devoted an entire section of seventeen pages to the subject.
 - Counseling may be more effective than “the sermons of a whole year.” (p. 116)



Counseling Principles from the Historical Church

Preparation

- Understanding the priorities of ministry and counseling: God first; care of self; concern, compassion, & love for neighbor; (Augustine)
- Be prepared spiritually; seek wisdom (God, Scriptures, Resolution to act, Love others) (Baxter, Augustine)
- Keeping both the body and the mind healthy (Luther)
- Personal integrity and maturity (Polycarp)

Counseling Principles from the Historical Church

Spiritual Orientation

- Finding meaning, purpose, and hope (the presence of God and spiritual growth) in tragic situations (Gregory of Nyssa, Taylor)
- Utilizing all available resources (that meet the acceptable Biblical standard of truth) (Augustine, Calvin)
- Addressing religious affections, using discernment in recognizing godly thinking and emotions ; finding joy in God (Edwards)

Counseling Principles from the Historical Church

Intervention and Prevention

- Active engagement and taking the initiative in counseling—seek out those who need our help (Apostle John, Taylor)
- Use of prayer, fasting, challenging thinking and spiritual preparation (Apostle John, Baxter)
- Importance of repentance and confession. Repentance is multidimensional (self, other, & God; attitude & action) (Chrysostom)
- Use of affirmations and encouragement of positive behavior (Gregory the Great)
- Behavioral techniques, cognitive awareness, body language (Gregory the Great)

Counseling Principles from the Historical Church

Intervention and Prevention

- Challenging negative thinking (Luther)
- The “act as if” principle in claiming victory in Christ (Luther)
- Use social support systems, distraction, humor, correction (Luther)
- Mutual accountability, care, discipline, & encouragement, small group counseling (Calvin, Bucer, Zinzendorf, Wesley)
- Combining love, truth, logic, confrontation, and comfort (Hildegard of Bingen)
- Systematic consultation and counseling (Baxter)
- Practical suggestions for joining and counseling (Gerard)

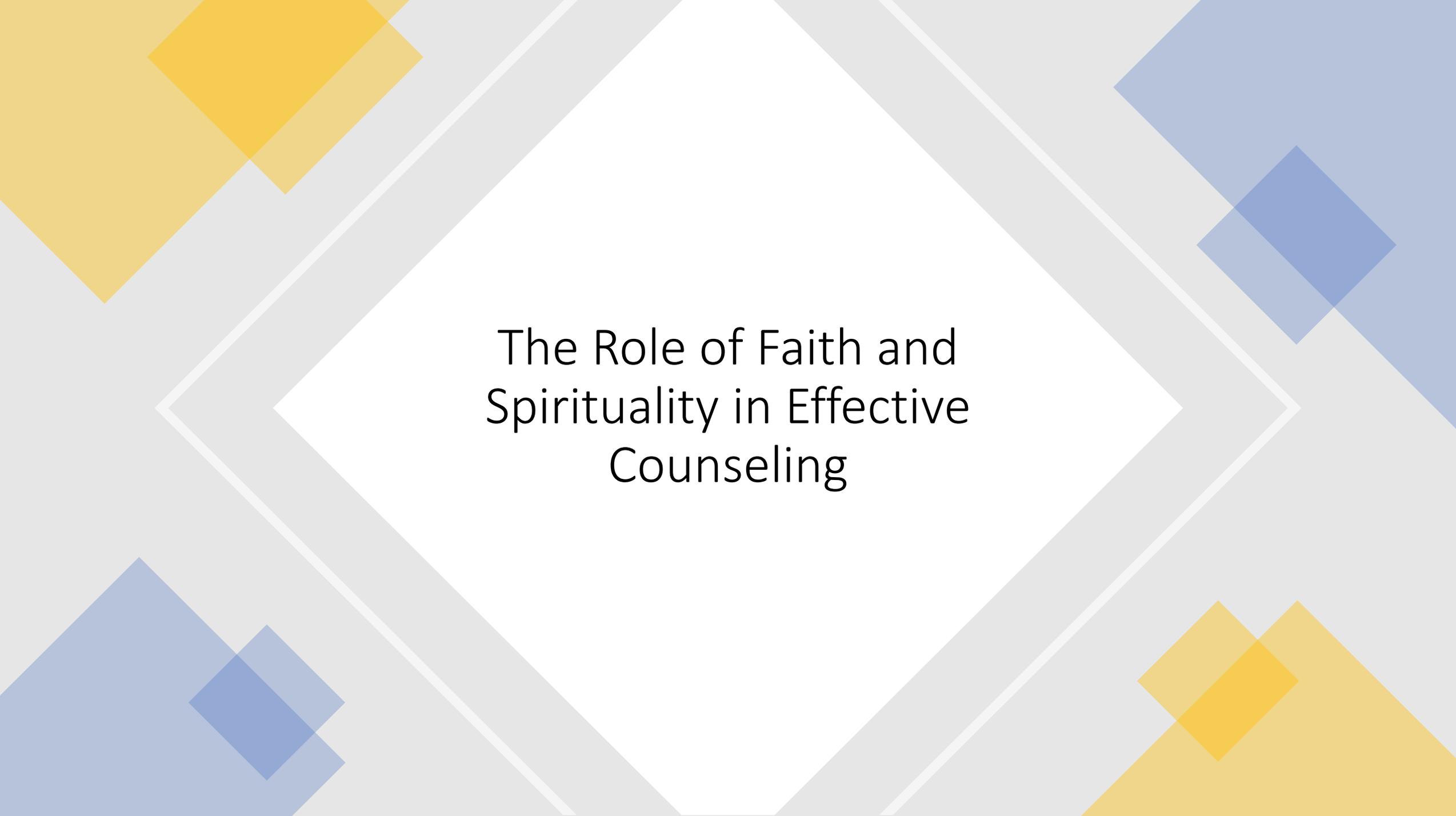
Counseling Principles from the Historical Church

Resources

- Have an adequate referral system (Herbert)

Particular Concerns and Dangers

- Seriousness of sin (Tertullian, Chrystostom)
- Danger of relapse and ways to prevent it (Cyprian)
- Dangers of self-deception (Gregory the Great)
- Pay attention to body language (Gregory the Great)
- Empathy, assessment, and adjusting your language and style to the listener (Gregory the Great, Herbert, Gerard)



The Role of Faith and
Spirituality in Effective
Counseling

The Spiritual Development of a Counselor

- **Stage 1 Counselor:** “What do I say next?”
 - “I don’t want to appear foolish.”
 - Focus: Self (Primary Attitude: Fear & Insecurity)
 - Engagement Level: Mechanics
- **Stage 2 Counselor:** “What does the counselee need from me?”
 - “I want to be able to help.”
 - Focus: Other (Primary Attitude: Concern & Information)
 - Engagement Level: Techniques; Applied Theory

The Spiritual Development of a Counselor

- **Stage 3 Counselor:** “Where is God working in this situation and how does he want me to proceed?”
 - “God is present, and this is a divine appointment. What is His Word for this moment?”
 - Focus: God & His Word (Primary Attitude: Anticipation & Expectation)
 - Engagement Level: Wisdom (Prov. 2:2-6)
 - “Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry out for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; ...Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding...”

Changing Views on the Role of Religion In Counseling

- A national survey of American Counseling Association members found that they strongly support the importance of spiritual and religious competencies for effective counseling practice.
 - 68% Strongly Agreed that formal training in addressing spiritual and/or religious issues in counseling was important BUT
 - 43.5% indicated Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed, or Neutral on their ability to practice in accord with the ASERVIC (ACA) identified spiritual competencies.
 - Young, J. Scott, Wiggins-Frame, Marsha, & Cashwell, Craig S. (2007). Spirituality and counselor competence: A national survey of American Counseling Association members. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 85, 47-52.

Changing Views on the Role of Religion In Counseling

- A random sample of American Psychological Association and American Counseling Association professionals found that “cognitive dissonance among mental health professionals in the current population is minimal regarding religious ideology and/or scientific orientations of knowledge. In addition, the **participants of the study approve of the integration of spiritual and religious diversity into the counseling education process.** Previous research has suggested psychologists avoided issues related to spirituality and religion when working with clients (Bergin, 1980, 1983; Frame, 2003; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000)” (p. 119).
 - Gough, Sharon R. (2009). *Spiritual and Religious Diversity: Implications for Counselor Education Programs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University.

Review of Research

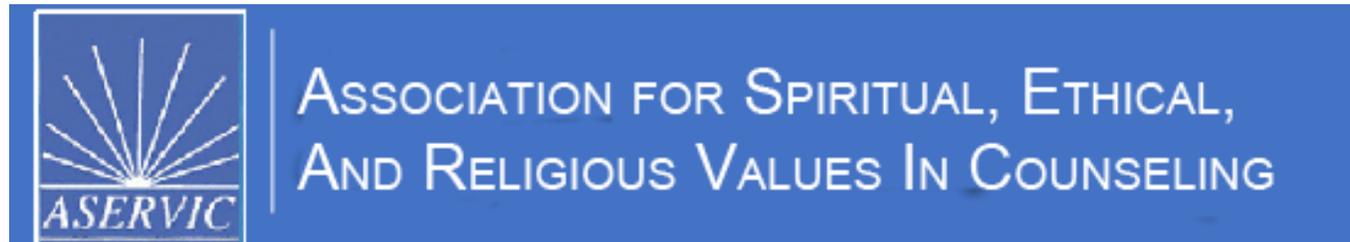
- Research indicates that therapists are more open to religious/spiritual issues, that clients want to discuss these matters in therapy, and that the use of religious/spiritual interventions for some clients can be an effective adjunct to traditional therapy interventions.
 - Post, Brian C., & Wade, Nathaniel G. (2009). Religion and spirituality in psychotherapy: A practice-friendly review of research, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 65(2),131-46. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20563

Discrepancies Between Belief in the Value of Religion and Practice in Counseling Still Exist

- A study of college counselors' (N = 77) integration of religion and spirituality into substance abuse counseling **found a discrepancy between the importance ratings of religion and spirituality and the frequency of using such elements in counseling practice.**
- The college counselors generally were neutral towards incorporating religion and spirituality, but it was rarely addressed and included in practice.
 - Amanda Giordano, Elizabeth Prosek, and Tessa Hastings (2016). Examining College Counselors' Integration of Religion and Spirituality Into Substance Abuse Counseling. *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling*, 37, 102-115.

Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)

- ASERVIC is an organization of counselors and human development professionals who believe spiritual, ethical, and religious values are essential to the overall development of the person and are committed to integrating these values into the counseling process.



JCAHO REQUIREMENTS FOR SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT

- Joint Commission on Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) stipulates that practitioners conduct an initial, brief spiritual assessment with clients in many settings, including hospitals and behavioral health organizations providing addiction services. The same framework, however, is used in all settings. At a minimum, the brief assessment should include an exploration of three areas: (1) denomination or faith tradition, (2) significant spiritual beliefs, and (3) important spiritual practices.
- JCAHO provides a list of suggested questions

AACC Code of Ethics (Y2014)

- *1-330: Consent for Biblical-Spiritual Practices in Counseling*
- Christian counselors do not presume that all clients want or will be receptive to explicit, spiritual Judeo-Christian interventions in counseling and therefore, obtain consent that honors client choice, receptivity to these practices, and the timing and manner in which these elements are introduced. This includes, but is not limited to the following: (1) prayer for and with clients; (2) Bible reading and reference; (3) spiritual meditation; (4) the use of biblical and religious imagery or music; (5) assistance with spiritual formation and discipline; (6) incorporation of fasting in the treatment plan as a spiritual discipline; and (7) other common spiritual practices.

AACC Code of Ethics (Y2014)

1-340: Special Consent for More Difficult Interventions

- Christian counselors **obtain close or special consent for more difficult and potentially controversial practices**. These include, but are not limited to: (1) deliverance and spiritual warfare activities; (2) cult deprogramming work; (3) recovering memories and the treatment of past abuse or trauma; (4) the use of hypnosis and any kind of induction of altered states; (5) authorizing (by medical doctors) medications, electroconvulsive therapy, or patient restraints; (6) the use of aversive, involuntary, or experimental therapies; and (7) engaging clients who are struggling with same sex attraction, crisis pregnancy/abortion decision-making and/or end-of life issues. [Emphasis Added]
- 1-340-a (Listed interventions require additional documentation.)

Major Functions of Spiritual Interventions

- To help counselees find spiritual resources
- To help counselees apply God's word and grace to their problem
- To help counselees trust in God
- To help counselees to draw closer to God and to walk with Him
- To help counselees grow in spiritual maturity

Examples of Spiritual Resources, Practices, and Effectiveness in Counseling

- Influencing with spiritual interventions means using uniquely Christian resources to benefit the counselee

SPIRITUALITY IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS (SUD)

- Direct correlation between spirituality and positive outcomes in SUD
- Patients in recovery often prioritize spiritual programs in their treatment
- Spirituality is an essential part of the recovery process
- *Addiction & Spirituality*, Jaime Grodzicki, M.D., Associate Director Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse; Director of Substance Abuse Referral Program (SARP), NYU/Bellevue Hospital Center
 - www.med.nyu.edu/spirituality/addiction_and_spirituality.ppt

Example: Spiritual Practices in Addiction Recovery

- Spiritual practices that have helped with addictions include “fasting, prayer, and meditation, and religious and meditative practices that have in their roots the establishing and strengthening of self-control. These practices to establish and strengthen self-control are focusing attention, maintaining forced silence, repetitive chanting, and contemplation; the practices that often result in dramatic epiphanies.” (p. 42)
 - Sharon Cowan, *Spirituality: An Important Component of Recovery from Addiction*, *Family Therapy*, 13(1) (January/February 2014), 41-42.

Example: Spiritual Practices in Addiction Recovery

- Studies report that “spiritual people are less depressed, less anxious, and less suicidal than non-spiritual people. They also cope better with traumatic events, such as illness, divorce, and bereavement. Further, the more people report incorporating spiritual practices into their daily living, the more frequently they report positive emotions and an overall sense of satisfaction with life (Paul, 1995). Research also found higher levels of spirituality predicted more optimistic life orientation, higher perceived social support, higher resilience to stress, and lower levels of anxiety (Pardini, Plante, Sherman, and Stump, 2000).”
 - Sharon Cowan, Spirituality: An Important Component of Recovery from Addiction, *Family Therapy*, 13(1) (January/February 2014), 41-42.

Reasons Religious Coping is so Prevalent among Patients

- Religion provides a sense of meaning and purpose that assists with psychological integration during difficult times
- Promotes a positive world view of optimism and hope
- Provides role models in sacred writings that assists in accepting suffering

Reasons Religious Coping is so Prevalent among Patients

- Gives a sense of indirect control over circumstances, thus reducing the need for personal control
- Offers a community of support (human & divine)
- Helps reduce isolation and loneliness
- Also, “religion is available to anyone at any time, regardless of financial, social, physical, or mental circumstances” (Koenig, 2009, p. 285).

Research 1887 to 2020

Handbook of Religion and Health
(Oxford University Press, 2001, 2012,
2021, forthcoming)

Religion and Mental Health: Research & Clinical Applications
(Academic Press, 2018)

- Koenig, H. G., Al-Zaben, F., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2020). Religion and psychiatry: Recent developments in research. *British Journal of Psychiatry Advances*, 26(5): 262-272 (<https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2019.81>).
- Koenig, H. G., Peteet, J. R., & VanderWeele, T. J. Religion and psychiatry: clinical applications. *British Journal of Psychiatry Advances*, 26 (5): 273-281. (<https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2020.11>).

Social Stressors and the Christian Faith

Effect of religious faith on mental and physical health:

- Healthier active coping
- Healthier active coping responses
- Less depression
- Lower rates of suicide
- Less anxiety
- Less alcohol and drug use
- Healthier personality traits (conscientiousness, agreeableness)
 - **Harold G. Koenig, MD, COVID-19, Social Stressors, and the Christian Faith. AACC National Conference, 2020**

Social Stressors and the Christian Faith

Effect of religious faith on mental and physical health:

- Less antisocial behavior
- Greater marital and family stability
- More social support
- More positive emotions (optimism, hope, meaning, happiness)
- Less cigarette smoking
- More physical activity and exercise
- Healthier diet
- Less heart disease
 - **Harold G. Koenig, MD, COVID-19, Social Stressors, and the Christian Faith. AACC National Conference, 2020**

Social Stressors and the Christian Faith

- Effect of religious faith on mental and physical health:
 - - Lower rates of hypertension and stroke
 - - Slower rates of cognitive decline with aging, less dementia
 - - Healthier immune system, less inflammation
 - - Lower stress hormones (cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine)
 - - Lower rates of many cancers and slower progression
 - - Less physical disability with aging
 - - Greater longevity overall (lower all-cause mortality)
 - **Harold G. Koenig, MD, COVID-19, Social Stressors, and the Christian Faith. AACC National Conference, 2020**

Research

Emotional Well-being

- Research has repeatedly found that committed religious belief and devout practice are related to higher levels of emotional well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction.
 - Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Research

Relational Well-being

- Those people who are more religious report significantly greater social support than those who are less religious.
- Of the 79 quantitative studies measuring religiosity and marital satisfaction and stability, 68 (86%) reported significant positive connections. Those who are more religious have better marriages based on existing research.
- Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Research

- Nearly nine out of 10 objective quantitative studies by health researchers published in peer-reviewed science journals (including some very comprehensive studies, as well as longitudinal research with married people) find that religious devotion is associated with more stable, more satisfying marriages.
- Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Research

Physical Well-being

- Study after study reports a positive connection between religion and physical health.
 - Koenig, H. G. The influence of faith on mental health and well-being. *Christian Counseling Today Magazine* Vol. 20, No. 3, 48-53.

Conclusion

- Addressing spirituality is not only important but necessary in competent counseling.
- The question is not **should we** introduce spirituality in counseling, but **how do we** do it.

Engaging Spiritual Intervention

- Assess client's location regarding spiritual beliefs
 - Listen carefully and respectfully
 - Identify spiritual themes and past spiritual experiences
- Explore beliefs about God, particularly in relationship to his or her current condition and situation
 - Examine any expectations for spiritual intervention or change
- Examine affective or emotional issues regarding spiritual matters
 - Note type and intensity of feelings

Engaging Spiritual Intervention

- Encourage spiritual conversation
 - Identify possible areas of previous godly intervention and direction
- Provide information on spiritual resources for recovery
 - Church, faith-based support groups (e.g., Celebrate Recovery)
- Connect client with spiritual support systems

39 Spiritual Disciplines Used in Clinical Practice (Eck, 2002)

Cognitive:

- Meditation, listening, Scripture, study, prayer, discernment
 - These disciplines address a disordered thought life.
 - Eck, Brian E. (2002). An exploration of the therapeutic use of spiritual disciplines in clinical practice. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 21, 266-280.

39 Spiritual Disciplines Used in Clinical Practice (Eck, 2002)

Behavioral:

- Simplicity, frugality, fasting, chastity, body care, saying no/yes
 - These disciplines address excessive, out of control behaviors (e.g., materialism, gluttony, promiscuity)
- Slowing, Sabbath, solitude, silence, secrecy
 - These disciplines address managing stress and finding balance and meaning in life beyond compulsive behavior or pursuit of money or power.
- Service, servanthood, sacrifice, suffering, dying well
 - These disciplines address transcending self-interest through personal growth.

39 Spiritual Disciplines Used in Clinical Practice (Eck, 2002)

Interpersonal (Address relational problems):

- Confession, repentance, forgiveness, submission, humility
 - These disciplines address repairing and restoring broken spiritual and interpersonal relationships
- Worship, Eucharist, singing, celebration, fellowship, community, hospitality, guidance
 - These disciplines address the horizontal and vertical connections in life (These areas may be the least studied in clinical research)
- Healing, witnessing, testimony, intercession
 - These disciplines address spiritual concern or brokenness and the desire of spiritual renewal



A Uniquely Christian Approach
to Counseling

בְּרֵאשִׁית ... אֱלֹהִים

bereshith. . . Elohim—“In the
beginning. . . God”
(Genesis 1:1)



God Exists in Relationship

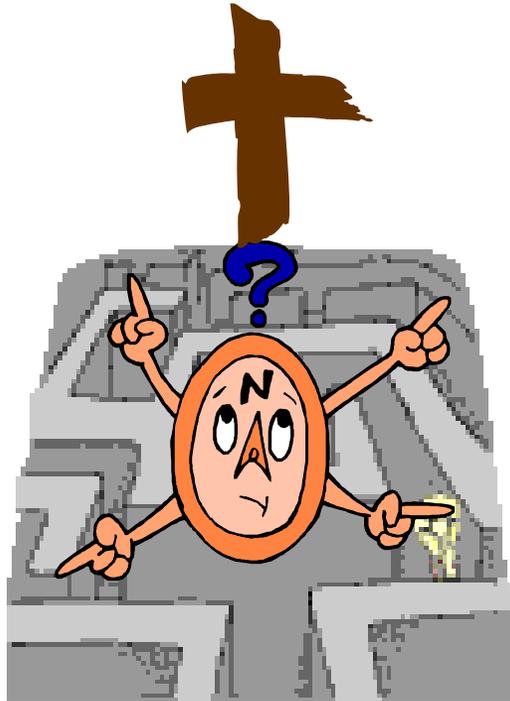
- We need God, but He does not need us
 - The Trinity models ideal relationship
- We are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28, 31)
 - Uniqueness of our creation and identity:
 - God “formed (*yyatsar*—יִצַר) man of dust from the ground” (Genesis 2:7), and he separately “formed (*yatsar*--יָצַר) every beast of the field” (Genesis 2:19).

The Starting Place: The Fall and the Loss of Relationship

- Pastoral and Christian Counseling models must address both:
 - Our creation in the Image of God
 - The fall, sin, and effects of evil and the curse
- The First Crisis Counseling Intervention in Human History (Gen. 3)
 - Provides a picture of a biblical counseling model

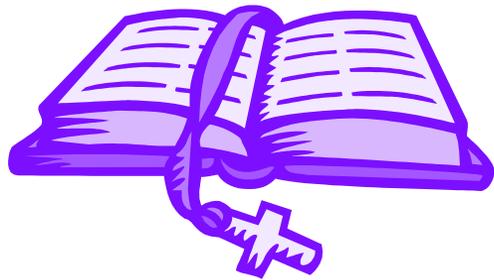
The Three Questions:

- “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9) (Your Location)
 - *The relationship has changed*



The Three Questions:

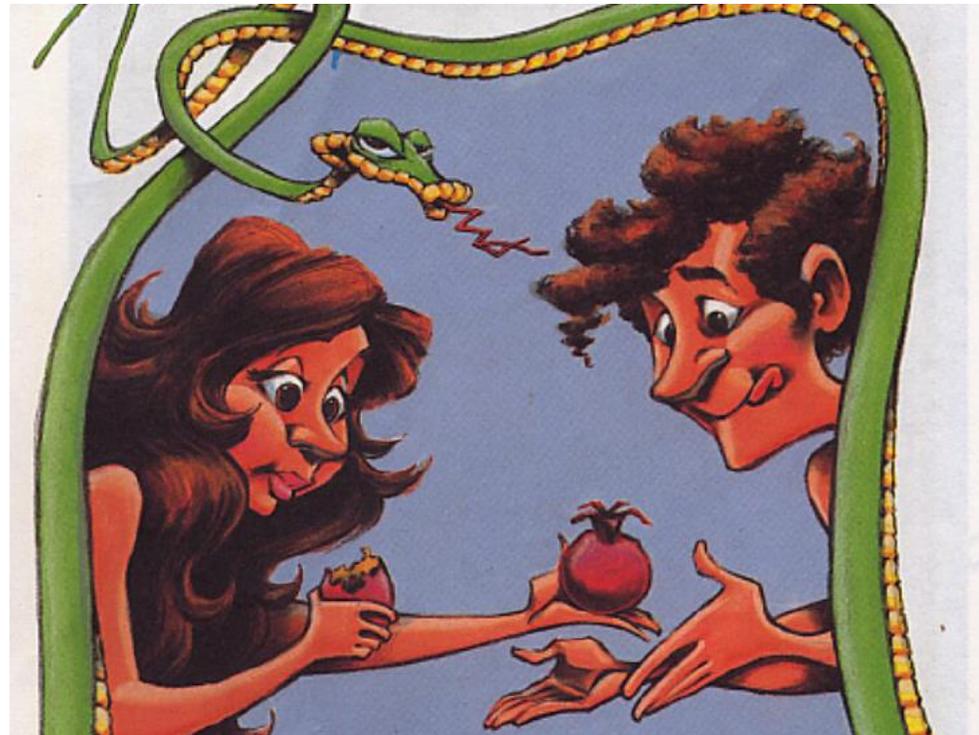
- “**Who** told you...(that you were naked)?
(Gen. 3:11) (Your Authority)



The Three Questions:



- “***What*** have you done?” (Gen. 3:9)
- (Your **Actions**)—Addressed to Eve



The Three Questions:

- “**Where** are you?” (Gen. 3:9) (**Your Location**)
 - *The relationship has changed*
- “**Who** told you...(that you were naked)? (Gen. 3:11) (**Your Authority**)
- “**What** have you done?” (Gen. 3:9) (**Your Actions**)—
Addressed to Eve
- The questions focus on the foundations for a solid relationship with God and the sin that we try to cover up or hide from God.
 - *“For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed, nor has anything been secret, that it would not come to light.”* (Mark 4:22, NASB)
 - Note God’s response to the first murder (Gen. 4:1-16)

The Three Dimensions in Relationships

- Where are you in relationship to:
 - God?
 - Self ? (as Christian? as Spouse? as Parent?)
 - Others?
- Biblical Expressions:
 - The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20)
 - The Greatest Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31)

Basic Biblical Model of Counseling

1. Where are you?

From perspective of:

- Client (self)
- Counselor (other)
- GOD

Primary Role of Therapist:

Joining

Ideal Situation: All three are in agreement

Basic Biblical Model of Counseling

2. Where do you want to/need to be?

From perspective of:

- Client (self)
- Counselor (other)
- GOD

Primary Role of Therapist:

Goal Setting/

Treatment Planning

Basic Biblical Model of Counseling

3. How do you get there?

- *From perspective of:* **Primary Role of Therapist:**
- Client (self)
- Counselor (other) **Intervention/**
- GOD **Treatment**

Biblically-based Counseling

- **Two types of client:**

- In Christ—goal is part of process of growing in grace and sanctification
- Not in Christ—goal is part of process of revealing the gospel of Christ

- **A Biblical Christian Counselor:**

- 1. Represents God
- 2. Models what the client is missing

Seeking God's will & Purpose

- Christian care giving seeks God's will and purpose and brings godly hope to every counseling encounter
- Christian care givers recognize that we do not live in a meaningless world of chance and fatalism; instead, we live in a world under the control of God, who has a plan and ultimate purpose
- We seek the Kingdom of God

Where is God in Your Counseling Session (or Your Life)?: Five Options

Slife, Brent D., Stevenson, Tiffani D., & Wendt, Dennis C. (2010). Including God in psychotherapy: Strong vs. weak theism. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 28(3), 163-174.

1. There is no one at the door

- (Only the natural or material exists, there is no God)

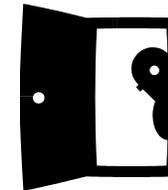


2. God is not relevant in counseling (or your life)

- (Deism)

3. God is a spectator in the session

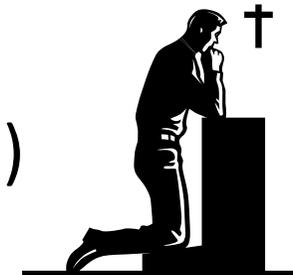
- (Dualism, compartmentalized theism)



4. God is present in support, to be called upon at times

- (Incomplete or inconsistent Theism)

5. God is active in all aspects of counseling (or your life)



The Question “Where are You?”
Emphasizes the Importance of
Location and Direction

Rich young ruler (**Matt 19:16-24; Luke 18:18-21**) &
Scribe or lawyer (**Luke 10:25-37**)

Adjusting Interventions to Individual Location and Need

- *Address the questions raised by the clients and begin with their understanding of the problem.*
- *Look for ways to connect or join with clients.*
- *Do not assume that people who ask the same question have the same problem.*
- *Begin interventions, if possible, at the points of agreement.*

Adjusting Interventions to Individual Location and Need (Cont.)

- *Direct clients to the truth using techniques that illuminate biblical principles as clearly as possible for them.*
- *Allow clients to take personal responsibility and apply biblical truths to their lives.*
- *Not all clients will make the right decision.*

**Application of the Greatest
Commandment is a Guiding Principle of
Biblically-Based Counseling**

Application of Location & Relationship in Counseling

- ***Current Location***

- Where do **you** say that you are located? What do you believe is the problem?
- Where do **others** say that you are located? What do they say is your problem?
- Where does **God** say that you are located? What is the biblical view of your situation?

Application of Location & Relationship in Counseling

- ***Goal, Destination, or Solution***

- Where do **you** believe that you want to be? What is your the solution? Where do you have control? What changes are you willing and able to make?
- Where do **others** say that you need to be? What do they suggest?
- Where does **God** say that you need to be? What does Scripture say is the solution to your problem and what changes does God expect?

Application of Location & Relationship in Counseling

- ***Plan for Change***

- How do **you** propose to get to your goal? What resources do you have?
- What suggestions do your counselor and **others** have for reaching your goal?
- What is **God's** plan for your life in this situation?

Jesus the Messiah: Our Counselor of Heaven on Earth (Isa. 9:6, 11:2)

Isaiah 9:6:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Eternal Father
- Prince of Peace

Six Characteristics of a Christocentric Model of Counseling (Isa. 11:2)

- **The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding**

(1) **Wisdom**—(1 Kg. 3:16-28; Job 28:12-28; Prov. 8:1-36; Luke 2:52)

(2) **Understanding**—(Deut 4:6; Isa. 29:24; John 2:25)

Six Characteristics of a Christocentric Model of Counseling (Isa. 11:2) (Cont.)

- **The Spirit of Knowledge (Counsel) and Power**

(3) **Knowledge**—(1 Kg. 12:13-14; Isa. 5:19; Prov. 19:21; Jn. 10:10, 14:6)

(4) **Power**—(Ps. 20:6; Job 12:13; Jn. 4:14, 10:17-18)

Six Characteristics of a Christocentric Model of Counseling (Isa. 11:2) (Cont.)

- **The Spirit of the Knowledge of God and the Fear of God**

(5) **Knowledge of God**—(Isa. 53:11; 1 Sam. 2:3; Prov 2:1-22; 1 Kgs. 7:14; Ex. 31:1-5, 35:30-33)

(6) **Fear of God**—(Prov. 1:7, 8:13)

True Fear Vs. False Fear

Blaise Pascal differentiated between the true fear of God and a false fear of God:

- False fear is the fear of finding God
- True fear is the fear of losing God
 - True fear comes from faith; false fear comes from doubt. True fear is joined to hope, because it is born of faith, and because men hope in the God in whom they believe. False fear is joined to despair, because men fear the God in whom they have no belief. The former fear to lose Him; the latter fear to find Him. (Blaise Pascal, Pensées and The Provincial Letters [New York: The Modern Library, 1941], 92 [Pensée #262])

The Model of Jesus: The Master Counselor of Heaven on Earth

- ***Christian counselors seek godly wisdom***
- ***Christian counselors seek godly understanding***
- ***Wise Christian counselors gather information and form a plan***
- ***Wise Christian counselors assess and access the power needed to execute a plan.***
- ***Wise Christian counselors seek a perfect understanding of the will of God in every situation.***
- ***Wise Christian counselors have a holy fear of the Lord that brings joy and blessing as they realize their absolute dependence upon God.***

Developing a Godly Orientation & Attitude

Practicing “Truth Extraction”

- **“Extract the Precious from the Worthless” (Jer. 15:19 NASB)**
- “God is acting in all actions upon you, so respond to all actions upon you as to respond to His action.” (H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*)
- Examples: Elijah (1 Kings 19) & Elisha (2 Kings 6:8-23)

Elijah & Elisha: Two Responses to Crises (1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 2)

- **Elijah**

- Target of a evil plot
- Hides in cave
- Fearful
- Cannot see God's hand

Elisha

Target of an evil plot

Does not hide; stays in tent

Is not afraid (v. 16)

Sees and reveals God's presence (v. 17)

The Holy Spirit: Our Current, Indwelling Counselor of Heaven on Earth

- “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26 NIV).
- Jesus revealed that God would provide “another Counselor/Helper” to be with us forever, the “Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16)
- Helper: *parakletos*--one called or summoned along the side of another to help; comforter; advocate; or intercessor.

Characteristics of the Holy Spirit (John 14):

- Comforter (Advocate of Christ)
- Counselor (Intercessor)
- Teacher
- Reminder
- Helper
- Spirit of Truth
- One who convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment

Characteristics of Biblically-Based Counselors

- Accept the supreme authority of Scripture and the biblical view of human nature and the human condition
- Begin with the question “Where are you?” as they seek to locate people in need in their relationship to God, self, and others.
- Are God-centered and counselee serving as they emulate and apply the Greatest Commandment.
- Follow the model of Jesus the Messiah, our Master Counselor of heaven on earth in the components of wisdom and understanding, planning and power, and the knowledge and fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:2)

Characteristics of Biblically-Based Counselors

- Clearly communicate truth as they assist people to “extract the precious from the worthless” (Jer. 15:19) by looking for the hand of God in every situation
- Rely upon the Holy Spirit, our current Counselor of heaven on earth, for guidance and the expression of spiritual gifts
- Develop and utilize biblical traits and spiritual disciplines in their ministry
- Encourage love and support among their counseling brethren, are knowledgeable about the counseling field, careful and fair in their evaluation of counseling approaches and publications, continue to learn, and humble in the assessment of their own position.

Characteristics of Biblically-Based Counselors

- Are representatives of God in the counseling encounter. In addition to locating people who are in pain and guiding them towards healing, Christian counselors have a responsibility of imitating and demonstrating Christ in their lives as a model for people in need.

Conclusion

- Addressing spirituality is not only important but necessary in competent counseling.
- The question is not **should we** introduce spirituality in health care delivery and counseling, but **how do we** do it.
- Most care givers are not qualified (trained or competent) to address spirituality in their work.
- Christian care givers and Christian counseling organizations must play a more active role in communicating the importance of the spiritual dimension in counseling.

*Foundations for
Biblical Christian Counseling*

The Counsel
of Heaven on Earth



IAN JONES

Broadman &

Holman

2006