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DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF BIBLICAL  
COUNSELING TRAINING AS A MEANS OF OBEYING THE  
GREAT COMMISSION AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE  
FELLOWSHIP, NORTH RIDGEVILLE, OHIO

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A Project  
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the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Glenn David Dunn  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF BIBLICAL  
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I dedicate this project to the glory of God in the hope that it will advance  
His kingdom in the hearts of men.

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## PREFACE

The completion of this project finds its foundation in the multiplied grace of God to me. First, I give God praise for saving me, a sinner. I give Him thanks and praise for His providences to me in bringing me to embrace the wonderful truths of the reformation. This includes the truths of the doctrines of grace and the sufficiency of the Scriptures. These truths have given guidance and direction in my personal growth as a Christian. In addition, the truth of sufficiency was the cause for the founding of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship. A church that would not be in existence were it not for the providences of God in my life regarding the power of the Word of God.

Additionally, I give God praise for the godly men who have poured truth into my life from an early age. My inconsistency in the hearing of that truth, especially at a young age, only commends their faithfulness in God's call. Through my adult years, I marvel at the men the Lord has allowed me to learn from, faithful men in the preaching and teaching of the Word. An important part of the formal learning process continued at SBTS. I give God thanks for SBTS allowing me the opportunity to pursue the Doctor of Educational Ministry degree in Biblical Counseling. I am thankful for the professors who gave of time and talent in faithfully teaching each class. I especially recognize Dr. Jeremy Pierre, who graciously gave necessary guidance in writing this project.

I also gladly give God praise for the gift of my wife; she is the evidence to me that every good and perfect gift comes from above. My wife is my best friend, a faithful encourager, and a necessary gentle support. I'm also thankful to the Lord for the gifts of my two children. Throughout this process they have both offered technical help and their loving support. I pray that whatever God calls them to do, they will always hunger and



thirst after righteousness.

Finally, I bless God for the wonderful church family He has allowed me to shepherd. They are a faithful group of saints, who love the Lord, love His Word, and love their pastor. It is thanks to them that I was able to pursue this doctoral degree. It is my earnest prayer that as a result, it will only serve to further sharpen my shepherding skills for the good of the church and God's glory.

Glenn Dunn

North Ridgeville, Ohio

May 2021

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Colossians 1:28 is the theme verse of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship (CBF). By fulfilling Paul's admonition for the church to preach, counsel, and teach from the Word of God, the church engages in both evangelism and discipleship. Given the church's call to minister the Word in this trifold fashion, one of the primary ways CBF engages in evangelism and discipleship is through biblical counseling. CBF is also at the beginning stages of teaching biblical counseling to train others to counsel and encouraging participants to pursue certification with ACBC. Training with the goal of ACBC certification benefited the broader ministry of CBF in four ways. First, the training offered an understanding of the importance of training biblical counselors, which would better equip the church as a whole to be more engaged students of the Word. Second, CBF benefited because those who pursue ACBC certification would expand the ministry of the church in the community by obeying the Great Commission. Third, understanding the importance of such training would encourage the church to better grasp the sufficiency of God's Word in light of the many challenges against such a perspective in today's culture. Finally, such a process served CBF's desire to bring glory to God through the full-orbed ministry of His Word.

#### **Context**

CBF was birthed out of a previous ministry context that did not affirm the sufficiency of the Word of God in the counseling ministry. The church I grew up in and served on the pastoral staff on for about fourteen years asked me to be a candidate for the senior pastorate position. As a candidate, I stated my conviction for the church to be fully

engaged in discipling Christians and reaching the community through the vehicle of biblical counseling, being engaged in both biblical counseling and training. The church elected not to keep me in ministry there. The church's doctrinal choice for their decision caused a concerned group of people to meet together to seek the Lord's direction as to their remaining in that church. With no plan in place, the Lord birthed CBF in the space of one week, sixteen years ago. Since then, the Lord has added His blessing to the church, and the congregation is thankful to have an active and engaged biblical counseling ministry.

Along with other senior pastor ministry obligations, it is my privilege to serve as both Instructor, Board Member, and Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Institute of Ohio (BCI). Through BCI, it has been a pleasure to teach multiple classes over the course of many hours to interested students. As the pastor of CBF, it is vital for me to recognize the detailed instruction found in Colossians 1:28. Here the apostle Paul gives three obligations to the biblical church that are intended for the benefit every man: (1) preach Christ, (2) counsel from the Word, and (3) teach from the Word. Just as the local church should be known for her preaching and teaching ministries, she should also be known for her counseling ministry. Paul's instruction gives evidence that the church should be known as the place where the hurting and lost can go for counsel. CBF's ministry context also includes the fact that there is a lack of churches in the area that practice biblical counseling (not just espousing a theological belief in it). Consequentially, the Lord providentially led a group of committed Christians to start the church. Since CBF began, the church has increasingly engaged in the ministry of biblical counseling, first in counseling those in need, and more recently, the beginning stages of training other counselors to counsel.

In addition to the instructions found in Colossians, CBF's ministry context is also patterned after that of Paul in Acts 20:19-31. In verse 31, Paul gives a short yet significant summation of his ministry in Ephesus. Paul writes of his very active

counseling ministry among both leaders and people. By ministerial example, Paul gives further evidence that just as the church should be known as a preaching and teaching center, so it should also be known as a counseling center. Powlison comments that such counseling is a primary function of the pastor and the church:

Counseling is fundamentally a pastoral activity and must be church-based. It must be regulated under the authority of God's appointed under-shepherds. Counseling is connected both structurally and in content to other aspects of the pastoral task: teaching, preaching, prayer, church discipline, use of gifts, missions, worship, and so forth. Counseling is the private ministry of the Word of God, tailored specifically to the individuals involved. The differences between preaching and counseling are not conceptual but only methodological. The same truths are applied in diverse ways.<sup>1</sup>

CBF holds Paul's ministry perspective, seen both here in Acts 20 and in Colossians 1. CBF's ministry context aligns particularly with Colossians 1:28, which is the church's theme verse: "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man so that we can present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Romans 15:14 also fits into the current ministry context in that CBF requires its office-bearers, as well as every teaching member of the church, to complete counseling training. In my pastoral ministry, I have seen first-hand the need that exists both in those who claim to be Christians as well as those who stand apart from the saving grace of Christ, to be counseled biblically. I consequently have a strong conviction regarding the biblical necessity for pastoral staff, office-bearers, and church members to be trained to biblically counsel. Given that Paul says that Christians are to study to show themselves approved (2 Tim 2:15), it is crucial for members and friends of CBF to have the opportunity to be trained through the ministry of the local church in how to counsel effectively from the Word of God. While the possibility of such training exists at CBF, its importance in being seen as a means of obeying the Great Commission needs to be more firmly grounded in the cultural mindset and convictions of the church as a whole. Further, as evidence that there has been sufficient understanding of the materials

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<sup>1</sup> David Powlison, "Biblical Counseling in Recent Times," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 29.

presented, students should pursue certification primarily through ACBC to counsel under the ministry of CBF. Consequently, the counseling training materials CBF uses have been approved by ACBC. As an outside ministry, ACBC stands as an impartial organization providing and grading both theological and counseling exams to certify that students are indeed prepared to counsel from the Word of God.

Through the ministry of BCI, CBF is establishing a more formal training center at CBF so that the ministry offers not just biblical counseling but also trains members as well as Christians from the surrounding area for ACBC certification. Through training members to counsel as well as offering training to other Christians in the community, CBF is working to obey Christ's Great Commission more fully.

### **Rationale**

Given that in CBF's ministry, only ACBC certified biblical counselors give counsel as a ministry of the church (2 Tim 2:15), there is a great need for more certified counselors. This counseling requirement necessitates the development of a culture of understanding the importance of CBF undertaking the task of not only offering biblical counseling but also training in biblical counseling, particularly for CBF members. There was a need for CBF to be encouraged to more fully obey the gospel commission of Christ. This need could be met by helping members better grasp the importance of not only counseling biblically but also, and just as importantly, being a church committed to offering biblical counseling training with the goal of ACBC certification. The more CBF members who complete the training, the more who may be able to pursue the certification process, and the greater the ministry impact of CBF in obeying Christ's gospel command. As a further benefit, CBF's spiritual strength overall will be increased as its members are more fully engaged and equipped spiritually through such counseling training.

Since the process of certification through ACBC is necessarily rigorous, those who take the training at CBF must be prepared to meet ACBC's requirements, which include a theology and counseling exam, along with ten hours of observed counseling,

and, finally, fifty hours of supervised counseling. Such a certification process serves not only to evidence the reality of 2 Timothy 2:15 regarding the benefit of training but to give credibility to those who may come for counsel. Although biblical counseling is offered as a ministry of CBF with no fees, potential counselees, a number of whom are unconverted, still express greater trust in counselors who have been certified with an international certifying organization, such as ACBC. Although CBF is currently engaged in providing training, the ministry needs to be more fully embraced by the church family at large, as chapter 3 will explain, to assure the necessary commitment to maintaining an active biblical counseling ministry as a significant means of fulfilling the Great Commission. Such deepening commitment could be accomplished by a curriculum designed to help the church understand the importance of embracing training counselors to be certified by ACBC. Without churches being committed to the process of training toward ACBC certification, the local counseling ministry would be significantly hindered.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip the people of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship in North Ridgeville, Ohio with a deeper understanding of the church's role in biblical counseling as a way of working toward the Great Commission, as well as a greater appreciation for the ACBC certification process.

### **Goals**

The following goals were established to determine the effectiveness of this project.

1. The first goal was to assess CBF's adult members' current understanding of the importance of biblical counseling and the necessity of CBF providing both biblical counseling and biblical counseling training.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As of fall 2020, there were about one hundred members of CBF.

2. The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum to introduce and explain the principles of biblical counseling, the importance of offering training, and the value of ACBC certification.<sup>3</sup>
3. The third goal was to assess the effectiveness of the six-week curriculum by measuring CBF's adult members' understanding of the necessity of biblical counseling and biblical counseling training and their appreciation for ACBC certification.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to assess CBF's current adult members regarding their current understanding of the importance of biblical counseling and the necessity of CBF providing both biblical counseling, as well as having an active biblical counseling training ministry. This goal was measured by administering the pre-Biblical Counseling Survey (BCS).<sup>4</sup> This goal was successfully met when twenty-five members of CBF completed the CBFBCS, and the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current understanding of biblical counseling and the importance of training biblical counselors among CBF members.

The second goal was to develop a six-week introductory curriculum to introduce and explain the principles of biblical counseling, the importance of offering training, and the value of ACBC certification to the church. This curriculum explained such issues as the importance of the church in fulfilling the Great Commission, an overview of historical figures in psychology, the weakness of integrationism, why CBF requires certification through ACBC, and a discussion on the process of certification through ACBC. This study was presented in the Christian Development Hour. This goal was measured by an expert panel who evaluated the biblical faithfulness, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.<sup>5</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when a

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<sup>3</sup> These goals primarily included the CBF membership, since counseling is a ministry of the church.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 2.

minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it reached the standard.

The third goal was to assess the effectiveness of the six-week curriculum by measuring CBF's adult members' understanding of the necessity of biblical counseling and biblical counseling training and their appreciation for ACBC certification. This goal was measured by administering the post-BCS, which was used to measure the change in knowledge.<sup>6</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. This goal was regarded as successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it reached the standard. This goal was successfully met when the same twenty-five members of CBF completed the pre-and post BCS, and the survey had been analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the understanding of biblical counseling among CBF members.

### **Definitions and Delimitations**

Throughout the course of this project, specific terms are often repeated. For the purposes of this project, it is helpful for the reader to understand the following terms.

*Biblical counseling.* As this term implies, the Bible is depended upon as the sum and total resource in the counseling ministry. Jay Adams explains,

The Scriptures speak of counseling under the Greek term *nouthesia* ('nouthetic confrontation.'). The New Testament word is untranslatable since there is no English equivalent large enough to carry all of the freight that it bears. *Nouthesia* incorporates three ideas:

1. There is something wrong in the counselee (sin) that God says must be changed.

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 1.



2. The counselor seeks to the effect that change by biblically appropriate verbal confrontation.
3. The change is attempted for the benefit of the counselee.<sup>7</sup>

In saying that the Bible is sufficient is not to say that other biblical resources may not also be used in the counseling setting. Other sources that adhere to the sufficiency of the Scripture may also be used in biblical counseling. Such other biblical sources can and should be used because “counseling is a theological discipline.”<sup>8</sup> For this project, *biblical counseling* is defined falling within the framework of seven points, articulated by David Powlison:

- (1) God is at the center of counseling, (2) Commitment to God has epistemological consequences, (3) Sin, in all its dimensions is the primary problem counselors must deal with, (4) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer, (5) The biblical change process which counseling must aim at is progressive sanctification, (6) The situational difficulties people face are not the random cause of problems in living, (7) Counseling is fundamentally a pastoral activity and must be church-based.<sup>9</sup>

*Psychology.* It is essential to understand the definition of *psychology* because its practice is well accepted in the evangelical church as a whole. Psychology’s acceptance is evidenced by the great debate that currently exists within the evangelical church when biblical counselors maintain that the Word of God is sufficient in counseling people. Many in the church now argue that psychology is beneficial because it speaks where the Bible is silent. Yet, as MacArthur states, “The word psychology literally means ‘the study of the soul.’”<sup>10</sup> For this project, this will be the accepted definition of *psychology*.

*Christian psychology.* *Christian psychology* is the belief that the concepts of psychology can be integrated in areas where the Bible is insufficient. As Lambert states,

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<sup>7</sup> Jay Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 166.

<sup>8</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Powlison, “Biblical Counseling in Recent Times,” 27-29.

<sup>10</sup> John MacArthur, “Rediscovering Biblical Counseling,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 7.

adherents of Christian psychology believe that “the Bible serves as the control of beliefs that filter out unbiblical elements, allowing parts of the therapy that conform with to Scripture to remain and be used by Christians.”<sup>11</sup>

A number of delimitations applied to this project. First, the biblical counseling survey was given to only adult members of CBF. Second, the survey was only administered to those who were able to attend the classes in person. If they could not be in attendance, then they accessed the class online before the next in-person session was taught.

### **Conclusion**

The three major goals of this project should help CBF see an increase in the number of students who begin the certification process with ACBC certification as a result of the ministry of CBF. An increase in ACBC certified counselors will only serve to strengthen CBF’s counseling ministry and further impact the church’s local community for the cause of Jesus Christ, thus further obeying the Great Commission. Chapter 2 will focus on the theology of biblical counseling, its need in this current culture, and the unique role of the church in fulfilling that need. Biblical counseling done primarily through the vehicle of the church is the exciting way in which Paul’s admonition can be fulfilled until Christ returns, preaching Christ, counseling from His Word, and teaching from the Scriptures. Each of Paul’s admonitions find their source in agreement that the Bible is sufficient.

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<sup>11</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 98.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR COUNSELING TRAINING MINISTRY AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this project was to equip the people of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship in North Ridgeville, Ohio with a deeper understanding of the church's role in biblical counseling as a way of working toward the Great Commission, as well as a greater appreciation for the ACBC certification process. The first chapter described both CBF's past and current engagement in the biblical counseling and training ministry. CBF's participation in this ministry is related to its belief that the Scriptures alone are sufficient for the task of speaking to the souls of all people (Ps 119:89, 104; 2 Pet 1:3). This corporate conviction of CBF regarding the sufficiency of God's Word drives the basis for this project. It finds its root primarily in Christ's Great Commission to make disciples, principally through the vehicle and ministry of the local church. As far as biblical counseling is concerned, this commission is carried out by offering counseling to those in need. However, CBF needs to further understand the significance of training other counselors to help counselees, both informally and formally, through the ministry of the church. The responsibility for such biblical counseling training rests upon every local church. If such local churches cannot train counselors themselves, then they should at least be burdened to be engaged with another local church that does have the training of counselors as a part of their ministry. The need for both counselors and churches who can train counselors for both formal and informal counseling remains great. "Formal counseling is required when struggles of sin and suffering reach a point of crisis, but informal counseling occurs all the time. Both are necessary for the church to be a

counseling ministry.”<sup>1</sup> The church should be engaged, therefore, in both training counselors and offering counseling to those in need.

Consequently, this project focused on training for the formal counseling process by encouraging all counseling students, especially CBF members, to pursue certification with ACBC. In agreement with Steve Viars and Rob Green’s view of the church, “we not only want to be a place where hurting souls can find help and hope; we also want to be a church that teaches, counsels, and discipulates so that issues can be prevented or solved before they reach the point of critical mass.”<sup>2</sup> There is a two-step perspective to such an engaged ministry. First is training the counselees through counsel and discipleship that they might grow in their faith, and the second perspective should concern training counselors to help counselees grow in their faith. The more the church trains its members to counsel biblically, the more the ministry of the local church will be exponentially increased in obeying Christ’s commission.

This chapter contains a multilayered approach to see CBF will take up the call to counsel and train. First, this chapter’s survey of relevant biblical texts places the primary responsibility for biblical counseling in fulfilling the Great Commission upon the local church, including Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 20:31, Romans 15:14, and Titus 3:10. The second focus of this chapter will be an analysis of Colossians 1:28, where the apostle Paul speaks of the trifold responsibilities of the local church in ministering the Word of God, of which he lists biblical counseling as an integral part. Last will be a study of Ephesians 4:11-12, wherein Paul writes of the significance of the local church equipping the saints for ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Viars and Rob Green, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 226.

<sup>2</sup> Viars and Rob Green, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” 226.

It must be stated at the outset that advocating for the local church to be a central place for biblical counseling training to occur is not to suggest that there is no need for formal institutions of higher education, especially institutions that train in the area of biblical counseling itself. Addressing the responsibility of training through the local church is not to be interpreted as a way to replace or supplant academic training outside of the church through Christian universities, colleges, and seminaries, etc. Instead, when speaking of biblical counseling training in the church, this project intends that academic training of such institutions be incorporated, as much as possible, in and through the church itself. In this way, the church is the beneficiary of God-centered academia, as the purpose of such Christian academia is to ultimately strengthen the church. Lilly Park and Jeremy Pierre write,

The church's privileged role as the center point of redeeming grace is why Christian institutions of learning must be self-conscious servants of the church as the primary means of serving humanity. Christian institutions of higher education are not the church, and thus they do not carry out the mission of the church in her place. Neither do they ignore the role of the church as unimportant to the benefit of humanity. Rather, Christian institutions of higher education pursue and transmit knowledge of the scholarly disciplines for the purpose of enabling people to work for the benefit of the world in Christ-honoring ways. More specifically, Christian higher education glorifies God and serves His church by engaging in the pursuit of knowledge for its proper application to human conduct, in conscious attendance to the central mission of the church to proclaim a crucified, risen, and reigning Lord.<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of being able to train others to counsel biblically, the benefit of such academic training can and should be incorporated into the ministries of local churches, thus helping the church further fulfill the Great Commission. Training ministries such as the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), and the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD), and approved training centers of ACBC, such as the Biblical Counseling Institute, can offer the benefit of biblical counseling training even to the smallest of churches. Incorporating such training can be

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<sup>3</sup> Lilly Park and Jeremy Pierre, "Biblical Counseling, the Church, and the Academy," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care Through God's People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 369-70.

accomplished through these ministries, many of which are led by graduates of institutions of higher learning who are now devoted to helping churches educate their members in biblical counseling. Certifying training ministries make it much more conducive for churches to provide training in their churches if the church is unable to run a full-fledged training ministry in and of itself. Local churches engaged in such training will help fulfill the mission of the church. Thus, this chapter will also address the importance of training in the local church, specifically at CBF, from the perspective of incorporating the benefit of academic education in the life of the church, as the church seeks to obey the Great Commission by training counselors. In this chapter's survey of relevant biblical texts, first will be a consideration of texts that place the primary responsibility for biblical counseling in fulfilling the Great Commission upon the local church.

### **Scripture Depicts the Local Church Making Disciples Through Biblical Counseling**

This section will consider a number of scriptural texts that give evidence that in Christ's Great Commission, the local church is to offer biblical counseling, as well as train Christians how to counsel biblically.

#### **Matthew 28:19-20**

Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." An essential part of understanding the local church's place in the Great Commission is for Christians and non-Christians alike to first see the church as the place where they may seek counsel for their troubles. As Lambert explains, "Understanding the doctrine of the church in a theology of biblical counseling is important because the

church is the place where counseling ministry will most meaningfully happen.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the spiritual leadership of local churches, as well as members of those churches, should recognize the need to be better equipped to biblically counsel, particularly those within their congregation. Also, such churches should recognize the importance of evangelizing those who are not in their church's membership.

An important component of this teaching/training ministry of the church is that a church that has an active biblical counseling ministry is also a church automatically heavily involved in Christ's commission to evangelize. Biblical counseling provides a scriptural way to make disciples. It is my personal experience that more have been brought to confess Christ as Lord and Saviour as a result of my counseling ministry, over and above my preaching ministry. In mentioning this to Jay Adams (with a certain amount of chagrin), he greatly encouraged me in his answer by saying:

I'll tell you why that is the case. Generally, when people come to see you for counseling, they are spiritually ready. They have been broken by life, broken by their sinful choices, and in that broken state, they are ready to listen to the Gospel. When you preach, people are not always as prepared to listen; when you counsel, they are ready to hear what you have to say.<sup>5</sup>

What an encouragement to me regarding the reality of evangelism through the ministry of churches that offer biblical counseling. Indeed, the church should be known as the place to receive biblical counsel because such a ministry expands its opportunity to reach the unsaved. When people in the community are made aware of a counseling ministry where others have already been helped, they also come hoping that they too can be assisted. CBF has seen this occur as it has followed Christ's command to evangelize via the counseling ministry, but how will this last if new counselors are not continuing to be trained? Biblical counseling affords an opportunity to obey the Great Commission of Christ by effectively reaching the lost, particularly speaking to them in the midst of their crisis and hurt (John 4).

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<sup>4</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 305.

<sup>5</sup> Jay E. Adams, conversation with the author, 2008.

Those suffering the pain and trouble of life are the ones willingly coming to the church for counsel. Patten explains,

Evangelizing lost people in a counseling session has been compared to fishing in a barrel. That is, many of the obstacles have been removed, and the opportunities for success are great. What are the obstacles to evangelism? They often include things like a lack of relationship, an appropriate opportunity, and sufficient time for follow-up discussion. In biblical counseling, each of these hindrances is overcome, and there are often opportunities to present the claims of Jesus Christ in a meaningful way. By God's grace, when we are faithful in sowing the seed of the gospel and watering it, there is life-transforming repentance and conversion.<sup>6</sup>

The church that offers biblical counseling is active in evangelism because, as Jay Adams says, "counseling is redemptive."<sup>7</sup> Since the unsaved are unable to spiritually understand the counsel of the Word (1 Cor 2:10-16), they must first be evangelized in the hope that the Spirit of God would bring them to the place of confession and repentance in trusting in Christ.<sup>8</sup> Many churches are always looking for evangelistic programs to employ in the church, which is appropriate. Yet, most seem not to understand the potential evangelistic impact of an active biblical counseling ministry. In my ministerial experience, through the offer of biblical counseling, our church has had the privilege of seeing entire families come to Christ, and I have had the further opportunity of baptizing them into the membership of the church. This joy is the culmination of evangelizing through the counsel of the Scriptures. Adams comments that, when dealing with counselees who are unsaved, soon enough, "the counselor's task is to explain the gospel and to say very plainly that God commands all men to repent of their sin and believe in Jesus Christ."<sup>9</sup> It may please the Spirit of God to reap unto Himself the spiritual harvest of that lost soul (Titus 3:5). Such opportunities come to churches that are engaged in the biblical

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin Carson and Randy Patten, "Biblical Counseling and Evangelism," in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 314.

<sup>7</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 66.

<sup>8</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 69.



counseling ministry. The potential of evangelism through the church's ministry of providing biblical counsel will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

Given Christ's multi-layered gospel command in Matthew 28, it may be said that another critical part of the church's function is to train counselees who are already disciples of Christ. Given this concept, the ministry of biblical counseling also serves to disciple Christians and has rightly often been equated with the act of discipleship itself. Via the Great Commission, Christ commands the church with the duty of "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." In this framework, as described by Randy Patten, one aspect of such "teaching to observe" means instructing individuals to apply biblical principles and precepts to their own circumstances. Biblical counseling is one very effective way of accomplishing this.<sup>10</sup> Given the scope of Christ's command, the concept of teaching is understood to be broadly defined in dealing with not only deep theological truths but also the application of those biblical truths to daily life. Leon Morris explains, "Jesus is not speaking about education for education's sake. He speaks of those who are being taught as those who are 'observing' what Jesus has commanded. In other words, Jesus is concerned with a way of life. . . . He continually urges His followers to live in a manner pleasing to God."<sup>11</sup> When a Christian knows biblical doctrine, the Christian knows how to live a life that is pleasing to God (1 Tim 4:16). John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue write, "Doctrine has been understood too narrowly, like a doctrinal statement or theological essay, rather than more broadly in the scriptural sense of biblical content. However, the Scriptures never envisioned doctrine referring to ivory-tower musings about theological speculation or minutiae."<sup>12</sup> The scope of Christ's

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<sup>10</sup> Randy Patten, "Launching a Counseling Ministry," in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 244.

<sup>11</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 749.

<sup>12</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 131.

command for the church to teach was to include more than doctrinal intricacies. Through knowing doctrine, Christians know how to live to please the Lord. Thus, as John Gill states, the church is also to teach:

Moral duties; all obligations, both to God and men; all relative duties that respect the world, or one another, those that are without, and those that are within; and these are to be taught them, and therefore to be insisted on in the ministry of the Word; and not merely in order that they may know them, and have the theory of them, but that they may put them into practice.<sup>13</sup>

By following Christ's clear command to teach/train, the church matures and makes disciples. It is no coincidence that those so disciplined serve as witnesses of the power of the Gospel to the unconverted.

A final consideration of Matthew 28:19-20 also sees the training of biblical counselors via the church as a means of obeying Christ's command to make disciples. This is my personal burden for CBF—that the church would more deeply own the importance of training counselors to counsel through the ministry of the local church. Both counseling and the training of counselors should be seen as an integral part of the church's commission to proclaim the Word of God. The burden for the need of such training to take place should be owned by the whole church, not just the pastor. Counseling and training should be understood as a natural part of the warp and woof of the church, a part of her DNA. William Goode writes,

Just as church members need to be trained in evangelism, so they need to be trained in counseling. In what context should that training take place? This question is the watershed for the whole issue of counseling. For the biblical counselor, the training ground must be the local church. While some training takes place in counseling classes, most of the training of the biblical counselor comes through normal, active involvement in the church. If we believe the Word of God can bring genuine change, solutions, healing, and growth, then counselor preparation must focus more on the biblical responsibilities of pastoring and less on counseling as a separate, parachurch skill.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John Gill, *Expositions of the Old and New Testaments* (Washington, DC: OSNOVA, 2012), Matthew 28:20, Kindle.

<sup>14</sup> William W. Goode, "Biblical Counseling and the Local Church," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 229.

Thus, Christ's Great Commission evidences that the church is to be the hub for such a disciple-making ministry, this ministry should include both biblical counseling and counseling training. The unsaved who may be brought to conversion and the Christian who may be further disciplined both occur through the ministry of biblical counseling. Therefore, training biblical counselors and providing an active biblical counseling ministry is a submissive attempt by the local church to both evangelize and "make disciples" (Matt 28:19).

### **Acts 20:31**

Acts 20:31 says, "Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years, I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears." This text makes apparent the truth that in each of the churches Paul established, he gave considerable time to the ministry of counseling people nouthetically. Adams writes, "It is important to notice first that nouthetic confrontation took up a fair share of Paul's time if he engaged in it night and day for three years without ceasing. Paul continually confronted people nouthetically."<sup>15</sup> The apostle Paul, known for his missionary work in establishing churches and his preaching work in the marketplaces, also evidences through his ministry to the Ephesians that fulfilling the Great Commission comes through counseling within the church. In this verse, the Apostle highlights the import of his counseling ministry amongst the Ephesian church. As he is preparing to leave the church at Ephesus, Paul deals nouthetically with them one last time. The form of *noutheteo* (νουθετῶν), which Paul employs in this verse, has the same meaning as *nouthesia*, which according to Strong "means to put in mind, admonish. . . . It is used of instruction, of warning."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 43.

<sup>16</sup> James Strong, *A Comprehensive Strong Dictionary of the Bible* (Seattle: Bestbooks, 2015), s.v. "admonish," Kindle.

Nouthetic counseling then literally means “a putting in the mind”<sup>17</sup> of the Scriptures in terms of teaching its truth and necessary subsequent application. As Matthew 28:19-20 demonstrates, the responsibility of putting the Scriptures into the mind is a task primarily given to the local church. As Green and Viars write, “being a church of biblical counseling is part and parcel of the mission God gave His church.”<sup>18</sup> This mission is true both in terms of training members how to counsel biblically and then being able to also offer nouthetic counseling to those in need, many of whom will likely stand apart from Christ.

It is telling to note that in this portion of the book of Acts, Paul is speaking directly to the elders of the Ephesian church. In so doing, he reminds them primarily of his nouthetic ministry amongst them over a three-year period. Not only did the apostle meet with people throughout his time amongst them, but he was also often deeply engaged in counseling the membership of the Ephesian church. Paul thus encourages the elders of the church of Ephesus to follow his example. In Acts 20:28, he instructs the elders to “pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.” In verse 31, Paul goes on to define for the elders what is comprised in caring for the church, seen in his example with the Ephesian church. He reminds the leadership that he often tearfully counseled the church, and significantly, he instructs the elders that they should also do likewise. Gill explains that Paul

was constantly and continually cautioning them against false teachers, and their doctrines, in the most tender and affectionate manner; shedding tears at the thoughts of what mischief would be done, and how many souls would be ruined by them; which gives a lively idea of the apostle, and his ministry, of his affection, zeal, and diligence, very worthy of the imitation of all the preachers of the Gospel.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 30.

<sup>18</sup> Viars and Green, “The Sufficiency of Scripture,” 227.

<sup>19</sup> Gill, *Expositions of the Old and New Testaments*, Acts 20.

The bulk of Paul’s ministry to the Ephesians is evidence of the place that counseling biblically should have both in the life of the pastor and of the local church. Wayne Mack writes, “Paul cared for people, and people knew that he cared. His heart was ‘open wide’ to them (2 Cor. 6:11). That is why he could be so straightforward in addressing their faults without alienating them. If we are to be effective counselors, we must have this same kind of compassion.”<sup>20</sup>

Acts 20 reveals Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, as well as explains the kind of nouthetic ministry Paul encouraged the leadership of the Ephesian church also to be engaged in with the people. In fact, Paul is giving a template for the same kind of nouthetic ministry on the part of the spiritual leadership in local churches as a whole. Certainly, this is just as true for CBF. The reality seen in this section of Acts 20 is that biblical counseling allows active engagement between the pastor and his sheep. Adams states,

Paul’s tears plainly reveal one fact—that he became deeply involved in the problems of his people. Involvement may differ not only in intensity but also in kind. Tears show that Paul’s involvement was a total involvement both of intensity and of kind. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote: Who is weak without my being weak, who is led into sin without my intense concern (2 Corinthians 11:29)? In his third letter, John too showed evidence of nouthetic involvement: I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my own children walk in the truth (vs. 4). Nouthetic counseling, then, necessarily embodies involvement of the deepest sort.<sup>21</sup>

Such pastoral involvement also serves as a witness to the watching world. This is Paul’s intention, as seen in Acts 20: 17-21, where he evidences the reality that the church’s engagement of counseling nouthetically is coupled with “preaching the kingdom of God” (v. 25). This church-centered, disciple-making, counseling model is a biblical model for obeying Christ’s Gospel command. MacArthur and Mayhue write,

The Great Commission indicates that true evangelism involves making disciples (and not merely convincing unbelievers to make decisions). As sinners respond in

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<sup>20</sup> Wayne Mack, “Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees” in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Dallas: Word, 1994), 177.

<sup>21</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 52-53.

saving faith to the message of the gospel, they are to be initiated into the church through baptism and disciplined by the church through sound teaching. The pattern of disciple-making was established by Jesus himself, who sought to make disciples during his earthly ministry (Mark 1: 16-22; 2:14; John 8:31). His example is to be continued by His people. True followers of Christ become “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19), meaning that those who become His disciples are themselves to be disciple-makers.<sup>22</sup>

### **Romans 15:14**

Romans 15:14 says, “I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” In this text, Paul gives another perspective of nouthetic counseling when he writes to the believers in the Roman church that they are “able to counsel.” This passage, which has been faithfully exegeted and taught by Adams, is a foundational text for the biblical counseling movement. From this verse, it became providentially obvious to Adams that the church at large was not fulfilling Paul’s call for Christians to deal nouthetically with one another. Paul plainly writes that Christians are able to counsel one another (καὶ ἀλλήλους νουθετεῖν) through the Word of God. The word *nouthetein* again is used by Paul, and here has the meaning to admonish or to warn. Vine defines, “The difference between ‘admonish’ and ‘teach’ seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do chiefly with the impartation of positive truth.”<sup>23</sup> Again, for the context of this project, it is important to note that such nouthetic involvement is to take place both informally and formally within the context of the local church. Such admonishments, or warnings, according to MacArthur and Mayhue, “elaborate on how fellowship should be expressed within the congregation.”<sup>24</sup> It is both a solemn and a joyful obligation for members of the local body of Christ to follow Paul’s conviction that, steeped in the knowledge of Christ and living in obedience to Him,

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<sup>22</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 753.

<sup>23</sup> Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 793.

Christians can and should counsel one another. Leon Morris states, “The Romans also have the ability to instruct one another, where instruct means more than ‘teach’; it has rather the idea of ‘admonish’ with the thought of correcting what is amiss.”<sup>25</sup> Such nouthetic engagement, undertaken between members of the church, is done for the benefit of the whole body of Christ. MacArthur and Mayhue suggest, “The fellowship of believers not only provides a context for Christian service; it also offers spiritual protection to its members.”<sup>26</sup> Christ has designed these benefits to take place primarily within the context of the local community of believers. Therefore, biblical counseling is to be an integral part of the life of the church. Certainly, those called to the full-time vocational ministry should be counseling biblically. As Adams writes, “Any Christian worker may become a helpful counselor in the place where God has called him to serve. That the work of counseling should be carried on preeminently by ministers and other Christians whose gifts, training, and calling especially qualify and require them to pursue the work, I do not doubt.”<sup>27</sup>

While all Christians are generally able to offer counsel, such a view does not preclude that Christians do not need to be formally trained in the counseling process. Adams explains,

I freely acknowledge that some counselors are more effective than others, and I fully recognize that many ministers have not been trained to counsel biblically. But to agree that for one reason or another (mis-training, lack of training, etc.) Christian workers are not now competent to counsel; is not the same as saying that they cannot become so.<sup>28</sup>

Given that Paul speaks of the Christian’s ability to learn to counsel, and their responsibility to counsel those who need to be spiritually warned (Gal. 6:1), the dual need for adequate counseling and counseling training is seen to be necessary in the life of the local church. Training Christians to be better equipped to counsel furthers the work of

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<sup>25</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 509.

<sup>26</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 793.

<sup>27</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 268.

<sup>28</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 268.

evangelism in the church. Jay Adams states, “Evangelism is the work of the *whole* congregation; it is not the task of the pastor only. Evangelism, like other Christian tasks, must be taught by the discipleship (or modeling method, and the pastor is the principal (though not sole) teacher/model.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Titus 3:10**

Given that the conduct of church members impacts the witness of the church as a whole in the community, biblical counseling plays an important role in this area of the church’s obedience of the Great Commission. Titus 3:10 says, “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.” The biblical counseling ministry of the church has the opportunity to impact not only those who struggle with the likes of fear and depression but also those who struggle with the blatant yet too often ignored sin of disrupting the unity of the local church. The Bible gives a necessary way to deal with such disruptive members through the vehicle of counseling because such members will soon enough damage the witness of the church in the local community. Many times, the potential to deal biblically with a church member who consistently stirs up strife can and often should first happen in the biblical counseling setting. Given Colossians 1:28, one may say that a part of the method of warning the erring member would include the ministry of biblical counseling. MacArthur writes,

Ever since apostolic times, counseling has occurred in the church as a natural function of corporate spiritual life. After all, the New Testament itself commands believers to “admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14); “encourage one another” (Heb. 3:13, KJV); “comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18); “encourage one another, and build up one another” (1 Thess. 5:11); “confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed” (James 5:16). The apostle Paul wrote, “We who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves” (Rom. 15:1). And, “Even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1–2). All those instructions apply to rank-and-file church members, not only to some priestly caste of experts. Counseling, particularly

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<sup>29</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock: A Handbook on Pastoral Ministry, Counseling, and Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 468-69.



counseling that skillfully employs and applies God's Word, is a necessary duty of Christian life and fellowship.<sup>30</sup>

In Titus 3:10, Paul uses the word *nouthesian* (*νουθεσίαν*), carrying the meaning of admonition and warning, and in this usage, it has to deal with warning those who are unruly in the context of the body-life of the church. Paul uses this word to convey that the counseling ministry may be included in the discipline process. Thus, biblical counseling can occur with an eye to possible church discipline. Adams explains, "Nouthesia is 'the training by word,' whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance."<sup>31</sup> Here is where the biblical counseling ministry primarily differs from the teaching (*διδάσκω*) ministry of the Scriptures. Adams states that there is a difference between counseling and teaching because "didasko simply suggests the communication of data (teaching), making information known, clear, understandable, and memorable. The word didasko implies nothing about the listener but refers exclusively to the activity of the instructor."<sup>32</sup> Thus, biblical counseling is to occur when there is more than just information to be conveyed, but a biblical problem to be addressed or solved, even including the warning and need for church discipline. In such cases, warnings must be given, and the Bible makes clear that it is the church's primary responsibility to issue such cautions. Adams writes,

Nouthetic confrontation, then, necessarily suggests first of all that there is something wrong with the person who is to be confronted nouthetically. The idea of something wrong, some sin, some obstruction, some problem, some difficulty, some need that has to be acknowledged and dealt with, is central. In short, nouthetic confrontation arises out of a condition in the counselee that God wants changed. The fundamental purpose of nouthetic confrontation, then, is to effect personality and behavioral change.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John MacArthur, "Rediscovering Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 44.

<sup>32</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 45.

<sup>33</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 45.

An example of such a warning is given here in Titus 3:10, where, in speaking of the church's responsibility to warn the disruptive member of the church, Paul uses the noun form of *nouthesia* (*νουθεσία*) as the duty of the church in warning the erring member who refuses to repent. There are a number of biblical purposes for putting the Scriptures into the minds of Christians, and in this text, the purpose is to discipline. Certainly, one of the designated places for warning an erring member who refuses to repent to occur is in the counseling setting of the local church. In speaking to Titus as one of the leaders of the church, Paul places the responsibility upon the leadership to be sure that necessary warnings are given to the erring member. Such warnings are an essential part of the counsel of the church, and biblically the church has been given both the responsibility and the authority to carry it out (Matt 16:19). Biblical counseling is also to be employed when the serious issue of discipline is on the horizon for a member of the local church who, for lack of repentance, causes unnecessary division within the body and being a poor witness to the community (Titus 3:1-3). In the context of biblical counseling, the church has also been given the keys of authority by Christ Jesus (Matt 18:17-18; 1 Cor 5:7) to discipline her members when required. In the case of Titus, the warning must be given to a member of the church he was overseeing who stood in need of biblical change. One may deduce that Titus warned the erring brother through preaching, teaching, and biblical counseling in the form of *nouthesia*. Such warnings of admonition are to occur before the discipline of the church is to take place. Titus 3:10 gives evidence of just how necessary biblical counseling is to the church's overall ministry of the Word and its witness to the power of the gospel. Such ministry of counseling has the welfare of the sinning brother, the church's purity, and its witness to the watching world, all in mind. Jonathan Leeman warns, "When churches fail to practice church discipline, they begin to look like the world. They are

like salt that has lost its saltiness, which is only good for being trampled upon (Matt. 5:13). They are no witness at all to a world lost in darkness.”<sup>34</sup> Adams explains,

[The church] needs men who not only will preach the truth of the Scriptures and all of the doctrines contained in them (thankfully, there seems to be a resurgence of concern for this), but men who (as fearlessly as they preach) also will apply that truth in the hard concrete situations of life to which it is directed. It is one thing to win the Lord’s battles verbally from the pulpit; it is another to win them experientially in the everyday affairs of pastoral work. Sadly, there are all too few who exhibit the courage to exercise church discipline, to say “no” in practical matters of judgment, and to evangelize in counseling when they know (all too well) that this is exactly what is needed by the persons to whom they speak. Instead, there are all too many who rationalize, and in the name of love, sympathy, compassion, etc., compromise God’s truth in actual practice. There is too much of the fear of men. The Church needs men who fear God more and, therefore, fear men less. Only such pastors can remain faithful to Him and effectively minister the Word in love both to saved and unsaved sinners.<sup>35</sup>

### **Colossians 1:28: The Responsibility of the Church to Counsel Biblically**

In Colossians 1:28, the ongoing significance of the church and her ministry is once again evidenced. As Paul writes to the Colossians, he gives a trifold obligation to the church to biblically preach, counsel, and teach. This trifold responsibility is given because the church has been tasked by God to carry out the mission of “holding forth the Word of life” (Phil 2:16). What Paul writes in Ephesians 3:8-11 helps bring further understanding to Colossians 1:28. For to the church at Ephesus, Paul writes of the enduring importance of the church in advancing the Word of God:

Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Leeman, “A Church Discipline Primer,” *New 9Marks Journal*, March 1, 2010, <https://www.9marks.org/article/church-discipline-primer/>.

<sup>35</sup> Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock*, 246.

In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, one sees the importance of pastors also being engaged in the opportunity of counseling biblically, evidencing that such a ministry should be an important part of the church's overall ministry to both members and non-members, saved and unsaved. This is evident in that Colossians 1:28 speaks to three responsibilities of a biblical pastor, which are for the benefit of "every man." The Greek word Paul uses for "all" here is (πάντα) and according to Strong's means "all, the whole, every kind of . . . all, any, every, the whole."<sup>36</sup> Paul makes plain that the Word of God is to be given to "every man" through the ministry of the church. Such a trifold proclamation of the Word is the primary means of obeying the Great Commission. According to Paul, saved and unsaved alike are to receive the Word through preaching, counseling (including pre-evangelism counseling), and teaching. Paul writes that the church is the instrument through which Christ's building work through evangelism and discipleship is accomplished. The church's task of "holding forth the Word" (Phil 2:16) continues to this very day and will continue until Christ returns. The church is the chosen primary means by which Jesus Christ has been pleased to declare the mysteries of God to the generations "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3:10-11). The mandate to make God's wisdom known is connected to the fact that the church is "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Paul tells Timothy that God has given to the church the unique task of both promoting and defending the gospel. The church then is the rightful sphere of the shepherd's ministry—this is where the sheep are to be regularly and properly fed (Ezek 34:2c). In this ministry of holding forth the Word, God has called and appointed pastors to this important trifold task of proclaiming the Word through the church (Acts 20:28; Eph 4: 11-12; 2 Tim 4:2). Adams writes,

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<sup>36</sup> Strong, *A Comprehensive Strong Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "every man."

God ordained the minister to be the counselor of His flock and provided him with full resources for carrying out this function (2 Timothy 3:16, 17—“man from God” is a phrase used to designate the pastor-teacher). Rather than consider himself inadequate for this task, necessitating dependency upon extra-pastoral resources, the Scriptures indicate that the Holy Spirit has provided all that he needs to equip him for “every good work.”<sup>37</sup>

Biblical counseling is an integral part of the pastor’s use of promoting the Word of God. Therefore, the church should be known as the central place for biblical preaching, teaching, and also counseling. Pastors cannot properly deal with fragile souls who have endured difficult personal crises apart from counseling them from the Word of God. The Bible is sufficient for every soul in crisis that God in His providence may bring through the doors of the church. The Word of God is true, useful, and powerful (Heb 4:12). Thus, Jesus says in Matthew 4:4, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” The Bible is God’s unaltered Word, which is most needful in the time of crisis when people are hurting, whether by their sinful life choices or hard and difficult providences which they have been brought to endure. The Word of God should, therefore, be the most prominent resource in the pastor’s office. So important was counseling to Puritan pastor Richard Baxter that he believed it should be a part of the pastor’s daily responsibilities:

It is past doubt that we should perform this great duty to all the people, or as many as we can, for our love and care for their souls must extend to all. If there are five hundred or a thousand ignorant people in your parish or congregation, it is a poor discharge of your duty, not and then to speak to some few of them, and let the rest alone in their ignorance, if you are able to afford them help.<sup>38</sup>

In the counseling setting, God’s Word alone is powerful enough to speak to every person, every crisis, every issue, and every sin. Thankfully, the Bible is sufficient for the task (2 Pet 1:3). Ed Bulkley writes,

The Bible provides the principles necessary to deal with eating disorders, non-biogenic depressions, scholastic failure, child abuse, bitter memories, anxiety, and a host of other modern problems. Thus, integrationists are grossly mistaken when they

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<sup>37</sup> Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock*, 185.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Dascalu, Romania: Magna Gratia Ministries, 2017), dedication.

say that “many, perhaps most, of the problems people bring to modern counselors are never discussed in the Bible.”<sup>39</sup>

The church’s call, then, is for pastors and those trained in biblical counseling to be ready to administer the Word to the sheep through this three-fold process, knowing that it speaks to all the issues that Christians may face. Although Paul separates these three duties, there is a close connection between preaching, counseling, and teaching. Therefore, there will be brief consideration of preaching and teaching, but for the purpose of this project, particular emphasis will be given to biblical counseling.

### **Preaching to Every Man**

God has chosen the means of solid biblical preaching as one of the pastor’s major ministry obligations. To preach is “to herald the Word”<sup>40</sup> and to “proclaim before the public.”<sup>41</sup> To preach to every man is to proclaim God’s Word publicly to both believer and non-believer. William Hendriksen states, “It is the earnest proclamation of the great news initiated by God.”<sup>42</sup> Preaching is comprised of telling people about both their need of Christ in salvation (evangelism) and their need of living for Him (sanctification/edification). The Puritans had a high-view of the place of preaching in the life of the church. Yet, as Sarles asserts, “The sermon served as a means of corporate counseling, edifying the body of believers gathered together.”<sup>43</sup> Their preaching was never done just to be academic, but always with exhortation and a call of necessary application to the Word that had been spoken in their midst. This perspective evidences that the church

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<sup>39</sup> Ed Bulkley, *Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), 27.

<sup>40</sup> William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, The New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955), 309.

<sup>41</sup> Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 309.

<sup>42</sup> Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 310.

<sup>43</sup> Ken L. Sarles, “The English Puritans: A Historical Paradigm of Biblical Counseling,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, 25.

should be known as the primary place to receive biblical counsel. A part of this corporate counseling through the vehicle of preaching includes the opportunity to train people to be prepared for and thus better enabled to know how to go through a crisis when it comes. This is why Paul tells Timothy to “preach the Word” (2 Tim 4:2).

### **Counseling Every Man**

In Paul’s instruction to the church, one also sees that there is to be a private component to the pastor’s feeding. Preaching may serve as a means of “corporate counseling,” but Paul writes that there is also much more to this dynamic of counseling. The Greek word Paul uses in Colossians 1:28 is *nouthetountes* (*νουθετοῦντες*) and here again means to “put into the mind” by admonishing, exhorting, and warning. Paul points out the fact that along with preaching, the pastor must also be engaged in biblically counseling his people individually. This is an important means by which he will also comfort his sheep. Patten writes, “The public declaration of God’s truth is certainly giving advice/instruction/warning/counsel, but it has to be recognized as general, not applied specifically to one’s circumstances. Biblical counseling is intensive discipleship, not general discipleship.”<sup>44</sup> Paul writes that it is a God-given responsibility of the pastor to counsel from the Word of God. Jesus Himself serves as the perfect model in this when He preaches publicly to the crowds, but then He also sits with His disciples and explains and challenges them privately with what He has preached publicly. Such ministry was Paul’s own practice, as has been seen from Acts 20:28.

Paul writes that one of the major ministries that the pastor should be involved in is this matter of counseling; it goes part and parcel with preaching and teaching. Here is further evidence as to why the church should be known as the primary place to receive counsel. Given this text in Colossians, pastors should not be sending their sheep away to someone else for the counsel that they should be receiving from their own shepherd.

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<sup>44</sup> Patten, “Launching a Counseling Ministry,” 243.

Rather, the sheep should know that they can always come to the house of God for comfort and encouragement through the counsel of His Word, no matter their trouble or sin issue. Biblical counseling will be a help since such counsel will always point people to Jesus Christ because the Bible always points people to Christ. This certainly is the responsibility of the church and the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission. According to Paul, biblical counseling is an integral part of the proclamation of the Word in pointing people to Christ. Thus, the biblical evidence points to the fact that the church should be serving as the center for biblical counseling. A church with such a counseling ministry will be sure to extol Christ. Wayne Mack states,

It is not enough for us to espouse certain principles and regulations for living because that would be pure behaviorism. If our counseling is truly biblical, people should not come away from it, saying merely, "The Bible is a wonderful book"; they should also come away saying, "What a wonderful Savior we have." We should labor in all of our instruction to point our counselees to Jesus Christ, and we will be successful in this if we can help them to behold "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).<sup>45</sup>

Biblical counseling is an important means that Christ has given to His church. It is a God-given means for Christians to be able to bring the counsel of the Word of God to those in crisis. Unless the pastor spends such time with his sheep, he will be unsure as to what they may be dealing with daily, and thus, tend to neglect their problems. Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju state, "Pastoral labor involves identifying with the weakness and sin of people."<sup>46</sup> Next, Paul mentions a third and final area of importance for the pastor who desires to feed his sheep well.

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<sup>45</sup> Wayne Mack, "Providing Instruction Through Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, 259.

<sup>46</sup> Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), chap. 1, Kindle



## Teaching Every Man

Teaching in this verse conveys the idea of instruction (διδάσκοντες): “To impart instruction or instill doctrine into one.”<sup>47</sup> In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul tells Timothy, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” In both cases, Paul uses the word *teaching* to describe a systematic way of instruction for those in the church. Biblical counseling is nothing other than a biblical systematic to be able to counsel the souls of men from the Word of God, which Paul says is “all wisdom.” Such a perspective stands over and against the teaching of the Colossian heretics of Paul’s day, who were happy to boast of their superior wisdom apart from the need of God’s revelation. Similarly, the same Word stands today against all who still are boastfully arrogant in believing that they are better equipped to deal with the souls of the hurting than the one who has been trained to counsel the Truth from the Word of God. Such a systematic teaching of the Word of God brings “all wisdom” and is within reach of all (Rom 15:14). Again, there is a close connection between counseling and teaching. As Hendriksen states, “Paul’s teaching was done with a view to admonishing; his admonishing was rooted in teaching.”<sup>48</sup>

When a person is converted to Christ, they continue to need the preaching of the Word of God, be counseled from the Word of God, and be systematically taught with the Word of God, that their base of understanding for the Christian life will be strengthened and broadened (1 Tim 4:16). Second, since biblical counseling is a systematic means of addressing the soul, Christians can be systematically taught how to counsel solely from the Word of God. Pastors who engage in such a trifold ministry will further broaden their ministry and expand the proclamation of God’s Word in their church and surrounding community. In defining the pastor’s ministry, Hendriksen writes,

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<sup>47</sup> Strong, *A Comprehensive Strong Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “teach.”

<sup>48</sup> William Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, The New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 91-92.

Paul was ever emphasizing the need of pastoral labor. For him to admonish meant to warn, to stimulate, and to encourage. He would actually plead with people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20). He would, at times, even shed tears (cf. Acts 20:19, 31; 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 3:18). His proclamation of the Christ was a marvelous combination of the true gospel and the most affectionate presentation.<sup>49</sup>

It is biblically clear that the Word of God will bring real comfort to the soul of any sheep in crisis because it points them to the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has determined that the message of the gospel should go forward through the preaching, counseling, and teaching of the Word. The promised result in the church will be “that we may present every man perfect in Jesus Christ.”

### **Ephesians 4:11-12: The Duty of the Church to Equip the Saints to Counsel Biblically**

This text lays the responsibility of biblical training in the church primarily upon the pastor, which would include training in the ministry of biblical counseling. Paul writes that the pastor is responsible to equip (*καταρτισμὸν*) the members of his church in better understanding the Word of God, bringing them to better practice obedience to it. This work of the pastor, with the Spirit’s help, is intended to bring his sheep to “a strengthening, perfecting of the soul [through] training, disciplining, [and] instructing.”<sup>50</sup> In accord with Colossians 1:28, given the context of this chapter, this is evidence that the church should also be the primary place for counseling, with the pastor offering biblical counseling for the benefit of the sheep. Patten comments,

A biblical shepherd must equip his sheep to handle anger, fear, worry, temptation, discouragement, rejection, success, failure, guilt, bitterness, communication struggles, and self-discipline, to name a few. A shepherd must be equipped for the ministry of being a godly husband, wife, child, parent, employee, employer, and friend. These are all frequent topics of study and application in biblical counseling.<sup>51</sup>

Further, according to Paul’s instruction to the Ephesians, that pastor is also given the responsibility of training those of his sheep who are competent to counsel. Pierre and

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<sup>49</sup> Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, 92.

<sup>50</sup> Strong, *A Comprehensive Strong Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “equipping.”

<sup>51</sup> Patten, “Launching a Counseling Ministry,” 244.

Reju explain that the membership of the church “should expect to be equipped [by the pastor] for the task of disciple-making. [He] equip[s] [his] people in two primary ways: by teaching and by modeling.”<sup>52</sup>

Paul gives this charge to the pastor because he is the primary voice with which the congregation is tuned to follow. This leadership role in training comes through the authority of the preaching ministry, as seen in 2 Timothy 4:2. Further, as has been discussed, it is understood from Colossians 1:28 just why the pastor should be preaching, counseling, and teaching, to benefit every person. Such an example from the pastor is central to the church because the congregation generally considers those issues important that the pastor understands as being significant because the primary preaching voice in the church most often sets the direction and charts the course of the church’s involvements and engagements (Acts 15). Consequently, as Pierre and Reju write, what matters to the pastor “usually defines what matters to the church. This influence is a grave privilege (Heb. 13:7).”<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, the pastor has the opportunity to expand his ministry by following Paul’s instruction and model, which means that the pastor has the obligation of also training others to minister in the counseling setting. Pierre and Reju state that “the way to glorify God is to make disciples. This task should be in the deepest part of a pastor’s value system. And he should radiate this as a value his people should share.”<sup>54</sup> Paul writes that the pastor’s ministry is for the purpose of application in the lives of his sheep, thus expanding the church’s ministry exponentially and impact both from within and in the community at large. This result is in keeping with Paul’s teaching regarding the training and equipping role of the pastor. Peter O’Brien comments,

“For the equipment of the saints,” as directly related to the main verb *He gave* (v. 11), and to express the reason for Christ’s giving these ministers. Then, in line with

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<sup>52</sup> Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, chap. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, chap. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, chap. 7.

the change in preposition, the phrase “for the work of the ministry” has been understood as subordinate to the first, “for the equipment of the saints,” while the next phrase, “for the building the body of Christ,” is dependent on the previous phrases together. *On this view, ministers have been given by Christ to equip believers for the exercise of their gifts (v. 7; cf. v.16) in Christian service, so that by means of both the ministers and the common service of believers the body of Christ may be built.*<sup>55</sup>

Such a ministry of counseling by example, combined with training and equipping, are vital components to help the church obey the full scope of the Great Commission. Paul makes clear in this passage in Ephesians, as well as in 1 Corinthians 12-14, that the whole of the church’s membership is to be involved in the process of being equipped and trained. In the context of the biblical counseling ministry, while the pastor is to take the lead and is to model by example, he cannot perform all the functions of the ministry alone. Thus, after the equipping ministry of the pastor, the members of the church are said to be “able to instruct one another” (Rom 15:14). Indeed, for the ministry to go forward, the wise pastor should know that for biblical counseling to occur, he must work to equip his members must take up their responsibility to counsel. O’Brien writes,

In line with this salvation-historical dimension, Ephesians 4 indicates that the exalted Messiah gives ministries of the Word to equip God’s people for work in His service so as to build up His body. This construction has both an extensive and an intensive dimension to it. Growth in size is implied in the mention of the gifts of the apostles and evangelists (v. 11), while the introduction of the body metaphor implies the notions of development of the church as an organism from within, by means of its own God-given life.<sup>56</sup>

Further, the pastor who trains his members but does not provide opportunities for them to use their gifts in the service of Christ and His church is unwisely trying to bear the load that the body has been designed to do together. Pierre and Reju explain, “If you labor as though the spiritual well-being of every member directly depends on you, you will eventually fold under such an impossible burden. God, in His wisdom, assigned the task of discipleship not to a single man, nor even to a team of men, but to the entire

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<sup>55</sup> Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 301-2, emphasis added.

<sup>56</sup> O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 305.

church.”<sup>57</sup> The importance of the church in the providence of God is evident as to the theme of this chapter in carrying out the Great Commission. The church should be known for its preaching ministry, teaching ministry, and counseling ministry. James Estep, Roger White, and Karen Estep explain,

The mission of the church is indeed to transform the people of the world into the people of God, to build a community of the faithful from the faithless people of the world. This transformation is not instantaneous and is not accomplished through evangelism alone. Maturing in faith, becoming Christlike, no longer being conformed “to the pattern of this world,” but “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2a) is not an automatic or natural occurrence. It is a life-long process of engagement with God through Scripture, by the Holy Spirit. It includes participation within the community of faith, the church.<sup>58</sup>

### Conclusion

Goode explains,

Preaching, teaching, evangelism, discipleship, and counseling are all integral parts that make up effective, biblical ministry. The local church is the instrument Christ ordained to help believers grow into His likeness. It is the only organization—or better, organism—He promised to build, sustain, and use. Counseling is an essential part of the local church’s ministry as it disciples and helps believers mature in Christ’s image.<sup>59</sup>

This chapter examined several biblical texts that give a theological basis from Scripture that depicts the local church as the primary place Christians are to seek counsel and be trained to counsel. Beginning with a set of biblical texts (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 20:31; Rom 15:14; Titus 3:10), this chapter addressed the biblical evidence that the primary responsibility for biblical counseling and training is placed upon the local church. The chapter then gave an analysis of Colossians 1:28 and the trifold obligation of both the pastor and the local church in ministering the Word of God, specifically in counseling and counseling training. Last was a consideration of Ephesians 4:11-12, wherein Paul

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<sup>57</sup> Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, chap. 7.

<sup>58</sup> James Estep, Roger White, and Karen Estep, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), chap. 1, sec. “The Church, Education, and Curriculum.

<sup>59</sup> Goode, “Biblical Counseling and the Local Church,” 223.

writes of the significance of the local church equipping the saints for ministry, of which it is clear that biblical counseling and training to counsel biblically must have an integral part.

Understanding that the church should be recognized as the primary place where soul-care is to occur, as a means of obeying Christ's Great Commission, remains a tremendous personal burden for me. An important part of this project's purpose is to enable and encourage CBF to embrace more fully the ministry of counseling and training. Further, I am burdened for the church at large, especially those churches who claim the five Solas of the Reformation, to take up both the obligation and privilege of seeing the church become the primary place where the hurting can and should be counseled. This topic is so pivotal that I concur with MacArthur when he states,

The Church must recover her confidence in the spiritual resources God provides. We must return to the conviction that Scripture alone is 'inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16). I am convinced that far more is at stake than the average Christian realizes. If evangelicals do not rediscover biblical counseling and reinstate God's Word to its rightful place as the supreme discerner and mender of the thoughts and intents of the heart (cf. Heb. 4:12), we will lose out testimony to the world, and the Church itself will die. These matters are critical.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> MacArthur, "Rediscovering Biblical Counseling," 20.

CHAPTER 3  
CONNECTING THE GREAT COMMISSION TO  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRAINING

**Introduction**

In the Great Commission, Jesus Christ gave the church a critical gospel mandate to obey. Yet, as Michael Horton writes, “Philosopher Paul C. Payne noted that the world does not take the church seriously today because the church is not serious.”<sup>1</sup> However, there is so much for the evangelical church to be serious about, not the least of which is the continuing gospel command to reach the lost with the good news of Christ. From Matthew 28:19, this project has noted that the gospel is more than just a call to conversion; rather, the gospel encompasses all that concerns a full-orbed understanding of what constitutes regeneration. William Shedd writes, “The term regeneration has been used in a wide, and restricted sense. It may signify the whole process of salvation, including the preparatory work of conviction and the concluding work of sanctification. Or it may denote only the imparting of spiritual life in the new birth, excluding the preparatory and concluding processes.”<sup>2</sup> The gospel that Jesus entrusted to the church includes both evangelism of the lost, and of equal importance, the edification and equipping of the saints (Matt 28:19; Col 3:16).

Consequently, every local church that is concerned about obeying Christ needs to be presenting the totality of the gospel through the Scriptures with a dependence upon the Spirit of God to bless the proclamation of the Word (Isa 55:11). As explained in

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Scott Horton, *Putting Amazing Back in Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 24-25, Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), 2:491.

chapter 2, Jesus Christ, in His multi-faceted commission to the church, gives evidence of Scripture's sufficiency both in its power to convert sinners and its ability to enable the saints to grow and mature. Christ's commission demonstrates the serious task given to the church in her efforts to obediently proclaim the Word of God until He returns. The church's dedication and obedience to the Word of God in promoting the gospel are indispensable to her mission and, by necessary consequence, makes the church a serious institution. John Murray speaks well to both the blessing and the responsibility of the church's ability to carry forward Christ's command: "The church is the receptacle of Christ's fulness and declares His unsearchable riches."<sup>3</sup> The apostle Paul writes to Timothy of the church's seriousness when he says that the church is "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

Paul's words to Timothy speak of both the ongoing significance of God's Word and the church's responsibility to proclaim that Word through preaching, counseling, and teaching (Col 1:28). The word picture that Paul uses is an important one, for he wants Timothy to understand that, as John Murray states, "God's truth is not able to stand without the church. If the pillar of a building is removed, as Samson proved in his last act in the Philistine temple (Judg. 16:29-30), the building will topple, and the people inside will be injured or killed. Paul's words imply that the truth would fall into disaster if the church did not exist."<sup>4</sup> By extension, disaster would come to the world if the church was not engaged in the ministry of discipleship and training. Indeed, Christ's gifts to the church and the reality that the church serves as a pillar and support of the truth are, by extension, truths that must also include the area of biblical counseling as well as training

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<sup>3</sup> John Murray, *The Claims of Truth*, vol. 1, *The Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 250.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne Mack and David Swavely, *Life in the Father's House* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1996), 10-11.



others to counsel from God's Word. Christ has invested primarily the local church with the task of making disciples (Matt 16:18-20).

However, since its inception, the church has always been in danger of losing sight of the serious task given in the Great Commission. This threat is why Paul warns Timothy of the need for the church to "preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season" (2 Tim 4:2). The church today needs the biblical reminder of her solemn obligation to obey the command of Christ if she is going to see sinners converted and saints equipped to live for Christ in their cultural context. One important way for the church to fulfill her task is by being known as a primary place where biblical counseling training occurs. Bill Hull writes,

The evangelical church has become weak, flabby, and too dependent on artificial means that can only simulate real spiritual power. Churches are too little like training centers to shape up the saints and too much like cardiopulmonary wards at the local hospital. We have proliferated self-indulgent consumer religion, the what-can-the-church-do-for-me syndrome. We are too easily satisfied with conventional success: bodies, bucks, and buildings. The average Christian resides in the comfort zone of "I pay the pastor to preach, administrate, and counsel. I pay him, he ministers to me . . . I am the consumer; he is the retailer . . . I have the needs; he meets them . . . That's what I pay for."<sup>5</sup>

This chapter will first consider that the Bible claims it is sufficient to meet all of the needs of man's soul. Within the finished canon of Scripture, Jesus Christ has already invested all things considered necessary for the church to fulfill His Great Commission. Second, this chapter will consider that the disease model does not intentionally point people to Christ. This section will briefly reflect on four men of history who can be considered integral in the formation of psychology as it is known today. It can be said that these men serve as some of the primary sources from which the evangelical church at large has borrowed in order to counsel. An examination of these particular historical figures is significant since the contention may be made that such borrowing from the world has served to discourage Christians from seeing the church as the proper and fitting place to

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<sup>5</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 18.

be both counseled and also trained to counsel biblically. Such a dim view of the church's position in counseling only continues to deepen in current evangelical culture and grows even darker when it comes to considering the church's ability to proficiently train others to counsel. The evidence of the impact of these historical figures of psychology is seen in how one well-known twentieth-century Christian integrationist justifies incorporating the thinking of these men of psychological history into Christian counseling. Third, this chapter will conclude with the fact that the local church is responsible to teach its members to counsel biblically. The local church, and principally CBF, should be fully engaged in not only biblical counseling but also biblical counseling training, with particular encouragement toward ACBC certification. Such training, via the local church, is a crucial vehicle in carrying out the Great Commission of the Saviour.

### **The Bible Is Sufficient for Man's Soul**

Christ has given the church a sufficient Word to fulfill His Commission to take the gospel into all the world. In understanding the Great Commission, it is vital to remember that the Bible claims that it is sufficient in dealing with all of man's problems related to life and living (2 Pet 1:3). Additionally, Paul says that Christians, supplied with the Bible, are fully equipped to help one another, particularly through the ministry of counseling (Rom 15:14). In Romans 15, Paul writes that Christians are able to counsel one another, *καὶ ἀλλήλους νοουθετεῖν*, through the Word of God. It is generally agreed that the word *νοουθετεῖν*, which Paul also uses in this text, has the meaning of "to admonish or to warn." Adams comments, "From Biblical times onward, God's people have counseled nouthetically. The word itself is Biblical. It comes from the Greek noun *nouthesia* (verb: *noutheteo*). The word, used in the New Testament primarily by the apostle Paul, is translated 'admonish, correct or instruct.'"<sup>6</sup> The goal of nouthetic, or biblical counseling,

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<sup>6</sup> Jay E. Adams, "What Is 'Nouthetic' Counseling?" *Institute for Nouthetic Studies, Christianity Today*, accessed May 11, 2020, <http://www.nouthetic.org/about-ins/what-is-nouthetic-counseling>.

is to, by use of the Scriptures, bring people to needed change. “Nouthetic confrontation, in its biblical usage, aims at straightening out the individual by changing his patterns of behavior to conform to biblical standards.”<sup>7</sup> The goal of biblical counseling is for the counselor to lovingly bring the Word of God to the counselee, that under the Holy Spirit’s direction, the counselee will be brought to change. This change is generally the result of confession and repentance. Adams explains, “The three ideas found in the word nouthesia are confrontation, concern, and change. To put it simply, nouthetic counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of deep concern in order to help them make those changes that God requires.”<sup>8</sup> Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, both Paul and Peter make it clear that the Bible is more than enough for the counseling task. Solomon, also under the Spirit’s inspiration, concurs, writing, “Every word of God proves true” (Prov 30:5a).

Christians should be thankful and encouraged to know that, as John Gill states,

The whole of Scripture is pure, free from all falsehood and error; coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie, and therefore called “the Scriptures of truth”: every promise is pure as well as precious, made without dissimulation, faithfully performed, and all yea and amen in Christ; every doctrine is pure, free from the mixtures and inventions of men; the sincere milk of the Word.<sup>9</sup>

Gill correctly points out that the Scriptures are pure and sufficient, precisely because they are free from the unnecessary interventions of man’s so-called spiritual “wisdom” (1 Cor 3:19-20). As the sufficient Word, the Bible is entirely trustworthy. The Bible makes clear that rather than mankind needing to add to its wisdom, mankind needs the spiritual wisdom which comes through the Word of God alone. The proof of man’s spiritual need for the Word alone is evidenced in the teaching of Jesus. For example, in Matthew 4:4, Jesus declares, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that

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<sup>7</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 46, Kindle.

<sup>8</sup> Adams, “What Is ‘Nouthetic’ Counseling?”

<sup>9</sup> John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and the New Testaments* (Washington, DC: OSNOVA Publications, 2012), Proverbs 30, Kindle.

comes from the mouth of God.” In giving the church the Great Commission to preach the Word, Jesus confirms that the Word is complete and sufficient.

Further, the Bible itself states that it is not a weak or incomplete book, but instead the very book given by God to point people to Christ, containing all that is needful for man’s soul. In Hebrews 4:12, the writer makes abundantly clear that the finished canon of the Scriptures, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is the very Word of God and is therefore powerful. Further, verse 13 points to the fact that every soul will be measured against the same unchanging standard of the Word of God. This truth evidences the continuing validity and power of the Word all the way until the end of the age. The Word of God will be the unchanging standard by which all men will be measured; therefore, it should serve as the sole standard of counseling today. Additionally, the Word should be used in the counseling setting. According to the writer of Hebrews, unlike any other book, the Bible alone can reach the very depths of the soul of man. John Calvin writes, “There is, therefore, nothing so deep in man’s soul, which cannot be drawn forth into light by that Word that resembles its own author, for as it is God’s office to search the heart, so He performs this examination by His Word.”<sup>10</sup>

Because the Bible teaches that mankind has been created in the image of God, people are comprised of both immaterial and material, physical and spiritual. In the counseling setting, the immaterial understanding of man’s makeup is critical to grasp since, according to the Scriptures, man’s actions stem from his spiritual heart, his soul, and not from his organic brain. Jesus explicitly teaches that the immaterial heart/soul/mind is the source of one’s conduct (Matt 15:19; Mark 7:18-21). John Street helpfully states, “in truth, your heart directs everything you think and do. Whatever is the worship focus of your heart will ultimately determine your entire life. Moreover, your worship focus will determine what your greatest passion is. It will affect all your plans, all your intentions,

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<sup>10</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentary on the Bible* (Omaha, NE: Patristic Publishing, 2019), Hebrews 4:12, Kindle.

all your cravings. This, in turn, will affect the choices you make in life.”<sup>11</sup> In a biblical counseling anthropology, biblical counselors do not believe that people’s behavior emanates from the organic composition of their brains, but rather from the immaterial composition of their minds/souls. Street writes, “This idea that the body is guided and steered by the soul is one that the biblical counseling movement has emphasized . . . we understand the heart as the ‘initiator’ of moral action and the body of the ‘mediator’ of moral action.”<sup>12</sup> Anthropologically, biblical counselors believe that a person is much more than just a collection of chemicals and biological parts. Street states, “To regard your humanity exclusively from a physiological standpoint is truncated and simplistic. This view places you solely at the mercy of your genetics, your body structure, and the neurochemical processes of your brain. According to this representation of mankind, there is no Creator, no soul.”<sup>13</sup> But if the Bible is true, and the heart is the real issue in counseling, then it is the gospel of Christ which gives the only answer. The gospel alone promises that sinners may be given new hearts (2 Cor 5:17); therefore, a new ability to be able to change their behavior.

Given this reality, the Word of God is more than sufficient and does not need to be added to by the wisdom of the world in order to reach man’s heart/soul. The Bible itself says that it is sufficient for people who struggle with the kinds of personal problems addressed in the counseling setting to bring forth both comfort and conviction. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord Himself speaks of the sufficient power of His Word: “Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in

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<sup>11</sup> John D. Street, *Passions of the Heart: Biblical Counsel for Stubborn Sexual Sins* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 32.

<sup>12</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 197.

<sup>13</sup> Street, *Passions of the Heart*, 30.

pieces?” (Jer 23:29). The Word of God is potent enough that under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, counselees can see a dramatic change. Matthew Henry comments,

[The Bible] is very lively and active, in all its efforts, in seizing the conscience of the sinner, in cutting him to the heart, and in comforting him and binding up the wounds of the soul. Those know not the word of God . . . call it a dead letter. . . . When God sets it home by His Spirit, it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It is so powerful as to pull down strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4-5), to raise the dead, to make the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. It is powerful to batter down Satan’s kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins thereof. . . . *It makes a soul that has been a long time of a proud spirit to be humble, of a perverse spirit to be meek and obedient. Those sinful habits that have become as it were natural to the soul, and rooted deeply in it, and become in a manner one with it, are separated and cut off by this sword. It cuts off ignorance from the understanding, rebellion from the will, and enmity from the mind, which, when carnal, is enmity itself against God.*<sup>14</sup>

Henry helpfully describes the orthodox view of the power of the Word of God both in conversion and in sanctification. It is by proclaiming this Word via the significant methods of preaching, counseling, and teaching through which the church will obey Christ’s commission (Col 1:28). Through the church’s adherence to the use of the Word of God alone in each of these ways, the Spirit of God promises to grant His blessing, both in the saving and sanctification of needy souls. Such a biblical understanding of the power of the Word evidences that, in obeying the Great Commission, the church needs no other help from the spiritual wisdom of this world to accomplish the task which Christ solely gave to the church in His commission. This perspective of the Bible’s supremacy is particularly true when it comes to counseling the souls of people. John MacArthur declares, “[The Bible] is so comprehensive in the diagnosis and treatment of every spiritual matter that, energized by the Holy Spirit in the believer, it leads to making one like Jesus Christ. This is the process of biblical sanctification. It is the goal of biblical counseling.”<sup>15</sup> The goal of sanctification via the ministry of the church is even furthered when the local

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew Henry, *The Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Washington, DC: OSNOVA Publications, 2010), Hebrews 4:12, Kindle, emphasis added.

<sup>15</sup> John F. MacArthur, “The Historical Background of Biblical Counseling,” in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne Mack (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 8.

church works to see the Great Commission's application by training Christians to counsel biblically. Training and equipping the saints for the ministry is an integral part of Christ's commission to the church at large (Eph 4:12). The church that is committed to being a training center where Christians learn to use the Word of God effectively can, therefore, ask for and depend upon the Spirit's blessing in the proclamation of the Word through its counseling ministry. Thus does Adams encourage, "Let us turn to Scripture, therefore, to discover what directions Christ, the King, and Head of the Church, has given concerning the counseling of people with personal problems."<sup>16</sup>

However, rather than turning anew to the Scriptures, many Christian authors and counselors have come to conclude that the Bible is not sufficient, not powerful enough to counsel the deep needs of man's soul. Despite the Great Commission and the fact that the Bible says of itself that it is pure and flawless (Prov 30:5), some Christians today maintain that to care for the souls of counselees properly, there is a need to add the wisdom of men in counseling where the Bible is either weak or silent. For example, in an article from *Christianity Today*, titled "The Integration of Christianity and Psychology," Sarah Rainer writes, "There are many helpful and positive aspects of psychology to consider, *which is why there is a need for integration.*"<sup>17</sup> The statement that integration is necessary for counseling speaks to the presupposition that the Bible is just not enough, just not authoritative, or not sufficient enough to treat people with personal problems. Such an integrationist presupposition infers that the resources Christ has given to the church are not enough to help the souls of deeply troubled people. Mark McMinn, another well-known Christian psychologist and leading integrationist, writes,

Integrative counseling calls for adaptability, fluidity, and sensitivity to the current moment, and for *an ability to see different realms of authority in relation to the*

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<sup>16</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Sarah Rainer, "The Integration of Christianity and Psychology," *Christianity Today*, September 25, 2014, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/september/concerning-psychology-and-christianity-guest-post-by-sarah-.html>, emphasis added.

*particular situation being faced.* For example, I take biblical and theological wisdom to be more authoritative than psychology in understanding the deep cries of human existence. When a client is weeping in my office, confronted with the deepest pains of loss and struggle, I may occasionally ponder the psychological theories I learned in graduate school, but much more often, I am thinking about a Christian view of persons. In situations such as this, I sit stunned anew by the depth of brokenness that pervades the human condition. I am inwardly groaning in harmony with my client's outward groans, yearning for all Creation to be redeemed (Romans 8:22-23). *Conversely, psychology is more helpful than theology when treating symptoms of panic disorder. Advances in cognitive and behavioral interventions have proven highly effective in treating symptoms of panic, and I would be quite irresponsible if I failed to provide those treatment options to clients who need help.*<sup>18</sup>

These two quotes give a representative picture of the many who would say that the Bible is helpful but not sufficient. McMinn states that not only is the world's wisdom better than that of the Scripture but also that he would be irresponsible if he were not to treat his clients with the wisdom of the world. This perspective, espoused by McMinn, is vastly different from the one that biblical counselors who hold to sufficiency advocate.

David Powlison asks,

Do secular disciplines have anything to offer to the methodology of biblical counseling? The answer is a flat no. Scripture provides the system for biblical counseling. Other disciplines—history, anthropology, literature, sociology, psychology, biology, business, political science—may be useful in a variety of secondary ways to the pastor and the biblical counselor, but such disciplines can never provide a system for understanding and counseling people.<sup>19</sup>

Within the church today, integrationism and sufficiency are the two primary, and for the most part, utterly opposed, perspectives regarding the sufficiency of the Word of God. How did such opposed viewpoints come to exist by using the same Bible, especially between two groups who both claim to follow Christ and evidently also desire to sincerely be a help to people? The answer to this question brings the reader to consider the second point of this chapter—a brief exploration of four men of history who may be deemed instrumental in the founding of psychology and psychiatry. These men helped

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<sup>18</sup> Mark R. McMinn, "An Integration Approach," in *Counseling and Christianity: Five Approaches*, ed. Stephen P. Greggo and Timothy A. Sisemore (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2012), chap. 4, "Learning Objectives," Kindle, emphasis added.

<sup>19</sup> David Powlison, "Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 247.



pave the way for the substitution of the Scriptures in counseling in favor of the principles of godless psychological perspectives. A consideration of these foundational figures of psychology will help to explain why current Christian counselors, like McMinn, so readily incorporate psychological aspects in the counseling setting today. By necessity, the integration of such principles diminishes the counselee's focus upon Christ, and thus, when offered in the church, serves to hinder the church's obedience to Christ's gospel command to evangelize in counseling.

### **Biblical Counseling Is Purposefully Evangelistic**

Given Christ's commission to the church to take the Word into all the world, it is crucial to understand the impact of the church's willingness to borrow from the world that the church might fulfill His commission, particularly seen in the ministry of counseling. Christ gave the church all it needs to minister to the souls of people in sending the church out to preach, counsel, and teach from His Word. Therefore, to borrow from psychology is to, at the very least, imply that all that Jesus gave to the church—the Word, His Spirit, and His promised presence and blessing to carry out the Great Commission—were not enough. Powlison asserts, “Unless God lies, we have the goods for developing systematic biblical counseling, just as we have the goods for preaching, teaching, worship, mercy, and missions.”<sup>20</sup> Christ has not left the church bereft in any of these crucial areas of proclamation, for He has invested the church with the authoritative Word for evangelism in the counseling ministry. Preaching, teaching, missions, etc., are each given to call people to Christ, either for conversion or further edification. Biblical counseling's sole purpose is intended to point people to Christ alone as the answer to their soul's greatest need because biblical counseling is equipped to address the deepest needs of man's soul. In speaking of needs, Adams states, “Nouthetic counselors also

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<sup>20</sup> David Powlison, “Affirmations & Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 19.

appropriately talk about needs. They speak about sin and its consequences. They explain that estrangement has resulted from sinful behavior. They show how failure to follow Scripture, ignoring God, and sinful life patterns have brought misery. Then, in this context, they present the gospel.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, just as the Bible is the sufficient preaching source, in biblical counseling, the Bible is the sufficient counseling source. To subscribe to another means of helping the soul is to question the means given by Christ to the church to carry out the Great Commission. Rather, as Powlison correctly states,

We affirm that the Bible teaches, invites, warns, commands, sings and tells the solution for what troubles humankind. In the good news of Jesus Christ, God acts personally. In word and deed, He redeems us from sin and misery through the various operations of His past, present, and future grace. God uses many means of grace, including the face-to-face conversations of wise counseling.<sup>22</sup>

The same cannot be said for other counseling methodologies, even counseling methodologies that seek to integrate psychological wisdom in addition to the Scriptures. There is no need to borrow from other sources when the Bible promises that biblical counselors are thoroughly equipped to deal with the souls of men with the Word (2 Tim 3:15-17).

Even according to the secular definition, from the beginning, the practice of psychology was understood as a means of treating the souls of people. Powlison helpfully writes,

The word *psychology* was formed by combining the Greek *psychē* (meaning “breath, principle of life, life, soul,”) with *-logia* (which comes from the Greek *logos*, meaning “speech, word, reason”). An early use appears in Nicholas Culpeper’s mid-17th century translation of Simeon Partliz’s *A New Method of Physick*, in which it is stated that “Psychologie is the knowledge of the Soul.”<sup>23</sup>

Historically, and at its most basic root, psychology was secularly understood as the means to treat the souls of those needing counsel. The church must consider if she

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<sup>21</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 71.

<sup>22</sup> Powlison, “Affirmations & Denials,” 20.

<sup>23</sup> Merriam-Webster, “Psychology,” accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/psychology>.

needs to depend in any way upon psychology/psychiatry to heal the souls of people when she has the sufficient Word given by Christ to point people to their need of Him (Rom 10:14-17). Powlison states, “We deny that Christless counseling—whether psychotherapeutic, philosophical, quasi-religious, or overtly religious—is either true or good. Their messages are essentially false and misleading, *competing with Christ*.”<sup>24</sup> Counseling does not have to be utterly devoid of Christ to be considered Christless; for any percentage that Christian counseling borrows from the world is the percentage to which the Person and the work of Christ are diminished, and the promised blessing of God negated (Isa 55:10-11). Thus does Adams say that “Jesus Christ is at the center of all true Christian counseling. Any counseling which moves Christ from that position of centrality has to the extent that it has done so ceased to be Christian.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, when churches borrow from methodologies that compete against Christ, they do so at the peril of being disobedient to His gospel command given in the Great Commission.

In considering the importance of the church training Christians to biblically counsel, the question of how the church has come to embrace an integrationist perspective is a critical one to answer. It is imperative to consider in a summary manner how the evangelical church in these last two centuries has in considerable measure capitulated in this area of not believing that the Scriptures are sufficient to care for the needs of man’s soul.

### **The Disease Model Does Not Intentionally Point People to Christ**

The Bible speaks with authority to the question of motivation and behavior in all people, pointing to the immaterial heart as the source of behavior. Yet, in borrowing

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<sup>24</sup> Powlison, “Affirmations & Denials,” 20, emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 41.

from the fundamentals of psychology, many Christians would now say that the brain/biology is the source of behavior. As Lambert describes,

Many have addressed the nature of what mental illness is and how best to offer care to those who are diagnosed with these very serious disorders. The most common contemporary view is that all such disorders—depression, anxiety disorder, and the rest—are biological illnesses of the brain that must be treated medically and with professional secular therapy. The biblical counseling movement has pushed back on this popular opinion, arguing that the problem of mental illness is more complicated than a simple biological explanation allows.<sup>26</sup>

Before psychology's theories on the causes of human behavior and suffering, counseling was understood to be concerned with the matters of the soul/heart/mind. For this reason, throughout the history of the faithful protestant church, the goal of the ministry of the Word has always been to point desperate and needy souls to the person and work of Jesus Christ. For example, in concord with both the 1647 Westminster Confession and the 1689 London Baptist Confession, the Puritans held to the sufficiency of the Word of God to be able to tend properly to the souls of men. The Puritans helpfully understood the spiritual nature of counseling and referred to it as "soul care." Evidencing the thinking of the time, Puritan pastor Baxter (1615-1691) writes, "The Scripture's sufficiency must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on others; and if papists, or others, call to us for the standard and rule of our religion, it is the Bible that we must show them, rather than any confessions of churches, or writings of men."<sup>27</sup> While the context of Baxter's defense for the sufficiency of the Bible is given to answer a different set of circumstances, his presuppositional view that the Scriptures are sufficient to meet the needs of men's souls is historically consistent with an orthodox view of God's Word. According to Baxter, the Bible takes precedence over confessions and the writings of men because the Bible alone is sufficient. Of the sufficient superiority of the Scripture, Baxter also states, "Nothing can be rightly known if God be not known; nor is any study well

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<sup>26</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 91.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. Vasile Lazar (Dascalu, Romania: Magna Gratia Publishing, 2017), chap. 2, sec. 13, Kindle.

managed, nor to any great purpose, if God is not studied.”<sup>28</sup> Only the Scriptures have the power to reach into the depths of man’s soul and bring true healing (Heb 4:12). The church’s Puritan forebears understood the Bible to be sufficient for soul-care.

The Puritan perspective regarding man’s soul/heart/mind as the seat of man’s behavior was held until the advent of the early founders of psychology in the eighteenth century. Up until this time, as Adams describes,

“Mentally ill” persons were viewed as malingerers rather than as patients. Th[e] medical model has been widely spread in recent times largely by propaganda using the mirror words “mental illness” and “mental health.” This model has been disseminated so successfully that most people in our society naively believe that the root causes of the difficulties to which psychiatrists address themselves are diseases and sickness.<sup>29</sup>

How did the medical model come to be accepted so readily within the church?

Not surprisingly, with the advent of the disease model and mental illness, the church found itself in a time which began to tempt the church away from believing in the Bible’s diagnosis for behavior and the corresponding necessary spiritual treatment. The church began to look to the answers of the world to explain people’s problems and behavior. Soon enough, the church started to believe, as opposed to the scriptural definition, that the soul was not the same as the mind. In so doing, the church fell into the temptation to doubt the sufficiency of the Scriptures in treating the soul.

Yet, such a temptation for the church was not new. The book of Genesis states that from the very beginning of Creation, Satan has tirelessly worked to tempt God’s people away from the Word of God and a proper understanding of the necessity of that Word in their lives. At Creation, even though God had already spoken to Adam, Satan brings another form of counsel and tempts Eve to question God’s Word by asking, “Did God really say?” (Gen 3:1) Daniel Berger observes, “Satan offered a fruit to Eve, which he claimed was a source of transcendence/enlightenment and the means of generating the

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<sup>28</sup> Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, chap. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 4.

divine within her.”<sup>30</sup> In innumerable ways, the hiss of this same temptation to find answers and truth apart from God and His Word continues to echo down the corridors of time. Satan has been ever tempting Christians of all ages to doubt in the power and the sufficiency of God’s Word.

Consequently, just about a generation after Baxter defended the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the seeds of integrationism and the acceptance of the medical/disease model began to be approved in the mid to late eighteenth century. It was at this time when the integrity of the Bible started to be more openly challenged by elements of the scientific community in several significant areas. Notably, this growing acceptance of the medical/disease model impacted the common cultural understanding regarding the source of man’s behavior (the cause of his actions). Up until this time, the teaching of the Bible, that the heart is the command center of behavior (Gen 6:5), was recognized and generally accepted. Yet, by the mid-nineteenth century, the organic brain model began to be propagated as the source of man’s behavior. As this relates to counseling, it may be said that how the church answers the ongoing temptation of Satan, leaves the church, and by extension the counselor, looking in one of three places for the source of their primary authority: the Scriptures alone, the wisdom of the world alone, or the wisdom of the world added to the Scriptures.

Integrationists have come to believe that the Bible is not enough to help people with their problems; they believe it is necessary to borrow from the world’s theories in giving counsel to man’s soul. McMinn confirms this when he speaks of the times that “psychology is more helpful than theology.”<sup>31</sup> For biblical counselors, it would be hard to imagine King David, the apostle Paul, or any Spirit-inspired author making such a claim. Nevertheless, it is evident that integrationists are now willing to make the wisdom of the

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Berger II, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Dependence* (Taylors, SC: Alethia International, 2016), chap. 4, Kindle.

<sup>31</sup> McMinn, “An Integration Approach,” chap. 4, “Learning Objectives,” Kindle.

world equal to that of the Scriptures, and perhaps in some cases even higher than the Scriptures, by treating a spiritual problem medically. Is this not the same temptation to find enlightenment, apart from God’s revelation, with which Satan lured Eve? And yet, integrationism has been the predominant perspective of the evangelical church from the latter half of the twentieth century up till now. As Lambert observes,

The twentieth century was marked not only by the incursion of secular practitioners into counseling ministry; it was also marked by the embrace of secular counseling principles by conservative Christians. Christians who rely—to one degree or another—on the counseling insights of secular people have been called integrationists, Christian counselors, and Christian psychologists—among other things.<sup>32</sup>

Given Christ’s commission to the church to take the Word into all the world that sinners would be pointed to Christ for forgiveness and help, it is crucial to understand the impact of being willing to borrow from the world in order to counsel.

#### **Four Historic Figures Whose Ideas Undergirded Psychology**

During the time of the nineteenth century, culture at large began to shift its thinking regarding the need to treat the material brain and the immaterial soul. This shift came through the efforts of early secular researchers into the new fields of psychology and psychiatry. As with the definition of psychology, Jeffrey Lieberman writes that “psychiatry originated as a medical specialty that took as its province a set of maladies that, by their very definition, had no identifiable physical cause. Appropriately, the term ‘psychiatry’—coined by the German physician Johann Christian Reil in 1808—literally means ‘medical treatment of the soul.’”<sup>33</sup> Franz Anton Mesmer, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Emil Kraepelin are four men who changed the course of history in dealing with those who were troubled of soul. The theories of these men would begin to significantly impact the thinking of both the medical and scientific communities. By the

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<sup>32</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> Jeffery A. Lieberman, *Shrinks* (New York: Little Brown Spark, 2015), 26.

early to mid-twentieth century, their theories would be broadly accepted as the new therapeutic ways to study the mind and give understanding to people's behaviors. As will be seen, the acceptance of these theories by the culture at large would also have an effect on the church's perspective on the immaterial and the material nature of mankind.

**Franz Anton Mesmer.** While most people today would credit Sigmund Freud as the founder of psychology, it may be said that, at least foundationally, psychiatry started with the German doctor Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815).<sup>34</sup> Mesmer became the first notable doctor to suggest that the care of souls should be wrested from religious and moral counselors alone and placed within a more medical framework. According to Myers, who translated Mesmer's writings, Mesmer "rejected the prevailing religious and moral accounts of mental illness in favor of a physiological explanation, making him arguably the world's first psychiatrist."<sup>35</sup> Mesmer promoted the theory of "Animal Magnetism," claiming to have discovered a body-controlling fluid that caused people to behave strangely.<sup>36</sup> He advocated for the use of magnets to manipulate the fluid and thus treat people with personal problems. In a twenty-seven-point defense of his doctrines, Mesmer in part states,

23. It will be seen recognized from the facts, in accordance with the practical rules which I shall draw up, that this principle [Animal Magnetism] can *cure nervous disorders directly and other disorders indirectly*.

24. With its help, the physician is guided in the use of medicaments; he perfects their action, brings about, and controls the beneficial crises in such a way as to master them.

25. By making known my method, I shall show *by a new theory of illness* the universal utility of the principle I bring to bear on them.

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<sup>34</sup> Daniel Berger II, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Faith and Authority* (Taylors, SC: Alethia International, 2016), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Lieberman, *Shrinks*, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Franz Mesmer, *Mesmerism: The Discovery of Animal Magnetism*, trans. V. R. Meyers (London: Soul Care Publishing, 2016), 19, Kindle.



26. With this knowledge, *the physician will determine reliably the origin, nature, and progress of illnesses, even the most complicated*; he will prevent them from gaining ground and *will succeed in curing* them without ever exposing the patient to dangerous effects or unfortunate consequences, whatever his age, temperament and sex.<sup>37</sup>

Through research, Mesmer claimed that when people were brought into contact with someone who had strong animal magnetism, or by the use of magnets themselves, a change could be brought about in their bodily fluids. In describing Mesmer's methods, Lieberman writes, "by touching patients in the right places and in the right way—a pinch here, a caress there, some whispering in the ear—Mesmer claimed he could restore the proper flow of magnetic energy in their bodies."<sup>38</sup> Mesmer contended that applying magnets to the body brought about a change for the better in the behavior of his patients. In addition, Mesmer believed he could hypnotize his patients or mesmerize them to produce a change in conduct. He claimed that by adding the process of hypnosis, he was further able to help people change their behavior and thus cure his patients.<sup>39</sup> Mesmer believed he could treat all physical maladies, even blindness. But more than this, Mesmer knew he was also offering a new theory as to why people acted against cultural norms; he was offering a theory of disease to explain people's behavior.

Mesmer conceived and propagated a new concept for treating people who not only complained of physical maladies but also for his patients struggling with issues of the soul. He maintained that those so troubled could now be cured by a doctor and medicine. R. B. Ince writes that "as Mesmer's fame spread, more and more people flocked to be cured by him, and even people of rank began to notice the doctor from

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<sup>37</sup> Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, emphasis added, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Lieberman, *Shrinks*, 27.

<sup>39</sup> R. B. Ince, *Franz Anton Mesmer: His Life and Teaching* (London: William Rider & Son, 1920), 18, Kindle.

Vienna.”<sup>40</sup> However, his cure of souls was found only to be temporary, and Mesmer and his theory of bodily controlling fluids were soon discredited.

Although his methods were proven false, Mesmer’s theories still took hold, even having influence into this century. For example, as Myers notes, “present-day spiritualism, owes some debt—in so far as it is based on the evidence of mediums—to Mesmer. And so does the Church of Christ Scientist, which was not founded by Mary Baker Eddy until after her treatment at the hands of Phineas Parkhurst Quinby [a disciple of Mesmer] at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1875.”<sup>41</sup>

In the context of the church’s perspective of counseling biblically, it may be said that Mesmer’s idea that man could be treated medically for spiritual problems began to take hold in social thought. He was a pioneer in that before his theories took hold, according to Lieberman, “mental illness was widely believed by physicians to have moral origins.”<sup>42</sup> After Mesmer, counseling the soul of the troubled was replaced by treating the brain of the troubled.

**Charles Darwin.** The concept that man’s source of behavior stemmed from the organic material brain, and not the immaterial spiritual heart/soul/mind of man, was greatly aided by the Englishman, Charles Darwin (1809–1882). During the latter part of Mesmer’s life, Darwin was also developing his theory of evolution, and in the process, growing in his own disbelief in God. From Darwin’s work *Origin of the Species*, it can ultimately be derived that there is no spirit/soul created in the image of God—man is just a higher animal made up of cells through the accidental process of evolution, begun millions of years ago. Darwin began to teach that man’s mind evolved from that of lesser animals: “The horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, *which*

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<sup>40</sup> Ince, *Franz Anton Mesmer*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Lieberman, *Shrinks*, 32.

*has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value.*”<sup>43</sup> Darwin questioned the validity of man’s moral and spiritual nature. He came to believe that man is nothing but the result of evolutionary processes found in nature and not created by God nor in the image of God. Darwin’s teachings and personal perspective began to change people’s thinking regarding the biblical account of belief in God and man’s creation. Whether or not this was Darwin’s original intent is unclear. However, as he continued his studies, writing, and publications, Darwin slowly began to give in to a settled disbelief in the existence of God: “I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all of my friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.”<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps an almost equal impact to his theory of origin was Darwin’s seeming intimation that to maintain a belief in God is inconsistent with intelligence and reason. During his early training at Christ’s College for the Anglican priesthood, Darwin professed faith in his theological studies, particularly the work of Paley’s *Natural Theology*, though later he would come to describe this topic of study as “the least use to me in the education of my mind.”<sup>45</sup> Instead, Darwin would describe his trip on the “Beagle” as the first time his mind was truly opened. For example, of this trip, he wrote, “I have always felt that I owe to the voyage the first real training or education of my mind.”<sup>46</sup> Here is evidence that Darwin found intelligence and reason to be inconsistent with a confident belief in God.

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Darwin to William Graham, July 3, 1881, Darwin Correspondence Project, “Human Nature,” accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/commentary/human-nature#quote6>, emphasis added.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Darwin, “Quotes,” accessed June 18, 2020, [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12793.Charles\\_Darwin](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12793.Charles_Darwin).

<sup>45</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, ed. Francis Darwin (Public Domain), 3, Kindle.

<sup>46</sup> Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, 13.

The perspective that to have faith in God is intellectually inferior has only grown as it is often asserted today that science and orthodox Christianity are incompatible.<sup>47</sup>

Following Mesmer, Darwin further wrested the thinking of the day away from humanity being morally accountable to his Creator for behavior to pursuing an explanation of man's conduct based solely upon bodily-genetic composition. Such a concept was enhanced by a contemporary of Darwin, Sigmund Freud.

**Sigmund Freud.** Borrowing from Darwin, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) also did not believe that mankind was made in God's image nor ultimately accountable to God as Creator. Instead, Freud theorized that man was composed of primitive desires, which he classified as the *Id*. He also theorized that man was comprised of a conscience imposed upon him by the moral standards of one's culture. Freud labeled this conscience the *Superego*. According to Richard Webster, Freud notably developed his theory of “unconscious symptom-formation—a theory which lies at the heart of psychoanalysis,”<sup>48</sup> after spending time being taught by the famed neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893). Following Mesmer, Charcot also used hypnosis and developed a theory related to psychoanalysis from which Freud heavily borrowed in the treatment of his patients. Charcot developed what he called “hysteria,” which he believed to be the source from which behavior and even physical manifestations within people were caused.<sup>49</sup> Charcot believed that hysteria, an issue of the uterus, only affected women.<sup>50</sup> According to Webster, Charcot is historically significant because his theory “would shape the development of

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<sup>47</sup> Jeffrey Schloss, “‘Faith vs. Fact:’ Why Religion and Science Are Mutually Compatible,” *The Washington Post*, August 3, 2015, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/science-and-theology/2015/08/03/77136504-19ca-11e5-bd7f-4611a60dd8e5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/science-and-theology/2015/08/03/77136504-19ca-11e5-bd7f-4611a60dd8e5_story.html).

<sup>48</sup> Richard Webster, *Freud* (London: Orion Publishing Group, 2011), 38, Kindle.

<sup>49</sup> “Jean Martin Charcot,” accessed May, 15, 2020, <https://psychology.jrank.org/pages/110/Jean-Martin-Charcot.html>.

<sup>50</sup> “Jean-Martin Charcot.”

psychoanalysis. It was the main factor which would eventually lead Freud to elaborate his entire theory of unconscious symptom-formation—or ‘repression.’”<sup>51</sup>

Following Mesmer, Freud was even more successful in further changing the perception of his day that behavior, particularly erratic behavior, was not related to the spiritual part of man. Instead, Freud taught that conduct stemmed from the interplay between the mental functions of a person’s brain. Freud attributed behavior to the unconscious mind. The *Id* he attributed to the way a person’s mind dealt with both the unconscious mind and reality. The *Ego* was a person’s moral mind, and the *Superego* was the way a person responded due to the moral standards of the culture. Freud described the interchange between the conscious and the unconscious by postulating that when there was repression between these two elements, most often due to cultural standards regarding the repression of the libido, a person could develop neurosis or psychosis.<sup>52</sup> According to Freud, depending upon the severity of the neurosis or psychosis, the patient could be diagnosed as being ill: “Of course, we are dealing here with psychic (or psychogenic) symptoms, and *psychic illness*—are acts which are detrimental to life as a whole”<sup>53</sup> The efforts that a patient would exert to combat their neurosis or psychosis would determine the severity of the “illness.” Freud wrote,

Since such an outcome is dependent on the amount of energy so utilized, you will readily understand that “being sick” is essentially a practical concept. But if you take a theoretical standpoint and disregard these quantitative relations, you can readily say that we are all sick, or rather neurotic, since the conditions favorable to the development of symptoms are demonstrable also among normal persons.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Webster, *Freud*, 42.

<sup>52</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, trans. Sarah Correll (New York: Clydesdale Press, 2019), 8.

<sup>53</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. G. Stanley Hall (Overland Park, KS: Digireads, 2013), Twenty-Third Lecture, “The Development of the Symptoms,” Kindle, emphasis added.

<sup>54</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Twenty-Third Lecture, The Development of the Symptoms.”

What the gospel describes as total depravity, Freud redefines as sickness. Freud disagreed with Jesus' diagnosis of behavior, saying it stemmed from a sick brain rather than from sinful hearts (Matt 15:19; Mark 7: 21-23).

It is pertinent to point out that Freud defined people with neurosis or psychosis as being patients and being ill, in need of being medically treated through the process of his psychological construct. Such a perspective was quite a leap from Mesmer's time, not even one hundred years earlier. As Adams details,

One achievement with which Freudianism ought to be credited is the leading part it has played in the present collapse of responsibility in modern American society. Another is Freud's contributions to the fundamental presuppositions of the new morality. Freud, taking his cue from Charcot, under whom he studied in France, adopted and popularized views of human difficulties under a Medical Model. Prior to this time, 'mentally ill' persons were viewed as malingerers rather than as patients. This Medical Model has been widely spread in recent times largely by propaganda using the mirror words "mental illness" and "mental health." This model has been disseminated so successfully that most people in our society naively believe that the root causes of the difficulties to which psychiatrists address themselves are diseases and sicknesses.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, much changed in the counseling world with the acceptance of Freud's theories. His perspective of mental illness began to impact and change not only the approach of the secular world in counseling people, but also, gradually, the evangelical world. Freud postulated that the reason for a person's problem was due to either psychosis or neurosis. And by claiming these as the source for people's behavior, Freud offered new ways of treatment, psychoanalysis, and psychotherapy. In defining these two areas of the Freudian construct, Mihaela Bernard writes, "Psychotherapy attempts to restore a person's relationship to the social norms and regulations, while psychoanalysis works to restore a person's relationship to their sexuality."<sup>56</sup> Freud had devised a paradigm to treat

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<sup>55</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Mihaela Bernard, "How Psychoanalysis Differs from Psychotherapy," PsychCentral, February 21, 2015, <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/practical-psychoanalysis/2015/02/how-psychoanalysis-differs-from-psychotherapy/>.

people's personal problems as "a method of treating nervous patients medically."<sup>57</sup> Freud acknowledged that his medical treatment was vastly different from recognized medicine of the day, given that no organic tests could be done to evidence either disease or cure.

Further, as opposed to treating organic disease, much of Freud's treatment centered on talk therapy. Freud stated that "in psychoanalysis, nothing occurs but the interchange of words between the patient and the physician."<sup>58</sup> Revealingly, while Freud's new method was dependent upon words, it was utterly distinct from the only word powerful enough to treat nervous patients, the Word of God.

By working on labeling his troubled patients as diseased, and with his professed new methods of treating them, Freud sought to remove the church from any part in the counseling process. It is telling that Freud opened his practice on April 25, 1886, Easter Sunday.<sup>59</sup> According to David Green, Freud's choice to open his practice on Sunday was intentional: "For someone to whom every action had significance, however covert or inconsequential it may seem to be, surely such an overt act must be viewed as symbolical."<sup>60</sup> Freud worked to make the counseling of people's behavior accepted as being a part of the practice of medicine in treating illness, and not related in any sense to a spiritual issue and the aid of the church. MacArthur writes,

Before Freud, the study of the soul was thought of as a spiritual discipline. In other words, it was inherently associated with religion. Freud's chief contribution was to define the human soul and the study of human behavior in wholly secular terms. He utterly divorced anthropology (the study of human beings) from the spiritual realm

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<sup>57</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, First Lecture, pt. 1, "The Psychology of Errors."

<sup>58</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, First Lecture, pt. 1, "The Psychology of Errors."

<sup>59</sup> David B. Green, "1886: Sigmund Freud Opens a Psychiatric Office in Vienna, Nobody Comes," April 24, 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-1886-sigmund-freud-opens-a-psychiatric-office-in-vienna-1.5440044>.

<sup>60</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 15.

and thus made way for atheistic, humanistic, and rationalistic theories about human behavior.<sup>61</sup>

Yet, even with his stated belief that the church was unnecessary in the process of counseling, Freud still found it difficult not to deal with the immaterial, spiritual dynamic in the process of counseling. Even Freud, contrary to most of his disciples, denied that the psychoanalyst's role was a distinctly medical role. He stated that the psychoanalyst was a "secular pastoral worker" and need not be a doctor. For example, Freud's noted disciple, Erik Erikson, had his professional training in art. According to Powlison, Carl Jung commented similarly, "Patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest and expect and demand of him that he shall free them from all their distress. That is why psychoanalysts must occupy ourselves with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologian."<sup>62</sup>

**Emil Kraepelin.** The medical model promoted by Freud in counseling was also taken up and promoted heavily by another contemporary of the time, Emil Kraepelin (1865–1926). While strongly influenced by Freud, Kraepelin differed with Freud as to the source of people's problems. It may, therefore, be said that much of the change in perspective regarding the origin of man's behavior was most prominently brought into the public arena with the published works of Kraepelin. Berger states that Kraepelin "is considered by the psychiatric community to be the founder of modern psychiatry as well as the father of psychopharmacology and psychiatric genetics."<sup>63</sup> Kraepelin synthesized much of the thought of Mesmer, Freud, and the others who had gone before him. Berger writes,

The current paradigm of mental illness was born in Germany in the late 1800s and thereafter began to flourish in the United States. In 1896 after visiting the German

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<sup>61</sup> MacArthur, "The Historical Background of Biblical Counseling," 7.

<sup>62</sup> David Powlison, "Biblical Counseling in Recent Times," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Berger, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Faith and Authority*, 63.



psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin and learning of his new ‘biological psychiatry,’ Adolf Meyer returned to the United States and brought with him Kraepelin’s construct of mental illness. While Sigmund Freud’s construct of psychoanalysis would supplant Kraepelin’s brain-dysfunction theory until the 1950s, Kraepelin’s construct would eventually win out and become the basis of the current mental health system.<sup>64</sup>

In his work, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, Emil Kraepelin follows in the footsteps of Freud in advancing the disease/medical model in counseling. In his book of lectures, he expresses his desire that his lectures “prove of some value as a guide to the clinical investigation of the insane.”<sup>65</sup> It is telling that the very first patient Kraepelin describes struggles with a guilty conscience. Kraepelin explains that “the patient himself refers to the sins of his youth as the cause of the apprehension.”<sup>66</sup> Kraepelin denies that the patient’s struggles are due to a guilty conscience and instead assigns the issue of guilt to the man’s physical sickness or mental illness.<sup>67</sup> Kraepelin believed that people who struggled with behavioral problems did so because of the physical poisons produced by the organs within their bodies. He theorized that “mental disturbances may arise from the single or repeated introduction of such poisons [in the body] as cause considerable injury to the cerebral cortex.”<sup>68</sup> Kraepelin maintained that patients who were mentally ill were so because of the poisons that eventually found their way into their brains. Those most severely damaged were diagnosed with dementia praecox, later called schizophrenia. Kraepelin came to believe that “dementia praecox was due to an endogenous process of chronic autointoxication which led to a ‘self-poisoning (*Selbstvergiftung*)’ of the body and, eventually, its brain.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Berger, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Faith and Authority*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Emil Kraepelin, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, ed. Thomas Johnstone (New York: William Wood and Company, 1917), preface, Kindle.

<sup>66</sup> Kraepelin, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, chap. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Kraepelin, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, chap. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Kraepelin, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, chap. 32.

<sup>69</sup> R. Noll, “Kraepelin’s ‘Lost Biological Psychiatry?’” accessed June 16, 2020, <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00570895/document>.

Because Kraepelin was convinced of the physical cause for mental illness, he was confident that those struggling with behavioral issues would be best helped by physicians and psychiatrists. Berger states that Kraepelin, therefore, “proposed that mental illness was a branch of science that should be practiced through the scientific processes of observation and experimentation and not from a faith-based or religious standpoint as it had been approached through most of history.”<sup>70</sup> Kraepelin also adhered to Darwinian beliefs, viewing human nature materialistically and rejecting the concept that people consist of both a spiritual and a physical nature. He believed that human nature meant that the brain, genetics, chemicals, and even the mind, were all just material matters. Therefore, science and medicine were best suited to study and explain why people behave in the ways that they do. Kraepelin’s theory began to be well received, starting in the 1950s, and is still the foundation of the construct of mental illness. Berger asserts, “Though never proved, the brain-dysfunction theory is still held as a fact today.”<sup>71</sup>

### **Modern Integrationism**

The brief consideration of foundational figures in psychology brings clarity as to how the medical or materialistic view of man’s psyche began to take hold in the culture at large, and soon enough, even in the pulpits and counseling offices of the church. Although never proven, the idea that mental illness was the cause for a person’s behavior began to be borrowed in the latter half of the twentieth century by Christian theologians and counselors and was integrated with the Scriptures. With this acceptance, integrationism began to teach both the unconverted and Christians alike to look to a source other than that of Christ and His Word for the answers to life’s problems. With the rise of integrationist counseling centers, recent evangelical history proves that rather than

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<sup>70</sup> Berger, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Faith and Authority*, 63.

<sup>71</sup> Berger, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Faith and Authority*, 65.

sending Christians to their Bibles or to their churches to receive biblical counseling, integrationism has instead, according to MacArthur,

conditioned Christians to think of counseling as something best left to trained experts. Such thinking has opened the door to a whole range of extrabiblical theories and therapies. Indeed, it has left many with the feeling that God’s Word is incomplete, insufficient, unsophisticated, and unable to offer help for people’s deepest emotional and spiritual problems.<sup>72</sup>

One of the foundational Christian champions encouraging such a perspective of biblical counseling is Larry Crabb.

### **Larry Crabb**

In the latter portion of the twentieth century, one of the most vocal and well-received evangelical proponents of this shift toward the wisdom of the world to help the troubled souls of people was psychologist Larry Crabb (1944–2021). Crabb’s integrationist perspective is seen in his earliest writings. Crabb therefore serves as an apologist for the integrationist movement and continues to function as a representative spokesman for the integrationist viewpoint of the Scriptures.<sup>73</sup> Like other integrationists, Crabb professes a belief in the Scriptures and yet holds that the Bible is not sufficient. Crabb believes in the necessity to integrate the psychological positions of the likes of Freud and Kraepelin with the Bible. Crabb maintains that insights from psychology, after being filtered through the Scriptures, should be added in the Christian counseling setting to the benefit of the counselee. Crabb writes,

The model I am proposing might be labeled Spoiling the Egyptians. When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, he took freely of the goods of the Egyptians to sustain God’s people on their journey to the Promised Land. God not only approved of this “spoiling” (taking from) but also planned for it to happen and intervened to make it happen.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> MacArthur, “The Historical Background of Biblical Counseling,” 4.

<sup>73</sup> This information regarding Crabb is taken from my research for the ACBC Fellows Exam and has been further adapted for this paper.

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., *Effective Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), chap. 2, “Spoiling the Egyptians,” Kindle.

How does going to the Egypt of psychology work? Crabb speaks of Albert Ellis as an example.

Albert Ellis, psychologist and *proclaimed atheist*, has observed that the sentences a person tells himself have a great deal to do with how he thinks and feels. This idea is consistent with Scripture's emphasis on changing your mind in order to act differently (see Rom. 12:1). In one of his articles, Ellis proposes that fear of death (an unpleasant emotion) can be reduced by convincing a person that there is no life after death. As the sentence is consciously repeated, 'There is no afterlife; therefore, there is no uncertain and potentially painful future to dread,' his emotion of fear would subside. The way that he uses the biblical principle that 'mind influences feelings' is *obviously unscriptural*. In spite of the wrong ways he uses his idea, his writings helpfully elaborate a biblical principle. A Christian who has spoiled the Egyptians of secular psychology, carefully weeding out the elements that oppose his commitment to the revelation of Scripture, will be better equipped to counsel.<sup>75</sup>

While Crabb may desire to use the Scriptures as the measuring rod for the spoils of his psychological Egypt, his presuppositional perspective remains problematic in at least three significant ways. The first is that he writes of psychology as if it was a hard science. Such a definitive definition is not even held by other scientists, such as Alex Berezow, who claims,

Psychology isn't a science. Why can we definitively say that? Because psychology often does not meet the five basic requirements for a field to be considered scientifically rigorous: clearly defined terminology, quantifiability, highly controlled experimental conditions, reproducibility, and, finally, predictability and testability. or even those in the psychological community.<sup>76</sup>

Even those in the secular field of psychology say that in the strictest sense, psychology is not a hard science. Gregg Henriques asserts, "In deep contrast to the broad disciplines of physics, chemistry, and biology, psychology has no consensually agreed-upon definition. Its most common definition, 'the science of mind and behavior' carries

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<sup>75</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, chap. 2, "Spoiling the Egyptians," emphasis added.

<sup>76</sup> Alex B. Berezow, "Why Psychology Isn't a Science," *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/13/news/la-ol-blowback-psychology-science-20120713>.

with it a deep dualism that is fundamentally unresolved by the competing paradigms of behaviorism and cognitivism (among others).”<sup>77</sup>

The second presuppositional problem with Crabb’s borrowing from psychology’s Egypt arises in thinking that psychology has some truth to offer regarding man’s soul that the Bible has not already addressed. God indeed promised to make the Egyptians favorably disposed to Israel, making it possible for slaves to leave as a victorious army (Exod 3:22). However, the wealth they took was only gold and silver and other such physical treasures. God did not command nor provide an opportunity for Israel to take Egypt’s philosophies, and certainly not any of Egypt’s false gods or idols. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord God condemns the children of Israel for desiring and seeking the wisdom and the advice of Egypt (Exod 30:1-2). “Therefore, the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation” (Exod 30:30). God did not command the Israelites to take the spoils of Egypt’s counsel for how to live a life that was pleasing unto Him, for He Himself promised to supply them with that. God’s provision came when He gave the law at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20.

Given the example of God’s provision in the giving of the law, and then by extension Christ’s provision of the Word in His charge to the church, the spoiling Egypt is a weak understanding of the Great Commission. First, as addressed in the Word of God, Christ gave to the church all that is needed to aid the soul of man in counseling. Second, the Word of God says of itself that it is sufficient. The Bible’s description of its own sufficiency means that there can be no treasure hidden in psychology that the Christian needs to spoil. Rather than having His people plunder the wealth of the world’s psychological wisdom, the Bible says that the Lord nullifies the counsel of the world (Ps

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<sup>77</sup> Gregg Henriques, “The ‘Is Psychology a Science?’ Debate,” *Psychology Today*, January 27, 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201601/the-is-psychology-science-debate>.

33:10) and instead encourages His people to search the Scriptures to find the wisdom of God for living (Job 28).

Further, when it comes to the issues of the soul, what could the world know that has not already been revealed in God's Word? John Street states, "The whole of the inner man comes under the dominion of the spiritual. In this arena, the Bible reigns not only as a sufficient source for addressing soul-problems but also as the supreme source."<sup>78</sup> The Bible also says that God's counsel stands forever. Christians are therefore not bereft of the benefit of God's counsel until someone in the psychological community "discovers," through general revelation, some counseling truth that the Bible does not contain. In comparing the Bible's sufficiency against Crabb's "Spoiling Egypt" position, Street writes,

The Word of God possesses the exclusive theoretical framework from which soul-problems can be properly interpreted and resolved. More importantly, it claims exclusive authority in defining the significance of and purpose for the life of man. When placed in juxtaposition with the counsel of man, the comprehensive superiority of the Word is unmistakable.<sup>79</sup>

Third, Crabb's view is problematic in that it is not evangelistic. The world's counsel never has as its goal to point people to their need for Jesus Christ. Yet, this is the overarching theme and purpose of the Bible—to point people to Christ. It is why in the Great Commission; Christ commands the church to preach the Bible to a needy world—because the Bible consistently singularly points people to Jesus Christ. Christ came into the world to save sinners, and He commands them to be reached through the preaching of the gospel. Jesus Christ came into this world to point people to Himself, the "living Word" (John 1:1). Thus, Jesus is the central focus of the Word, which means that as the church preaches the Word, it points people to the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>78</sup> John Street, "Why Biblical Counseling and Not Psychology," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 34.

<sup>79</sup> Street, "Why Biblical Counseling and Not Psychology," 31.

Such a Christocentric focus is not found in integrationist counseling. Again, Wayne Mack correctly states,

Therefore, our counseling instruction is not biblical unless it exalts Jesus Christ. It is not enough for us to espouse certain principles and regulations for living because that would be pure behaviorism. If our counseling is truly biblical, people should not come away saying, “The Bible is a wonderful book”—They should also come away saying, “What a wonderful Saviour we have.” We should labor in all of our instruction to point our counselees to Jesus Christ, and we will be successful in this if we can help them to “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!”<sup>80</sup>

Finally, against Crabb’s belief that counselors can and should borrow from the Egypt of psychology to counsel the inner man, the Word of God makes a significantly different claim about itself: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:17). Lambert comments,

Common grace makes it possible for unbelievers to know facts, but the noetic effects of sin (an inability to think correctly morally) make it impossible for them to embrace the most important facts. The closer unbelievers get in counseling to issues having to do with God, the ultimate meaning of life, and the problems that plague humanity, the greater will be the impact of the noetic effects of sin on their thinking and the more cautious Christians must be in accepting the information they produce.<sup>81</sup>

The issue of the noetic effects of sin is critical in considering whether people’s souls were bereft of full help until the advent of Mesmer, Freud, and Kraepelin. In the research of these secular counselors, there is no acknowledgment of the necessity of God, His Spirit, or His Word in their understanding of, or treatment for, man’s immaterial soul. Therefore, the Christian integrationist’s insistence that the wisdom of the likes of these men is needed in counseling forces more questions than answers for those who question the Bible’s sufficiency. For example, without the immaterial makeup of man created in God’s image, what causes him to make music and art, or write literature, etc.? What

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<sup>80</sup> Wayne Mack, “Providing Instruction Through Biblical Counseling,” in MacArthur and Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, 259.

<sup>81</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 71.

causes man to wonder why he is here, or what causes him to pray and worship? What causes people to do what they do? According to today's psychology, which in considerable measure still finds dependence upon Mesmer, Freud, and Kraepelin's disease model, all behavior flows from the organic brain. Thus, according to the integrationist, when the counselee's behavior is not what it should be, integrationists claim that such people have a sickness, not a spiritual problem. However, biblical counselors do not believe that people's behavior emanates from man's organic composition but rather from man's immaterial composition. Therefore, in dealing with sufficiency and the church's commission to give the gospel, the perspective that behavior flows from the heart cannot easily be dismissed. For if man's behavior stems from his corrupt heart, then only the Word of God alone, animated by the Holy Spirit, has the power to both diagnose and treat man's heart (Heb 4:12). John Ryle states,

There are very few errors and false doctrines of which the beginning may not be traced up to unsound views about the corruption of human nature. Wrong views of a disease will always bring with them wrong views of a remedy. Wrong views of the corruption of human nature will always carry with them wrong views of the grand antidote and cure of that corruption.<sup>82</sup>

Those who hold to the sufficiency of the Scriptures do not believe that God has ever left His people devoid of the spiritual help that they need in offering help to those who need counsel (Ps 119: 93, Jas 1:5). Additionally, those who hold to sufficiency believe that the heart problems of people today are no different now than they were before the advent of psychology (Eccl 1:9). Given all that the Scripture says about itself and the mandate that Christ gave to the church, it is difficult to believe that God would choose to reveal His truth about the intricacies of man's soul to men who did not believe in Him. Even the secular world realizes the animosity that Freud had against Christ and His Word. Webster states,

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<sup>82</sup> John Charles Ryle, *Knots Untied; Plain Statements on Disputed Points in Religion, from the Standpoint of an Evangelical Churchman* (London: National Protestant Church Union, 1898), 410.



Freud genuinely believed that he was using science to sweep away superstition and introduce a new view of human nature. His real achievement in creating psychoanalysis, however, was to hide superstition beneath the rhetoric of reason in order to reintroduce a very old view of human nature. By portraying the unconscious or the 'id' as a seething mass of unclean instincts, and seeing men and women as driven by dark sexual and sadistic impulses and a secret love of excrement, Freud in effect reinvented, for a modern scientific age, the traditional Christian doctrine of Original Sin. At the same time, through psychoanalysis, he offered to all who followed him a means of redemption.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, it is fair to wonder if the Spirit of God would enlighten men to add spiritual wisdom that the Scriptures left out to those who did not even hold to a belief in God and thought the Bible to be superstitious. Such thinking would contradict Paul's perspective that "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). It seems reasonable to hold that the Spirit of God would not give further insights about the soul to godless men. Indeed, Paul says that such godless men do not have the spiritual capacity to understand how to treat people's troubled souls. Adams warns, "Because unsaved counselors do not know the Holy Spirit, they ignore His counseling activity and fail to avail themselves of His direction and power."<sup>84</sup> Further, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul writes in Ephesians 4:17-20,

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!

Ephesians 4 is an essential passage in the biblical counseling movement in that it speaks to the need for radical change after one's conversion. If Paul is writing to warn believers to no longer walk as the Gentiles do in their thinking, then it does not make sense that Paul would encourage these same converts to continue to follow the counsel of the world in helping the souls of people (Ps 1:1). Again, this would be akin to Israel seeking

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<sup>83</sup> Webster, *Freud*, 63.

<sup>84</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 20.

the advice of Egypt, as seen in Isaiah 30. Rather, Paul writes that the world is darkened in being able to understand spiritual truth because of their hard hearts, which leads them to be spiritually ignorant. It is one thing for the world to want to believe that the principles of the ungodly are useful guides for the soul; it is quite another thing for those redeemed by Christ and given the benefit of His sufficient Word and Spirit to believe as much.

MacArthur writes,

Psychology is no more a science than the atheistic evolutionary theory upon which it is based. Like theistic evolution, “Christian psychology” is an attempt to harmonize two inherently contradictory systems of thought. Modern psychology and the Bible cannot be blended without serious compromise to or utter abandonment of the principle of Scripture’s sufficiency.<sup>85</sup>

Embracing the integrationist model in counseling ultimately weakens the authority of the Word amongst Christians. It diminishes the importance of the church in its offer of both counsel and the training of others to counsel from the power of the Scriptures. Lambert, therefore, asserts, “We do not need other resources. We do not need to integrate. God has told us what He wants to say to people in pain. The Bible addresses that issue. Suffering requires biblical counseling.”<sup>86</sup> The Bible claims that it is sufficient, and that should serve to settle the matter. Beginning with evangelism and the power to convert the soul, the Bible itself claims to answer all the issues of life and living that counselees will experience (Pss 19:7-9, 119:89, 138:2; Prov 2:6; Mark 12:24; 2 Cor 9:8). Therefore, it may be concluded that there is a severe presuppositional weakness in integrationism because the Bible itself claims to be sufficient. Thus, the church should be committed solely to offering biblical counsel and also to the training of biblical counselors.

Therefore, both counseling and training ministries should continue to take place in the church because these are important parts of what God has commanded the

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<sup>85</sup> Mack, “Providing Instruction Through Biblical Counseling,” 16.

<sup>86</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 272.

church to do in fulfilling the Great Commission. It is through such faithful proclamations of the Word that God has promised His blessing (Isa 55:11). MacArthur affirms,

Scripture is superior to human wisdom (1 Cor. 3:19); that the Word of God is a more effective discernor of the human heart than any earthly means (Heb. 4:12); that the Spirit of God is the only effective agent of recovery and regeneration (Eph. 5:18–19); and that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ Himself (Col. 2:3).<sup>87</sup>

### **The Local Church Is Responsible to Teach Its Members to Counsel Biblically**

Since all Christians offer counsel in some capacity or another, the principles of biblical counseling should be taught regularly to the members of all Bible-believing local churches. This responsibility of teaching is particularly true of CBF. Powlison writes,

Psychotherapists function as “secular priests” . . . mental health professionals necessarily act as prophet theologians, who define human nature and the meaning of life while typically excising God. They necessarily act as priest-pastors, who typically shepherd the human soul to find refuge in itself, in other people, and in psychoactive medication because they construct a universe barren of the living God and His Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Clearly, our Saviour did not commission such secular priests to preach the gospel; instead, He commissioned the church.

Seeing the emptiness of psychology’s answers to care for the soul properly and mindful of Christ’s commission to the church, biblical counseling is a vital means of evangelism through the church. Lambert claims, “Understanding the doctrine of the church in a theology of biblical counseling is important because the church is the place where counseling ministry will most meaningfully happen. . . . By the plan of God, every issue in Christian doctrine requires the church to uphold it.”<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the local church, equipped with the Word of God, is the primary biblically designated place for

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<sup>87</sup> MacArthur, “The Historical Background of Biblical Counseling,” 4.

<sup>88</sup> Powlison, “Affirmations & Denials,” 24.

<sup>89</sup> Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 305.

both counseling and the training of counselors to occur. In speaking of the importance of the church, John Calvin said,

The whole world is a theatre for the display of the divine goodness, wisdom, justice, and power, but the church is the orchestra, as it were—the most conspicuous part of it; and the nearer the approaches are that God makes to us, the more intimate and condescending the communication of His benefits, the more attentively are we called to consider them.<sup>90</sup>

Borrowing Calvin’s metaphor, when CBF counsels biblically and trains others to counsel from the Word, the church plays more loudly and beautifully the music of evangelism in the theater of the world. As CBF obeys the mandate of fulfilling the Great Commission through the counseling of others with the Word, the church will point people solely to Christ as the fulfillment of their greatest need. Its gospel symphony will focus not just on the behavior itself, but also on the heart, which causes the behavior. Churches that hold to the sufficiency of Scripture can confidently point counselees solely to Christ for their help and aid.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, if the church is going to be genuinely gospel-centered in its counseling methodology, it must use only the sheet music of the sufficient Word to point to the importance of sin and the need of the gospel to counselees. Further, as CBF works toward not only offering biblical counsel but also toward the training of biblical counselors, the church will be that much more effective in its obedience to Christ.

Given the biblical truths thus far expressed in this chapter, it is my responsibility as senior pastor to not only provide biblical counseling as a ministry of the church but also to ensure that CBF continues to be a place where training for biblical counseling is made readily available. By doing so, CBF will be actively engaged in obeying the Great Commission. As part of the equipping process of my ministry as a pastor, I should consistently encourage members to be “doers of the Word” (Jas 1:22). Every pastor has a powerful opportunity to shape the congregation’s thinking and, very often, significantly

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<sup>90</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1849), Ps. 135:13, Kindle.

<sup>91</sup> Mack, “Providing Instruction Through Biblical Counseling,” 259.

impact the ministry direction of the church. Of this truth, Pierre writes, “As the pastor, you are the primary shaper of the church’s culture. Because you preach most frequently, your beliefs and values are far more influential in steering the culture of the church. What matters to you usually defines what matters to the church. This influence is a grave privilege (Heb. 13:7).”<sup>92</sup> What matters to me as the pastor of CBF is the weight of Christ’s mandate in Matthew 28 and how to carry it out biblically. This gospel commission helps drive me in my ministry at CBF. A key part of “doing the Word” takes place in the church when members are equipped to counsel biblically.

As a pastor, part of my ministry obligation is to train the church to be able to handle the Word of God in counseling. My obligation is to work to develop an awareness of the value of biblical counseling training as a means of obeying the Great Commission at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship.

This pastoral obligation to train others in the church to counsel from the Scriptures is the example set by Barnabas and his teaching ministry as Paul’s pastor. Acts 11:25-26 reads, “So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians.” As a pastor under the tutelage of Barnabas, Paul was taught the importance of ministering the Word both publicly and privately. Barnabas taught Paul of the pastor’s responsibility to meet one-on-one with the people of the church in conjunction with the public ministry of the Word. Shaw writes, “The biblical counseling and relational disciple-making as modeled by Paul and Barnabas in Acts 11: 25-26 presses believers to participate in the increasing practice of obedience to the Word of God in everyday life situations.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Jeremy Pierre, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), chap. 7: “A Culture of Discipleship,” Kindle.

<sup>93</sup> Mark Shaw, “Paul and Disciple Making,” in *Paul the Counselor: Counseling and Disciple-Making Modeled by the Apostle*, ed. Mark Shaw and Bill Hines (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2014), 9.

After Paul's conversion, Barnabas was used to teach Paul how to do the ministry's full-orbed work. In the book of Acts, Barnabas teaches Paul that preaching was an essential part of the ministry, but so too was disciple-making through biblical counseling by meeting one-on-one with the people. Shaw points out, "Barnabas was a successful disciple-maker with his student Paul, who became a Christ-like leader using his own God-given gifts to advance the Kingdom of God. In churches focused solely on the pulpit ministry of the Word, it is easy to sometimes miss the relational context of disciple-making, which is a personal ministry of the Word."<sup>94</sup> Such disciple-making is practiced through the ministry of biblical counseling. Following Barnabas' example, Pastors need to be encouraged to take up the call to both counsel and offer counseling training via their local churches. Christians need to be encouraged and afforded the opportunity to learn how to biblically counsel in their churches. Bob Kellemen helpfully states, "The church is not a Christian cruise ship, focused on how comfortable we can make our people. Ephesians 4:12 calls us to equip people to do ministry because the church is a battleship, on a mission, engaged in a spiritual war."<sup>95</sup> The spiritual war is the constant effort of the church in obeying the Great Commission. In making the Scriptures sufficient, Christ has given the church all that it needs to fulfill His evangelistic command even in, or better, especially in, the counseling setting.

Consequently, it is vital for CBF to learn from Barnabas and Paul's example in the book of Acts. First, while the pastor's public preaching ministry of the Word is an essential dynamic of his ministry, so too is meeting relationally and individually with the people of the church. Barnabas serves as such an example—while he was the church's spiritual leader in Antioch, he took the necessary time to meet individually with his people, including Paul.

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<sup>94</sup> Shaw, "Paul and Disciple Making," 11.

<sup>95</sup> Bob Kellemen, *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care Through God's People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 24.

Second, the text in Acts shows that it is vital for the pastor not only to counsel but also to labor to train other counselors. Paul certainly benefitted by Barnabas' teaching, for later in his ministry, he would give a sum of what his ministry comprised: "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you in public and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). In addition, in verse 31, Paul points out that as he went from house to house to counsel the people of the church, he did so many times with tears. Again, Paul uses the Greek word *noutheteo* (νουθετῶν), which has the same meaning as *nouthesia*, and according to Strong, the meaning is "to put in mind, admonish. . . . It is used of instruction, of warning."<sup>96</sup> The book of Acts teaches that Paul learned from Barnabas the importance of caring for souls individually through counseling, as well as corporately through preaching. Barnabas and Paul serve as a biblical model for the pastor's ministry in the church. The spiritual impact of these pastoral counseling sessions between Barnabas and Paul will only be measured in glory, in terms of the Great Commission.

The example of these two men gives evidence that, as the pastor of CBF, if I am to equip Christians and aid in their progressive sanctification, I must not only preach the Word but must also counsel from the Word. It is in this way that the Bible says I will properly care for the souls of the sheep assigned to me. Such is the ministry that the Lord has given me to carry out at CBF (Acts 20:28), and this is the ministry that I desire to see CBF more fully embrace, both philosophically and practically. Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis Johnson write, "The ministry that furthers growth in Christlike desires, emotions, and behaviors belongs in the church and *is a function of the church*. It is only within the context of the church that ongoing spiritual care, encouragement, and accountability can occur. It is only as we use the powerful word of the gospel in each other's lives that we

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<sup>96</sup> James Strong, *A Comprehensive Strong Dictionary of the Bible* (Seattle: Bestbooks, 2015), s.v. "admonish," Kindle.

can change.”<sup>97</sup> In this way, the church will be able to obediently evangelize the lost in the counseling setting. However, as the example of Barnabas shows, the pastor cannot and should not undertake the counseling task alone. He must also work to equip others in the mission of counseling.

It has been my privilege to counsel biblically for many years. It has also been my burden to see members and Christians equipped to be able to do the same. CBF now has four other ACBC certified counselors in the church, and they are helping to increase the ministry of the Word, thus increasing capacity in obeying Christ’s evangelistic commission. The church is seeing Christians grow in their walk with Christ and sinners being converted. Such conversions to Christ and the spiritual growth of Christians are occurring through the active ministry of biblical counseling and training. Still, while we are near the beginning of getting into the flow of training, CBF members need to be further encouraged in the church’s obligation to counsel, but additionally, to be engaged in training others to biblically counsel. In this way, CBF may see its call to fulfill the Great Commission exponentially increased in our own community. While CBF is currently engaged in both counseling and training, the church would still benefit from being even further convinced of the benefit of training others for ACBC certification.<sup>98</sup> Such training would allow CBF to see an even greater movement of the Spirit of God. Thus, CBF needs to develop yet further the understanding of the importance of training gifted and interested members to be able to counsel effectively from the Word of God.

In Acts 2, the early pattern is given for the church to follow: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (v. 42). As a part of fulfilling the model given in Acts to “equip the

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<sup>97</sup> Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), chap. 2: “In Fellowship with Other Believers,” emphasis added, Kindle.

<sup>98</sup> See appendix 3 for process of ACBC Certification and Curriculum.



saints,” CBF provides faithful and consistent preaching, teaching, and counseling of the Word of God. Also, while the church has laid the basic foundation to train for biblical counseling, CBF needs to encourage further as to the ongoing need and importance of such a ministry to make it as much a part of the DNA of the church in the minds of the people, as is the need to teach from the Word. Such an enduring need for consistent reminders exists because the philosophy and answers that the world offers are so consistently prevalent in current culture. As the pastor, I see the need for being reminded reflected in our own church body. Through these consistent reminders, my prayer is that CBF comes more fully to own the importance of the sufficiency of the Word of God and its need, as a local church, to train Christians to counsel from the Word. My prayer is that this burden to both counsel and train would be true regardless of who the pastor may be at CBF. A biblical church has the responsibility to own the importance of preaching the Word of God, no matter who the pastor may be. The Bible makes clear that the same obligation exists regarding the church’s responsibility to offer both biblical counseling and the training of biblical counselors. Therefore, as the apostle Peter said to his congregation, “I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have” (2 Pet 1:12). While preaching the Word is probably one of the most public and vital ways that the church obeys the mandate of Christ, the church also needs to equip by training others for counseling.

Thus, this project was designed to encourage CBF to both grasp the importance of counseling biblically but also more fully grasp and embrace the importance of counseling training with the goal of ACBC certification. The more CBF members who complete the training, the more who may be able to pursue the certification process, and the greater the ministry impact of CBF church. Through biblical counseling training and certification through ACBC, CBF’s spiritual strength will be increased, and CBF will more fully be able to obey Christ’s Great Commission. May the Lord be pleased to guide

and protect the little flock of CBF, as we seek as a church to obey His Great Commission by training biblical counselors.

### **Conclusion**

Since Christ gave the Great Commission to the church (Matt 28:18-20), it is the church's duty to reach the hurting and the lost with the gospel. Berger writes, “Human attempts to heal the mind/soul with biological means—no matter how they are framed—will inevitably fail and lead the consumer away from God’s grace and saving faith. There is not nor will there ever be a substitute for the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit to heal the mind.”<sup>99</sup> Thus the reason that Jesus Christ gave His evangelistic mandate to every local church. How should the Great Commission be fulfilled? In answer, Paul writes, “Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:10). In Christ’s perfect plan, the local church holds the unique place of making known the “manifold wisdom” of God to the world. It has been the contention of this chapter that God's wisdom has been given in toto in the finished canon of Scripture.

Little wonder does Paul ask,

How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good joy.” (Rom 10:14-15)

When pastors are faithful to their call and lead their churches by equipping them to preach, teach, and counsel biblically, such obedient proclamations of the Word lead to additional disciples through the process of pre-evangelism counseling, as well as, to discipleship-making. When there are not such proclamations from the Word of God, and when there is a dependence upon the disease-model for behavior, the gospel is subverted and the Spirit’s blessing of the Word limited (Isa 55:11, Gal 1:8). Jesus said, “My sheep

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<sup>99</sup> Berger, *Mental Illness: The Necessity for Dependence*, chap. 4.

hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). Christ’s voice is only heard in and through His Word, a Word sufficient to the task of ministering to souls in need both of conversion and spiritual growth.

Adams issues the call for the church to “assume her counseling duty, and let Christians of all sorts encourage her to do so. Let no one stand in her way, lest he be found opposing her Head and King Himself!”<sup>100</sup>

To that end, this chapter examined first that within the finished canon of Scripture, Jesus Christ has already invested all things necessary for the church to fulfill the commission He has given. Second, this chapter considered four men of history who may be deemed integral in the formation of psychology as it is known today. In this consideration, the chapter also looked at one well-known Christian proponent of integrationism. Last, given the importance of the church and the mandate that Christ has given to the church regarding the gospel, this chapter concluded with Barnabas and Paul's example. Barnabas’ ministry to Paul evidences why the local church, and most principally CBF, should be fully engaged not only in biblical counseling but just as importantly in training both its members and other interested Christians, particularly toward ACBC certification.

This chapter deems that such training via the local church is a crucial vehicle in carrying out the Great Commission of the Saviour. Such training is a major responsibility of the church (Eph.4:11); this is the basis of my burden for the biblical foundation for CBF to actively engage in training counselors, particularly for the purpose of ACBC certification. Through the vehicle of the church, such training helps to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission. “To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph 3:21).

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<sup>100</sup> Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 280.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

#### **Introduction**

This project was primarily intended to be taught to the members of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship (CBF). The curriculum and classes' primary goal, taught during the CD Hour, was to encourage CBF members to see that the church equipping biblical counselors, particularly through ACBC training and certification, helps to further the Great Commission. While not intended to be exhaustive, the curriculum was designed specifically with CBF members in mind. The curriculum gave introductory information on biblical counseling, yet mostly focused on the sufficiency of the Word of God compared to secular counseling methodologies and the church's unique place in providing counseling to the spiritually lost and hurting. Providing training for such pre-evangelism counseling is a significant way for CBF to fulfill Christ's commission to the church in reaching the lost and equipping the saints with the gospel.

#### **Preliminary Considerations**

Some important groundwork was laid before this curriculum was taught in the CD Hour. First was several years of preaching on the truths that make biblical counseling unique. CBF members have been at least generally acquainted with the major tenants of biblical counseling. Second was the benefit of further training at SBTS in theological and practical research methodologies to make the curriculum more impacting and effective. Third, the church membership was supportive and willing to take the time to consider the truths presented in the curriculum. While the minimum number of participants was set at twenty-five, many more desired to participate in the survey and curriculum process.

## **Research and Teaching Methodology**

The first three chapters of this project informed the design of the classes in which the curriculum was to be taught. In chapter 1, the rationale for this project evidenced why there was a need for certified biblical counselors at CBF. CBF's counseling ministry has only ACBC certified biblical counselors that give counsel (2 Tim 2:15). Therefore, there was a need for CBF to be encouraged to more fully embrace biblical counselors' training as a way to obey the Great Commission further. Given the Great Commission, this project's purpose was to encourage and strengthen the level of understanding in CBF members regarding the importance of the church's role in offering biblical counseling, and biblical counseling training toward ACBC certification. In addition, chapter 1 also established three goals for this project.

Chapters 2 and 3 explored the theological and practical principles for churches, particularly CBF, to more fully comprehend the need for the ministry of the church to include being a training center with the goal of ACBC certification. With the rationale, purpose, and goals closely considered, establishing a curriculum that would aid the church was established. The classes took the familiar form of a lecture through the use of PowerPoint. The members were encouraged to meet in person, a challenge with ever-changing Covid-19 restrictions. However, the sessions were also live-streamed and recorded so that members could view them virtually if they could not attend. Each member who filled out a survey also committed to viewing each of the sessions in order to be able to fill out the post-survey. Complete notes of each session were provided for each person in the class, and the class was encouraged to use them to review information. A session to review the material was also added to the schedule before administering the post-survey.

## **Curriculum Development**

The curriculum was developed around six one-hour lessons to be taught in the CD Hour. One session was conducted via live stream on a Thursday night, with members encouraged to view live, but with the availability to watch the recording. All members

were encouraged to view the recordings if the members would be unavailable to attend any of the sessions. The class was also encouraged to view the recordings to be more fully immersed in the material.

Over many weeks, the curriculum was developed and sought to incorporate some basic information regarding biblical counseling, with sufficiently new material for members who may have had some familiarity with biblical counseling. Before being taught, the curriculum was submitted to an expert panel for review. After receiving important feedback from the panel, for example, on the noetic effects of sin, the curriculum was adjusted, further reviewed, and then prepared to be taught to the church. The material's overall theme was "The Biblical Foundation for CBF to Be a Biblical Counseling Training Center." The first three sessions were under the title, "Why CBF Should be Engaged in Biblical Counseling Training, Particularly for ACBC Certification." Topics in these first three sessions included:

1. A brief introductory history of counseling
2. A classic definition of psychology
3. The benefit of Christian colleges and seminaries in counseling training
4. Evangelization and discipleship occur through the counseling ministry of the local church
5. The Great Commission is obeyed/fulfilled when churches train Christians to counsel from the Word
6. The church's unique place in the Great Commission (Rom 15)
7. Evangelization takes place in pre-evangelism counseling
8. A definition of *nouthetic counseling*
9. A biblical anthropology, including a consideration of the material and immaterial make-up of mankind
10. The reality that the disease model does not intentionally point people to Christ
11. How the disease model came to be accepted in the church
12. How the temptation of Genesis 3 still echoes in churches today.

The content of these classes led to the fourth session, whose theme was a brief survey of four foundational men of psychology/psychiatry: Franz Anton Mesmer, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Emil Kraepelin. Each of these men was instrumental in changing the way those who were troubled of soul were treated. This brief survey led to a consideration in the fifth lesson of modern integrationism. This lesson's focus was particularly on Larry Crabb and his counseling philosophy of spoiling the Egypt of psychology. In this session, a treatment of the noetic effects of sin was given in connection to 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. This fifth lesson made way for the final lesson in the curriculum: the local church's unique position and call to fulfill the Great Commission. In Christ's commission, an important part of the local church's ongoing responsibility is to teach its members to counsel biblically. This point was made particularly through Barnabas and Paul's example in Acts 11:25-26 and Acts 20:20, 31. This example led to an explanation as to why CBF pursues ACBC certification. The lesson concluded with a summary statement of the Great Commission and its relation to both counseling and counselor's training. This conclusion noted that through the vehicle of the church, both a church-based counseling ministry and training ministry help to further and fulfill Christ's commission (Matt 28:18-20).

### **Selection of Participants**

The first chapter of this project spoke of the fact that CBF was established because no other churches in the area were dedicated to the ministry of counseling biblically. While this is a significant ministry focus for our church, we do not expect that every member will be involved in the ministry of counseling through the church. Nevertheless, the concepts that drive an active ministry of biblical counseling and training are those that should be understood and upheld by every member of CBF's membership. The current members came from a place where two churches were meeting under one roof concerning the critical issues of sufficiency and the need to counsel solely from the Word of God. The leadership and members do not want any such confusion to be known

at CBF. Consequently, the members of CBF are routinely encouraged to understand the issues around biblical counseling and the importance of training more counselors. Therefore, the design of the curriculum was for the benefit of all CBF members. However, only those who believed that they would be able to commit to listening to all six sessions were encouraged to take the pre-survey so that they could plan to participate in the post-survey.<sup>1</sup>

At the start of this project, the anticipation was for twelve member participants who would be willing to commit to the classes. The realities of Covid-19 were a major factor in considering the number of those who would desire to be involved. However, there was a greater response of those who wanted to be involved in the survey process, which was an encouragement to me. The number of participants who could take the pre-survey, view all the sessions, and take the post-survey, went from twelve participants to twenty-five. Clearly, I was dependent upon the members' participation and was thankful for their commitment to the project's end. The last four digits of their cell phone numbers were used as a means of tracking the pre-and post-survey results.

The pre-surveys were explained and distributed on Sunday, November 8, 2020. Approximately forty surveys were completed. Apart from explaining the purpose of the survey and the goal of the project itself, no other helps were given, and with thirty-seven questions, the survey took about a half-hour to be completed by those in attendance.

### **Session Lessons**

Each session was taught during the Sunday morning CD hour. The sessions were open to all, but only members were asked to participate in the process of the surveys. Each session was well attended and overall there was good reception to the material as it was being taught.

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<sup>1</sup> One participant, who is not a member of CBF due to extenuating circumstances, but is well known by the elders, deacons and me, was allowed to participate in the survey.



## **Session 1**

The first lesson was taught on Sunday, November 15, 2020. Each lesson was approximately one hour in length, although a good number of lessons went over the hour mark. This first lesson was designed for the CBF membership. While it was introductory, it was not at the level of introduction, which would likely be necessary for a church not as familiar with biblical counseling's major principles. However, the need for some introductory information was needed in that people need to be consistently reminded of that which is true (2 Pet 1:12-15). Further, an introductory treatment was necessary because some newer CBF members participated that perhaps were not as versed in biblical counseling. Each lesson was taught through a PowerPoint presentation with handouts provided to each student.

This first lesson began with a challenge for the people regarding their perspective of God's Word and its sufficiency. This lesson's scriptural focus consisted of several passages: 2 Peter 1:3, Romans 15:14, Hebrews 4:12, and Matthew 4:4. In this lesson was the beginning premise of the whole curriculum: the importance of biblical counseling as a means to help fulfill the Great Commission given by Christ to the church (Matt 28: 18-20). Below is a summary of the material session 1 covered.

1. Scriptural Texts That Speak to the Sufficiency of God's Word.
  - a. An early example from Gary Collins and the perspective of the integrationist was introduced.
2. Why the Church? What about Colleges and Seminaries? In this section consideration of the necessity of both higher learning institutions and the yet important place of the church in training was considered.
3. Evangelizing and Discipleship by Counseling Through the Church.
4. Evangelizing Through Training Others to Counsel in the Church.
5. Purpose of the Project.

## **Session 2**

This lesson was taught on Sunday, November 22, 2020. There was a brief oral review of what was covered in the previous week. This session was crucial in laying the

foundation for CBF members to continue to grasp the universal church's importance and its place in serving Christ's command at the local church level. As part of the universal church, the local church's importance in God's purposes for both evangelization and discipleship were discussed. This lesson's purposeful goal was to help CBF members understand the unique role of the local church in the plan of God. Scriptures mainly focused on this lesson were Matthew 28:19, 1 Timothy 3:15, Romans 15:14, Hebrews 4:12, Matthew 15:19, and Mark 7:18-21.<sup>2</sup> Below is a summary of the material covered in session 2.

1. The Serious Nature of the Church and Her Commission.
2. In the Command of Christ, He Has Given the Bible as the Sufficient Word.
3. Defining Nouthetic Counseling.
4. As God's Image Bearers; People Are Both Material and Immaterial.
5. A Biblical Anthropology.

### **Session 3**

This lesson was taught on November 29, 2020. While there was some concern over attendance given that it was a holiday weekend, attendance remained normal. In addition, due to the possibility of Covid-19 restrictions or shut-downs, the tech team recorded each of the sessions, beginning with session 1. Through a requested link, these sessions were made available to those who may have missed a class. Announcements and reminder emails were sent out to the church to encourage them to keep up with the sessions as the six weeks went along.

Lesson 3's purpose was to encourage the people to understand the evangelistic potential of biblical counseling. Scripture passages used in this lesson were 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Romans 10:14-17, Isaiah 55: 10-11. Below is a summary of the material covered in session 3.

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<sup>2</sup> While teaching, other passages of Scripture were also referred to, but not noted in either the lesson, or these reviews.

1. Biblical Counseling Is Purposefully Evangelistic.
2. The Disease Model Does Not Intentionally Point People to Christ.
3. How Did the Medical Model Come to Be Accepted So Readily in the Church?

#### **Session 4**

This lesson was taught on December 6, 2020. Attendance was at pace, and it was apparent that most people who had taken the pre-survey were doing their best to be present in the classes. Also, some members missed both the pre-survey and the first couple of classes. In order not to invalidate the *t*-test, they were encouraged to fill out the pre-survey first and then I sent the link to these members for them to have access to the previous classes. I was personally heartened when these members requested the pre-survey and expressed a desire to be involved in the process.

In designing this curriculum for the members of CBF, lesson 4's purpose was, in my mind, pivotal to helping people comprehend the emptiness of the world's answers compared to the sufficiency of the Scriptures. Pointing out the emptiness of the world's answers was done by considering four men who were integral in changing counseling methodology, even in the church setting. When the theories of these men were briefly explored, compared with what the Scriptures teach, the contrast between the disease/medical model and the Scriptures' answer was made more apparent. The concluding emphasis was made that the Great Commission is not obeyed in following the theories of these men. This lesson built on the previous studies in considering the source of behavior via the disease model, as opposed to Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7: 18-21.

Below is a summary of the material covered in session 4.

1. A Brief Survey of Four Foundational Men of Psychology/Psychiatry.
2. Franz Anton Mesmer.
3. Charles Darwin.
4. Sigmund Freud.
5. Emil Kraepelin.

## **Session 5**

Due to several extenuating circumstances, lesson 5 was taught on Thursday night, December 10, 2020. While there was a concern about whether the session would be viewed online, the number of views was more than consistent with those who had been attending in person. I was thankful to see this and grateful to the CBF members for their faithfulness. Additionally, having this lesson recorded on Thursday night was fortunate in that this was one of the most extended sessions yet. Hence, no disruption to the Sunday schedule had to occur.

Lesson 5 intended to codify the information of lessons 3 and 4 by giving evidence as to the impact of psychology through a foundational integrationist, Larry Crabb. Scriptures considered in this lesson were Exodus 30:1-2, Isaiah 30:1-2, 30, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, and Ephesians 4: 17-20. Below is a summary of the material covered in session 5.

1. Modern Integrationism.
2. Larry Crabb.
3. Spoiling the Egypt of Psychology.
4. The Noetic Effects of Sin.
5. Ephesians 4: 17-20.

## **Session 6**

The sixth and final lesson was taught on Sunday, December 13, 2020. Once again, there was a good attendance in the session, making it appear that the people's attendance had been consistent throughout the six-week process. Session 6 began with an explanation of how the post-survey would be conducted on the following Sunday, December 20, 2020. The people were encouraged again by announcements and emails to ensure that all sessions had been viewed and the notes reviewed. They were also informed that there would be a brief review of the material, and then the post-survey would be administered.

Lesson 6 intended to demonstrate that, given the emptiness of the world's answers and seeing that Christ gave the Great Commission to the church, counseling and training should be essential in the church's mission. Evidence was given primarily by addressing the church's unique place in God's plan and the example of Barnabas with Paul. The example of Barnabas and Paul was then tied to the process of training counselors in the church and the benefits of ACBC certification. Scriptures used in this lesson were: James 1:22, Acts 11:25-26, and 2 Timothy 2:15. Below is a summary of the material covered in session 6.

1. The Local Church Is Responsible to Teach Its Members to Counsel Biblically.
2. The Example of Barnabas and Paul.
3. Why the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors Certification?
4. The Process of ACBC Certification, in Conjunction with BCI.
5. Conclusion.

### **Conclusion**

The curriculum was developed to help CBF members understand the benefit of offering both biblical counseling and biblical counseling training as an ACBC approved training center through BCI. The sessions were designed to encourage members to see that the local church, particularly CBF, more fully obeys the Great Commission of the Saviour when the church equips others to counsel. While other institutions can help facilitate such training, the curriculum's purpose intended to show that the God-given and unique place where such training, if possible, should primarily occur within the local church.

In chapter 5, the results of these sessions are examined to determine the strengths and weaknesses of this curriculum. This examination will be beneficial as the curriculum may have to be broadened to include being taught to other churches.

CHAPTER 5  
PROJECT EVALUATION

**Introduction**

Jesus states, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-19). When Christ gave the Great Commission to the church, He also gave the church all that it would need in the Word of God so that souls might be converted, and disciples enabled to grow spiritually. Included in this provision is the proclamation of the Word through the counseling ministry, primarily through the local church. When the sufficient Scripture is used in counseling, the process of counseling serves as a powerful means of both evangelism and discipleship. Thus, does Peter write, “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Pet 1:3).

Believing that the Scriptures claim to be sufficient to accomplish the task Christ gave to the church, the counseling ministry of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship adheres solely to the use of the Scriptures in its counseling ministry (this includes resources whose presuppositional premise is the sufficiency of the Scriptures). CBF therefore only permits ACBC certified counselors to serve in the counseling ministry of the church (2 Tim 2:15). Due to the Great Commission of Christ and the need of trained counselors at CBF, there is a need for more ACBC certified counselors at CBF.

Further, for additional members of CBF to be encouraged to obey the command of Christ more fully, there is a need for the members of the church to be stimulated to

expand their awareness and appreciation for the fact that the gospel commission of Christ can also be said to include counseling and counseling training (Heb 10:24-25; Eph 4:11-13). A part of this project's purpose was to help satisfy the need for a deeper awareness of the church's opportunities and obligations regarding the ministry of counseling. The curriculum's intent was to help CBF members better grasp the importance of counseling biblically and, just as significantly, be a church committed to offering biblical counseling training particularly for our context, with the goal of ACBC certification. The more CBF members who complete the training, the more who may be able to pursue the certification process, and the greater the ministry impact of CBF in obeying Christ's gospel command to evangelize and make disciples.

Therefore, this project was developed to help CBF's members further connect the Great Commission to biblical counseling training at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship. This change of understanding was accomplished by increasing CBF members' awareness regarding the importance of biblical counseling training in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. A total of twenty-five members participated in the project. These twenty-five members took the pre-survey, were taught the curriculum, and took the post-survey. More members were involved in the class, approximately forty, yet for varied reasons they were not able to participate in the formal survey process.<sup>1</sup>

### **Evaluation of Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip the people of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship in North Ridgeville, Ohio with a deeper understanding of the church's role in biblical counseling as a way of working toward the Great Commission, as well as a greater appreciation for the ACBC certification process.

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<sup>1</sup> A number of members took the pre-survey but were unavailable for the post-survey. Some members left too many blanks on either the pre-or post-surveys, and these therefore were unusable in the total.

According to the calculated difference between the pre-survey and post-survey, this project accomplished its purpose. As CBF's pastor, the positive response of the membership has been a real encouragement. This response leads me to believe that the curriculum would be beneficial to those who may become new church members. In addition, the curriculum, with some modifications, would be helpful in being incorporated into the Biblical Counseling Institute's teaching curriculum. It may be said that the success of this project can be seen by at least three discernable markers: (1) As the classes went forward, there was continued eager participation by the members of the church to be involved in the classes. (2) With each week, the members responded positively to the content of the curriculum. (3) The three goals of this project were satisfactorily met.

The first indicator to gauge the congregation's interest was to see how much prodding was needed for them to be active and involved in a particular class or ministry. I am thankful to report that the church remained engaged in the entire process during all six weeks in teaching the curriculum. The church's engagement also included a seventh week of review and survey, which is not listed in the curriculum itself. I am thankful for the faithful and willing involvement of the people throughout the project. Given the potential issues with Covid-19, the congregation's interest remained strong and committed, seen in the fact that the in-person attendance was never below average during the six weeks. This is no small feat since the numbers from Covid-19 were rising in the state when the classes were being taught. Although I offered live streaming of the classes, people preferred to come in person, which from a teaching standpoint was certainly my preference. Thus, while doing our best to follow all the safety protocols, I was able to teach the class to the majority of the members in person. The material was better received because of their dedication to be physically present and thus better engaged. The members' committed attendance was an encouraging blessing to me in that I took it as subjective evidence that the people found the material beneficial.



Second, church members responded positively to the curriculum, both while it was being taught and afterward. This positive response was evidenced by the fact that there were no questions of disagreement or contention with the content when given the opportunity for questions after each session. A second example can be seen by the fact that after the classes finished, and even before the post-survey was administered, one member came to me asking to start the process of preparing for ACBC certification. The member stated that this was in direct response to the curriculum. Such an immediate response is certainly not always the norm in my ministry life, and I thus give God thanks for such an immediate response to the curriculum's content.

A third indication that the curriculum was successful was in the overall accomplishment of the project's goals. I designed the curriculum to help CBF be more aware that it is up to the whole church to own biblical counseling and training as being just as important as preaching and teaching in fulfilling the Great Commission. Increasing such awareness was an important objective regarding the goals of this project. By both the surveys administered, eager attendance, and the anecdotal expressions of the people who told me that they studied over the notes and prepared to take the post-survey, it may be concluded that these are positive evidences of the members' acceptance of the curriculum.

### **Evaluation of Project Goals**

This project had three goals that would measure whether the project could be considered successful. These goals helped guide the curriculum's basis, which was designed specifically with CBF members in mind. Further, the goals were the substantive guide for the pre-and post-surveys administered to the church's membership.

Using a pre-survey with thirty-seven questions, the first goal was to assess CBF's adult members' current understanding of the importance of biblical counseling and the necessity of CBF providing both biblical counseling and having a biblical

counseling training ministry.<sup>2</sup> This goal was driven by the Great Commission and seeking to understand how the members understood counseling to be a vital part of Christ's command to take the gospel into the world. The pre-survey served as an important diagnostic tool that allowed for a fair assessment of the understanding of the twenty-five CBF members regarding counseling and counseling training. This survey also provided a vehicle for the measurement of change in the knowledge of these members. This goal was successfully achieved as the survey was administered on November 8, 2020.

The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum for CBF to introduce and explain the principles of biblical counseling, the importance of offering training, and the value of ACBC certification toward obeying the Great Commission. The curriculum was purposefully not heavy in introductory material regarding biblical counseling. Such a decision was due to the fact that CBF is not new to many of the basic principles of biblical counseling and even associated terminology. However, there was some concern on my part between what I hoped was true and what would be seen to be actually true, as to the members' basic level of understanding. Despite my concerns, I only included some brief introductory materials in the first session of the curriculum and moved quickly on from there. The material's content focused upon the foundational theme that biblical counseling is an important part of the Great Commission and the subsequent need for CBF to further fulfill the Great Commission by serving as a training center for ACBC certification. While many dynamics could be considered under this heading, priority was given to ten foundational topics: (1) the Great Commission includes both pre-evangelism counseling and discipleship; (2) the sufficiency of the Scripture; (3) the unique role of the local church in fulfilling Christ's commission; (4) a basic biblical counseling anthropology; (5) biblical counseling is purposefully evangelistic; (6) the weakness of the disease model;

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<sup>2</sup> As of fall 2020, there were about one hundred members of CBF.

(7) four foundational men of psychology/psychiatry; (8) Larry Crabb and integrationism; (9) the example of Barnabas and Paul; and (10) the rigorous benefits of ACBC training.

The curriculum was developed over a period of several weeks and submitted to an expert panel for review and recommendations.<sup>3</sup> The expert panel was comprised of two pastors who have served for years in the biblical counseling movement. These men are ACBC certified, directors of ACBC approved training centers, and authors of counseling books. After receiving comments from the panel and making any necessary adjustments and revisions, the material was finalized. The goal of developing this material was achieved in that material was primarily completed by November 2, 2020.

The third goal was to further increase CBF adult members' knowledge in their understanding of biblical counseling and the importance of the church's role in the counseling ministry, both in providing counseling and counseling training toward ACBC certification. This goal was achieved by teaching through all of the material over six weeks, ending on Sunday, December 13, 2020. For various logistical reasons, the fifth session of the curriculum was taught online on Thursday night, December 10, 2020, with a full complement of members in attendance. This goal was met in that twenty-five CBF members completed the pre-survey and the post-survey. Using the same diagnostic questions of the pre-survey, this third goal assessed CBF's adult members' understanding of the importance of biblical counseling and the benefit of CBF providing both biblical counseling, as well as being a biblical counseling training center. This final goal was the most encouraging to me as the pastor of CBF in that it gave statistically satisfying verification of the project as a whole.

The method underlying this research was quantitative. The instrumentation chosen for the survey was the Likert Scale, which allowed the data to be measured linearly by assigning a value to each part of the scale. Each question allowed the

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 2 for surveys.

members to score from zero to five possible points. The post-survey allowed the benefit of seeing statistical change between the pre-survey and the post-survey. Each member was asked to use the last four digits of their cell phone number as a means to match the pre-survey with the post-survey.

The instrumentation for the survey was a one mean *t*-test with one tail to evaluate the significance of the change. With the sample size of the survey being twenty-five, and assuming a population mean of zero change from the pre-survey to the post-survey, the *t*-value was calculated to be 9.992575 and the value of *p* was 2.49278e-10. According to calculations, the result was considered significant considering  $p < 0.01$ . The null hypothesis can be rejected with confidence.

Each survey's questions were precisely the same, and therefore each was scored by the same method. The survey had a total of thirty-seven questions, with each question calculated to be worth 2.7 percent of the total percentage of the survey. Although many questions are interrelated, the questions can be grouped into four main categories: (1) The Great Commission/Evangelism; (2) Biblical Counseling; (3) Psychology; and (4) Church/Church Training. These groupings can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Question categories

Categories	Questions
Great Commission/Evangelism	1, 5, 11, 31, 35
Biblical Counseling	2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 21, 22, 23, 29,
Psychology	4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 28
Church/Church Training	25, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37

The following figures give statistical data related to the pre-and post-surveys which were administered to the membership of CBF. Figure 1 shows that the standard deviation in the pre-survey was 21.3236 and had a variance of 454.6976.

Sample size (n)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
25	127.32
Sample standard deviation (S)	Sample variance ( $S^2$ )
21.7633	473.6433
Standard Deviation ( $\sigma$ )	Variance ( $\sigma^2$ )
21.3236	454.6976
SEM	Sum of squares
4.2647	11367.44
MAD	Sum
17.7472	3183

Figure 1. Pre-survey: sample size of twenty-five

Figure 2 shows that the standard deviation in the post-survey was 15.2578 and had a variance of 232.8.

Sample size (n)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
25	164.2
Sample standard deviation (S)	Sample variance ( $S^2$ )
15.5724	242.5
Standard Deviation ( $\sigma$ )	Variance ( $\sigma^2$ )
15.2578	232.8
SEM	Sum of squares
3.0516	5820
MAD	Sum
13.392	4105

Figure 2. Post-survey: sample size of twenty-five

The pre-survey mean was 127.32 points out of a total of 185 points, which calculates to 68.82 percent. The post-survey mean rose to 164.2 out of 185, which calculates to 88.76 percent. The overall mean showed significant improvement of 19.94 percent. This percentage increase indicates a positive change in the awareness of the members of CBF due to the curriculum.

Table 2 gives data of considerable point changes between the pre-and post-surveys. The table uses examples of some of the more important questions in the survey as they relate to the desired result of the curriculum. The results of the data, and the responses to these particular questions, are encouraging evidences of positive impact and change.

Table 2. Changes between pre- and post-surveys

Question	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Point Change
1	105	123	18
4	88	122	34
5	72	121	49
21	79	119	40
22	113	124	11
25	91	121	30
27	107	125	20
30	111	121	10
32	107	122	15
34	106	123	17
35	101	119	18
36	95	122	27
37	115	150	35

In looking at the data, I am thankful for this promising response to the curriculum. However, as the project is evaluated overall, it is evident that there are both weaknesses and strengths which would be helpful to consider.

### **Evaluation of Project Weaknesses and Proposed Changes**

Due to some issues related to Covid-19, the schedule for teaching needed to be in a six-week time frame, not including a week for review. In retrospect, it would be better to add another two weeks to the schedule in order to teach the curriculum at a slower pace. A two-week addition would make the curriculum eight weeks in length.

Another weakness of the project was that there was not sufficient time for discussion and questions and answers. Although each session ended with the opportunity for interaction, more time would have doubtless been a benefit. I would be sure to include the opportunity for such involvement in teaching the curriculum again.

As a result of administering the post-survey, a third weakness that became apparent centered on the handouts given to the class. While a PowerPoint outline of each session was provided for every person, it would have also helped to have provided a more manageable bullet-point handout to better assimilate the curriculum. In teaching this curriculum again, I would add a review handout to be given to each student.

A final weakness of the project was in the wording of some of the survey statements. For example, while answered well by most in the post-survey, statement 21 did cause some unnecessary confusion. The statement reads, “The mind, heart, and soul are all immaterially the same.” The use of the word ‘immaterial’ should have been better defined because it made some think that the statement said that the mind, heart, and soul were unimportant.

### **Evaluation of Project Strengths**

Despite the weaknesses, I was personally encouraged by the apparent awareness and attitude change from the pre-survey to the post-survey. These changes can be especially seen in the questions related to the Great Commission, the importance of the church in being engaged in training, and the importance of counseling in the church’s ministry. I was also encouraged by the change in awareness and attitude that took place in the members regarding the sufficiency of the Scriptures dealing with the issues addressed

so often today by counselors. While the individual scores of almost all participants rose appreciably, I was especially encouraged by one of member who achieved a perfect score on the post-survey. Other members came close, with five people scoring at 180 or above.

Another strength in this project was that in offering the curriculum to the whole church in the CD Hour, many more were included in being taught the curriculum. There were members who attended each class, but for varied reasons their surveys could not be included in the total. Given the post-survey results, the fact that so many CBF members participated in the class, the anticipated impact of the curriculum should be that much more significant. The number of members who took this class leads to another strength of the project.

The membership's awareness was significantly increased regarding the importance of CBF being a training center for biblical counseling. In statement 36, I purposely bluntly stated, "The church must be a training center for Biblical Counseling." To see the awareness change in this answer is gratifying.

Greater awareness of the church's responsibility to train counselors leads to another strength of the project: helping the church recognize more fully the importance of the ministry of biblical counseling in the life of the church. This was seen in statement 35: "Biblical Counseling is just as important to the church as preaching and teaching." I was thankful to see a significant rise in the participants' awareness of this statement, as it means that the church should see that counseling must be a continuous function of the church, no matter who the pastor may be.

Another strength of the project was seen in allowing me as the pastor to more fully detail why CBF maintains a certification process for counselors and why we only allow ACBC certified counselors to be involved in the counseling ministry. This opportunity was an encouragement not just to the church at large but also to those who have taken the training but have not yet pursued the process of certification. In addition to



the member who already started the process rolling, two other members spoke to me about committing to the ACBC certification process.

This project was beneficial because it allowed members to learn of biblical counseling without committing to counseling training. It was encouraging to see the members' awareness increase regarding the sufficiency of the Scriptures, especially of those who may say that they do not have much personal interest in counseling. Statement 22 read, "The Bible speaks fully in order to help psychological issues such as bulimia, panic attacks, and schizophrenia." I purposely chose these specific issues because they seem to cause the most consternation regarding how such people should be helped. I was heartened to see awareness increase amongst the participants to this important question.

Finally, a further strength was the overall encouragement evident in the church by being involved in such a project. Through a difficult time of masks and physical distancing, it was a good providence for the church to be able to work together toward a shared vision and goal. This project helped greatly to solidify the church's thinking regarding the importance of moving forward and becoming all the more engaged in being a training center.

At the close of this portion of the project, I praise God for the privilege and opportunity to encourage the congregation in considering the crucial truths covered in the curriculum. Further, I praise God for the people's willing participation and the apparent increase in awareness of the importance of the church being actively engaged in counseling training as an important way of obeying the Great Commission.

### **Theological Reflections**

The gospel that Jesus entrusted to the church includes evangelizing the lost, and of equal importance, the edification and equipping of the saints (Matt 28:19; Eph 4:11; Col 3:16). When Christ commissioned the church, He also fully equipped the church (2 Pet 1:3). The Word of God is the sufficient source for the church to fulfill the gospel commission given by Jesus. Paul further evidences the church's importance in

carrying out Christ's commission when he says that the church is "the pillar and the support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Consequently, every local church that is concerned about obeying the gospel command of Christ needs to be presenting the totality of the gospel through the proclamation of the Scriptures via preaching, counseling, and teaching (Col 1:28). Biblical counseling, and the training of counselors, is a powerful avenue for the church in seeking to obey Christ's commission. Therefore, this project has been my attempt to encourage CBF's members in this continuing obligation of obedience to Christ's command.

The project made evident to me the words of Peter when he wrote of his ministry to the church: "For this reason, I will be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you" (2 Pet 1:12-13). Concerning the ministry of counseling, this passage is a comfort in that pastors do not have to make it up as they go along. Nor do they have to look to the methods and means of the world to effectively counsel. Rather, Peter gives the example that faithful pastors will constantly and consistently remind their people of the truth of the Scriptures.

In a day when even Christians question the supremacy and authority of God's Word, I am thankful that I was able to remind our people that the Bible is sufficient through this project. As in Peter's day, our people need this reminder because the enemy of our souls continues to work to tempt Christians away from believing God's Word. This fact is why Paul warns the church in Colosse, saying, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col 2:8). The Bible warns that Satan does his best tempting work by masquerading as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). In most evangelical circles, a frontal attack against the Word's benefit for the souls of the hurting would likely not work. However, a more subtle attack centered on helping struggling people by using means in addition to the Scriptures would likely find better

acceptance in evangelical circles. In the counseling context, the counselor must expect that Satan does his best to tempt Christians and churches. How might this temptation look? It seems the Satan would tempt by making the world's answers appealing enough to at least be added to the Scriptures. Against the subtlety of these attacks in how to help hurting souls, Christians need to be reminded that the Word of God needs no additions or subtractions (Rev 22:18).

At the conclusion of this project, I give God thanks for the wonderful opportunity to both survey and collect the data from the members of CBF. Such a survey is something I would never have undertaken of my own accord. In addition, I praise God for the opportunity to remind the congregation of CBF of the important truths covered in the curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

The training of biblical counselors and an active counseling ministry by the congregation of CBF are submissive attempts to obey Christ's command to both evangelize and make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). As I stand on the other side of the post-survey, I give God thanks for the privilege of pastoring the good people of Cornerstone Bible Fellowship (Acts 20:28). Because of the subject matter, this project would have been an impossibility in my previous ministry. I give God thanks for the willingness of our people to not only participate in this project but also for their willingness to take the time to become even more aware of the importance of the place of the church in the Great Commission, the importance of counseling training via the church, and the continuing import of the Great Commission in guiding our service to the Saviour.

I am thankful for the membership's expression of support, not only for the project in theory but also for its goals. The fact that they have been brought to a fuller awareness of CBF's importance as a training center for ACBC certification has also been a real encouragement. I am encouraged that the congregation accepts that counseling and training are both a necessary part of the warp and woof of the church's ministry, and not

just the pastor's particular interest. Counseling and counseling training are not just the pastor's niche. Through this project it can be said that the church has been more fully brought to see that counseling and training are effective ways for the church to obey the command of Christ in the Great Commission.

It would appear that the curriculum of this project may be built upon to continue to remind and encourage CBF that biblical counseling and counseling training are indispensable pieces of the overall ministry of the church. By seeking to provide these similar yet different aspects of proclaiming the Word, CBF will seek to obey the Saviour. I pray that this project has been glorifying to God and a benefit to the dear saints at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship.

APPENDIX 1

PRE- AND POST-BIBLICAL COUNSELING SURVEY  
OF CORNERSTONE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP  
ADULT MEMBERS

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your perceptions regarding biblical counseling and ACBC certification. For the purpose of this research, you will be asked to answer a series of questions, both before and after a teaching curriculum giving an introductory view of biblical counseling, the church as a training center and the process of ACBC certification. This curriculum will be presented in the CD hour. Any information or responses that you offer will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this project is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. As an adult member of CBF, by your completion of this Pre-Instruction Survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate  I do not agree to participate

Personal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: These statements ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

***SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat,***

***A = agree, SA = strongly agree;***

*Please circle the response which most agrees with each statement given.*

- |   |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. The Great Commission must include Biblical Counseling.       | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. Biblical Counseling is different than discipleship.          | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. IABC is considered the gold standard of certifying agencies. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. The medical model is beneficial in helping counselees.       | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

5. Although important, the church does not have to train biblical counselors, in order to fully obey the Great Commission.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. Nouthetic counseling is a non-essential component of biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. The immaterial mind controls behavior.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Not including physical and mental disabilities, genetics play an important role in explaining why people behave differently.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. Psychology is a study of the human brain.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Behavior comes from the functions of the brain.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. Scripturally, training biblical counselors, is voluntary for local churches.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. Sigmund Freud is the father of modern psychology.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. For the purposes of counseling, the mind and the brain should be understood to be different.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. Passages like 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, support the need for integration.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. Psychology can be used for the mind, the Bible for the soul.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Psychology is helpful in treating the more complex psychological issues of people today.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. Thanks to recent technological medical advancements, mental illness can now be diagnosed with objective tests.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. Biology and biochemical compositions, such as genetic make-up, brain size or function, have no influence on behavior.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. I have an understanding of the influence of Franz Mesmer, and Emil Kraepelin upon the field of psychology.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

20. Sigmund Freud stated that the psychoanalyst's role was distinctly a medical one.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The mind, heart, and soul are all immaterially the same.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. The Bible speaks fully in order to help psychological issues such as, bulimia, panic attacks, and schizophrenia.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. Integrationism and sufficiency are both appropriate for the church to use.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. In counseling, the history of the disease model is medically based.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. Churches are equipped to counsel the most serious psychological cases.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26. The Apostle Paul learned how to counsel through the ministry of the local church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. ACBC certified counselors are even better equipped to help the church counsel.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. Psychology is helpful in diagnosing and treating the counseling issues of people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. It is wise and beneficial for churches to offer integrated counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. It is vitally important for the local church to be a biblical <i>counseling</i> center.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31. The Great Commission includes training counselors to counsel biblically.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
32. It is vitally important for the church to offer <i>certified</i> biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33. The local church is the only biblically designated place for training counselors.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
34. When possible, it is vitally important for the local church to be an ACBC approved <i>training</i> center.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

- |   |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 35. Biblical Counseling is just as important to the church as preaching and teaching. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 36. The church must be a training center for Biblical Counseling.                     | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 37. I would consider taking the biblical counseling training offered at CBF.          | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |



## APPENDIX 2

### CURRICULUM QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXPERT PANEL

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The evaluation you are being asked to give is to measure the effectiveness of the biblical counseling curriculum to increase the knowledge of CBF members as to the importance of biblical counseling and ACBC certification. This research is being conducted at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship for the purposes of a ministry project at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Participation in this curriculum evaluation grants the researcher the right to use your responses for the purpose of further curriculum development and improvement, as well as the right to include your name and official title as an independent evaluator in the final written analysis of the ministry research project.

Name of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Center or Church: \_\_\_\_\_

After reviewing the curriculum and description of use provided, please complete the following evaluation and return to the researcher.

#### **Please circle the response that most agrees with each statement given.**

1. Has the curriculum sufficiently explained the importance of the Great Commission in offering church-based counseling training?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
2. Has the curriculum sufficiently demonstrated the need for biblical counseling to be church-based?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
3. Given that the curriculum is for CBF members, who have some familiarity with Biblical Counseling, has the curriculum sufficiently defined a “nouthetic” counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
4. Has the curriculum appropriately defined a biblical counseling anthropology?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding

5. Has the curriculum sufficiently evidenced the evangelistic nature of Biblical Counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
6. Has the curriculum sufficiently and accurately defined why the integration of psychology and biblical counseling is not necessary in order to counsel?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
7. Has the curriculum sufficiently defined psychology?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
8. Has the curriculum sufficiently explained the sufficiency of the Bible in counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
9. Has the curriculum sufficiently described the Medical Model of counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
10. Has the curriculum sufficiently presented the rationale for Christians to be more fully equipped in biblical counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
11. Has the curriculum sufficiently demonstrated the benefit of pursuing counseling certification for CBF?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
12. Has the curriculum sufficiently described the history of the four men who changed the basis of counseling?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
13. Has the curriculum sufficiently described Modern Integrationism?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
14. Has the curriculum sufficiently described and challenged the concept of “Spoiling the Egyptians”?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding
15. Has the curriculum sufficiently described the example of Barnabas and Paul in demonstrating the importance of training counselors in the church?  
1 = insufficient    2 = requires attention    3 = sufficient    4 = outstanding

## APPENDIX 3

### ACBC PROCESS OF CERTIFICATION AND CURRICULUM

The process of certification through ACBC is necessarily a rigorous one, those who take the training at CBF must be prepared to meet both BCI and ACBC's requirements for certification:

- Sixty-One hours of training...Not only are the major topics addressed in this training, but the students also participate in a practicum, which helps them to practice counseling. (See handout for curriculum).
- Thirty-One hours in Advanced Class training (not mandated from ACBC)...
- A theology and counseling exam...
- Followed by ten hours of observed counseling (either in person or on DVD)...
- Finally, fifty hours of supervised counseling...
- Reading one thousand pages from a list of approved works...

Such a certification process serves to not only evidence the reality of Second Timothy 2:15 regarding the benefit of training, but also serves to give credibility to the counselor in the eyes of those who may come for counsel.

#### Phase 1: Learning

##### A. Step 1: Complete a basic training course

1. A student who has successfully completed BCI's Training will have exceeded the basic training course requirement for ACBC certification.

#### Phase 2: Homework

##### A. Step 1: Homework must be completed for each section in order to progress to the exam phase.

- a. The homework is graded by the BCI instructor.

##### B. Step 2: Application

1. A student who desires to become certified will be required to submit his exams,

the ACBC application, and the other required ACBC documentation.

Phase 3: Supervision

A. Step 1: Supervision

1. A student who has successfully passes their ACBC exams will be required to complete 50 hours of supervised counseling by an ACBC Fellow.

***Curriculum:***

Section 1: Renewing Your Mind (10 Hours)

- A: Current Culture of Counseling
- B: Introduction to Counseling
- C: Basics of Counseling
- D: Counseling Unbelievers
- E: Counseling Believers
- F: Getting to the Heart
- G: Giving Hope
- H: Biblical Change
- I: Homework

Section 2: Conquering Common Problems (10 Hours)

- A: Counseling Life Dominating Sins
- B: Counseling Anger
- C: Counseling Worry, Fear, and Anxiety
- D: Counseling Depression
- E: Counseling Marriage Problems
- F: Counseling Sex Problems
- G: Counseling People with Addictions

Section 3: Learning To Discern - Identifying Worldly Counsel (10 Hours)

- A: Integration and Counseling Methodologies
- B: Critique of Some Integrated Approaches
  1. Hypnosis
  2. Inner Healing
  3. Deliverance from Demons
- C: Language of Counseling
- D: Working with Physicians, Psychiatrists, and Psychologists
- E: What to Do When Counseling Fails

Section 4: Practicum of Counseling Cases (10 Hours)

Section 5: Getting Marriage Right (8 Hours)

- A: God's View of Marriage
- B: How Two Become One
- C: Divine Order in The Home
- D: Sex and General Principles

Section 6: Biblical Instruction for Training Kids (8 Hours)

A: Five Things to Know About Children

B: Six Things to Know About Parenting

C: The Why and How of Discipline

D: Common Mistakes Parents Make

Section 7: Making Peace: The Art of Forgiveness (8 Hours)

A: Importance of Reconciliation

B: Foundation of Reconciliation

C: Seeking and Granting Forgiveness

Counseling Observation (10 Hours)

Reading from approved list, 1,000 pages.

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## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRAINING AS A MEANS OF OBEYING THE GREAT COMMISSION AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP, NORTH RIDGEVILLE, OHIO

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Chapter 1 covers the context of ministry at CBF and addressed the goals of this project. Chapter 2 examines several biblical texts which give the theological basis depicting the local church as the primary place for counseling and training. The third chapter examines that in the finished canon of Scripture, Jesus Christ invested all things necessary for the church to fulfill the commission. Four men of history deemed integral in the formation of psychology, as well as Larry Crabb are considered. Chapter 4 discusses the development of the curriculum for CBF. Further, this chapter deals with why ACBC certification is valuable in helping CBF to fulfill the mandate of 2 Timothy 2:15, in studying to show proficiency in counseling biblically. The final chapter of the project centers on the results of the pre-and post-survey data. This chapter also considers an evaluation of the project's purpose. An evaluation of the project's goals is also addressed measured by the results of the surveys. The chapter concludes with some theological reflections on the project.

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