

Christian Counseling: An Integrated and Biblical Approach

There are many different schools and approaches in counselling and psychotherapy. Can Christians use insights from these within a biblical framework or should we just use the Bible? How and why do Christians differ in their responses to this question? We will take a bird's eye view of the history of the development of secular and Christian counselling in order to see more clearly where we are today in our answers to this all important dilemma.

Richard Winter is one of the leaders of the European Christian Counselors Network. He is currently Professor of Practical Theology and Director of Covenant Seminary's counseling program in St Louis, USA. He is also a Psychotherapist and Counsellor who was trained in Medicine and Psychiatry in England before being on the staff and a director of the English branch of the L'Abri Fellowship for 14 years. He has served in a variety of pastoral and teaching leadership roles in the church. He is the author of *When Life Goes Dark: Finding Hope in the Midst of Depression*, IVP 2012; *Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism*, IVP, April 2005; *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment: Rediscovering Passion and Wonder*, IVP, 2002; *Choose Life, A study of abortion and other reproductive technologies* (Out of Print), and professional journal articles. He is married, with four children and eight grandchildren.

I: The Search for Truth and The Big Questions of Life

A. Looking back...

1. The Greeks

2. Jews

3. Christians

a. *The Puritans developed a massive and profound literature on a wide range of personal and pastoral problems.* David Powlison

B. A Vacuum in Pastoral Care

C. Demise of religion and rise of science

II: The Search for Truth and The Birth of Scientific Psychology

A. Freud and Psychoanalysis

1. Partial truths within a false framework

2. Alienation

3. Unconscious

4. Defense mechanisms

5. Biology and childhood

6. Relationship with father

B. Behaviorism (Skinner, Watson et al)

1. Partial truths...
 - a. Biological
 - b. Like animals
 - c. Conditioned by environment
 - d. Useful treatments

C. Organic/Medical

[Carl Jung

- a. Disagreed with Freud on:
 - i. the primacy of sex
 - ii his pessimistic view of human nature
 - iii. his negative view of the unconscious
 - vi. his strong atheism]

D. Humanistic Psychology (Rogers)

1. Unique with freedom and dignity
2. Unlimited potential for self perfection and goodness
3. Optimistic
4. Meaning and values subjective

Experience is for me the highest authority... It is to experience that I must return again and again to discover a closer approximation to the truth as it is becoming in me. Neither the Bible nor the prophets, neither Freud nor research, neither the revelations of God or man, can take precedence over my own direct experience. Carl Rogers

E. Cognitive Therapy (Ellis, Beck)

1. ABCDE

F. Positive Psychology (Seligman)

G. Systems and Family Therapy

H. Postmodern Therapies

1. Solution Focused Therapy and Narrative Therapy

I. Transpersonal Psychology (Maslow, Wilber)

1. Spirituality
2. Holistic
3. Interaction of mind/spirit and body
4. Conscious – Unconscious – Collective Unconscious – Cosmic Consciousness
5. Mindfulness

J. Brain Science

K. Postmodern Eclecticism

L. Christian

1. Need to recognize common ground and difference
2. Special and General Revelation
 - a. Creation - Romans 1:19-20, Psalm 19:1-4
 - b. Law of God in our hearts - Romans 2:14-15
 - c. Laws of nature - Proverbs 6:6, Is 28:23-29, Isaiah 28:23-29, Ecclesiastes 12:9-10
3. Common Grace
 - a. God cares for all creation and all benefit. Matt 5:45
Unbelievers can do good things. Matt 5:46
 - b. God restrains evil and sin and promotes good directly and through government. Romans 13:3-4
 - c. Common Grace Wisdom in many areas of life
4. A Christian Counseling Spectrum: Psychology and Scripture (see diagram)
5. Nouthetic "Biblical" Counseling
 - a. Nouthesia: Admonish, confront, warn, teach
 - b. Usually under-emphasizes:
Biological factors, Psychological factors, General Revelation, Common Grace
6. Eclecticism, Integrationism (weak and strong), Christian Psychology
7. Scripture: Sufficient but not Exhaustive

Suggested Reading:

The Search for Truth in Psychology and Counseling, Richard Winter, *Presbyterion*,
(www.richardwinter.org)

The Holy Spirit, Common Grace, and Secular Psychotherapy, Lydia Kim-van Daalen, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 2012, vol. 40, No 3, 229-339

Four Models of Pastoral Counseling, Tim Keller

(http://facultyweb.anderson.edu/~glg/4030/four_models_of_counseling_in_pastoral_ministry.pdf)

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