Christian Counseling: An Integrated and Biblical Approach

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The Greeks

- Psycho-therapy = Soul-servant
- Philosophers - physicians of the soul.
- Therapy of the word - persuading, challenging and guiding
Jews and OT

- *The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.*  Jer 18:18
- Wise men: Solomon, Proverbs...
- Priests
- Prophets
- Shepherds
- *Exhort as prophets, mediate as priests, pastor as shepherds and bring godly wisdom to those in need.*  David Benner.  
  Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest
Christians

• Early Church Fathers - John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great…

• Augustine *Confessions*

• Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologicae*

• Reformers

• Puritans - Richard Baxter Christian Directory
Demise of religion and rise of science

• *The cure of sinful souls was recast as the cure of (sick) minds.*  Thomas Szasz

• *...the human psyche was wrested from the faltering hands of organized religion and was situated in the world of nature as a subject for scientific study.*  Jacob Needleman
The Search for Truth in Psychology and Counseling
The Search for Truth

Dehumanizing

Deifying

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Humanist manifesto

• “We begin with humans not God, nature not deity... no divine purpose or providence... no deity will save us... we must save ourselves.”
The Search for Truth
Partial truths within a false framework

• Alienation
• Unconscious
• Defense mechanisms
• Biology and childhood
• Relationship with father
Psychoanalysis/Psychodynamic

• Make unconscious conscious
• Early relationships
• Transference
Post Freudian Psychoanalysis

• Adlerian

• Jungian

• Object relations

• Self psychology - Kohut

• Ego psychology - Erikson
Man, we once believed was free.

B. F. Skinner
Partial truths

• Biological
• Like animals
• Conditioned by environment
• Useful treatments
Organic/Medical
Carl Jung

- Disagreed with Freud on:
  - the primacy of sex
  - his pessimistic view of human nature
  - his negative view of the unconscious
  - his strong atheism
The Search for Truth

Dehumanizing

Deifying

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Humanistic Psychology

Carl Rogers

Client Centered

Person Centered
Humanistic Psychology

• Different from animals
  – *It is not nature but we ourselves who are responsible for making ourselves distinct from the beasts…man is a self-defining animal…* John Shotter
  – *Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of Existentialism.* J.P. Sartre
Humanistic Psychology

• Unique with freedom and dignity
• Unlimited potential for self perfection and goodness
• Optimistic
• 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
Different Therapies from each Theory
Albert Ellis
Rational-Emotive Therapy
Rational Emotive/Cognitive Therapy

- Activating event - situation

- Belief
  - Catastrophizing
  - Awfulizing
  - All or Nothing

- Consequence - emotional

- Disputation
  What am I saying to myself?
  Is it true?
  What evidence for this belief?
Aaron Beck
Cognitive Therapy
and CBT
Renewed thinking

• Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Psalm 42:5

• Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2

• You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds… Ephesians 4:22-23
Positive Psychology

- Martin Seligman
- Corrective balance to “negative psychology” with its focus on abuse, trauma, illness and pathology
- Cultivate virtues and character strengths
Systems and Family Therapy
Postmodern Therapies

- Solution focused therapy
- Narrative therapy
Transpersonal Psychology
Abraham Maslow

Toward the further reaches of human nature
Valuable truths

• Spirituality
• Holistic
• Interaction of mind/spirit and body
Conscious

Collective unconscious

Unconscious

Cosmic consciousness
The Mindfulness Movement
Do we even need psychotherapy anymore?
Brain Science

- Daniel Siegel
- Anatomy of The Soul
  Curt Thompson
Black box!

- Psychoanalysis
- Behavior therapy
- Medication
- Cognitive therapy...
Neuroscience/brain science

- Brain scans
- Neuroplasticity
- Implicit/explicit memory
- Neurogenesis
- Mirror neurons
- Retraining the brain
- Holistic treatment
The Search for Truth
Evolutionary Psychology
The Search for Truth
Postmodern Eclecticism

• No sure answer to the Big Questions
• Mix and match!
Postmodern Eclecticism
Christian – Special Revelation

Origins: Creation by personal God for relationship and dominion; universe material and immaterial; “man” is spirit and matter

Present state: Alienation and brokenness
- man and God
- man and man/woman
- man and himself
- man and nature
Redemption and restoration

Destiny: Eternal glory or grief
Need to recognize:

- Assumptions and Beliefs
- Aims and goals
- Methods and techniques
The Search for Truth

Dehumanizing

Deifying
Special Revelation
General Revelation
General Revelation
Romans 1:19-20, Psalm 19:1-4

• For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.

• The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works… they pour forth speech… they display knowledge… Their voice goes out into all the earth…
General Revelation

- Creation. Romans 1:19-20, Psalm 19:1-4
- Law of God in our hearts. Romans 2:14-15
When a farmer plows for planting...levels the surface...Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot...His God instructs him and teaches him the right way...All this comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.
General Revelation

• Creation. Romans 1:19-20, Psalm 19:1-4

• Law of God in our hearts. Romans 2:14-15


• Sayings of the wise. Eccl 12:9,10, Jer 18:18
Common Grace

• God cares for all creation and all benefit.
  – He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
  Matthew 5:45

• Unbelievers can do good things. Matt 5:46
  – but not to earn salvation

• God restrains evil and sin and promotes good directly and through government Romans 13:3-4

• Common Grace Wisdom
# A Christian Counseling Spectrum

## Psychology and Scripture

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- Perspectival

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- Bobgans
- Hunt
- Bulkley
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To put it simply, nouthetic counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of a deep concern in order to help them to make those changes that God requires.  

Jay Adams, 2004

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cz2DDQfwWOA
Nouthetic Counseling

• Nouthesia
  – Admonish, confront, warn, teach

• Sufficiency of Scripture
  – 2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness*...
  – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*...
Nouthetic Counseling
Traditional “Biblical Counseling”

Usually under-emphasizes:

• Biological factors
• Psychological factors - especially the damaging effects of others sin
• The value of General Revelation
  – Minimal value in studying secular psychology
Nouthetic Counseling

Traditional “Biblical Counseling”

• Usually under-emphasizes

• The importance of Common Grace
  – Cannot counsel unbelievers

• The time it takes to change deeply rooted patterns of sin

They would say that we under-emphasize sin and the sufficiency of Scripture
The Sufficiency of Scripture

• The Bible is sufficient because it provides either direct information or authoritative categories for answering all questions.

• Whenever the Bible is not explicit… biblical categories provide a framework for thinking through an adequate response.
Sufficient but not Exhaustive

• “As I seek to develop a model of counseling, I begin with the conviction that my study of God's written Word must be allowed to control my thinking more than any other data. Where the bible speaks, it speaks with authority. Where it doesn't speak, we may look to other sources of information for help.”  Larry Crabb
Examples of Common Ground discovered through General Revelation
Common Grace Wisdom

• Divorce
• Forgiveness
• Self-esteem
• Spirituality and health
Anxiety
Depression
Anorexia nervosa
Homosexuality
Bi-polar disorder
Schizophrenia...
Special Revelation

- Scripture is senior because it is propositional and direct... creation is subordinate because it is non-verbal and distorted since the fall. Creation must be interpreted by Scripture... theology and psychology are sciences organizing human thoughts about God’s revelation. As human products they both may contain human errors. (Hurley and Berry, 1997)
“Biblical Counseling”

- “Neo-Nouthetic” or “Progressive”
- Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF)
- Idols of the heart

Mike Emlet  David Powlison  Paul Tripp  Ed Welch
# A Christian Counseling Spectrum

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- Integrationist
- "Biblical"

**Including**

- Allender
- Crabb
- C.C.E.F
- Bobgans
- Hunt
- Bulkley
- Adams
- Scipione
- MacArthur
- A.A.C.C.
- S.C.P.
- Clinton
- Langberg
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- Bobgans
- Hunt
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### "Biblical Counseling"
- Allender
- Crabb
- Powlison
- Welch
- Tripp
- Adams
- Scipione
- MacArthur

### Other
- ”Integration”
- C.A.P.S
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Eric Johnson
Europe

- England: Association of Christian Counselors
- Hungary...
Christian Counseling: An Integrated and Biblical Approach

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• What questions or criticisms (or cynicism) do you have in your own heart about counseling?
• What tensions and divisions do you see in the church about counseling?
• What are common grace and general revelation and how and why are they so important in thinking about counseling?
• What is Biblical Counseling?
• What is Integrationist Counseling?
• What does the Bible say about anxiety, depression, homosexuality, cutting, anorexia nervosa, bi-polar disorder?
• How would you find a good Christian counselor in your area - either for yourself or for somebody in your church?