

Wasted Bones... Rejoice in the LORD

Christian Counseling

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Every year for many years now, Dr. Basil Jackson, a famous Milwaukee psychiatrist, is invited to talk to the graduating WLS seniors about psychiatry and to give them a taste of how a psychiatrist thinks. Some years the hour that he spends with the students is relatively peaceful. But some people might say that Dr. Jackson has a somewhat prickly personality and some years the session turns into a rather lively debate. Somehow, in his free-wheeling style, Dr. Jackson almost always presents a diagram showing three possible causes for depression. These are: physical, emotional, spiritual. There is a complicated interplay between the physical, emotional, and spiritual that impacts upon all of us and upon our mental health.

This paper is not so much about that interplay as it is about ministering with God's Law and Gospel to those whose mental health has been negatively affected by something spiritual within them that is troubling them.

Your assignment to me, and I have labored somewhat over both understanding and accepting it, was to look at Christian Counseling. More specifically, you have asked me to review, critique, and recommend books and authors in this field. I accepted this assignment with a lot of trepidation. I knew that my planned course of training in this field was going to be incomplete at the time of this conference. I am in the midst of pursuing a master's degree in social work – counseling. I had decided some time ago, I think it was shortly after I accepted the call that I presently hold to the seminary, not to spend my time during this intense period of preparatory study reading books on Christian Counseling by non-WELS authors. I had decided that I would read what our WELS writers have produced after I had studied the Scriptures and the Confessions on the subject. I would concentrate on preparing for my classes at the seminary and at UWM and then after that was somewhat in order, I would begin reading some of the works and the writers you have asked me to critique.

A part of my decision was the desire to let the Scriptures guide my thinking, a desire not to be labeled as a disciple of any Christian Counseling writer, and the frustration caused by the plethora of books published in the area of Christian Counseling. In the summer of 1992 I had naïvely asked Professor Westerhaus, our Seminary librarian, to get me a listing of the books published in the areas of psychology – counseling and practical theology. In October of that year he came to me with a smile and a two inch thick computer print-off of the books handled by his supplier and published over just the past three years in this area. There was an immediate conflict between great expectations and humble reality.

So, you are probably two or three years too early in your request. If you had asked me in 1995, I would probably still feel unprepared and I would probably still outline this paper the way I am presenting it to you today. But, in 1995 the computer printout would have been six inches thick!

The title I have chosen is from Psalm 32. It describes the fruit of the Law and the fruit of the Gospel as the Holy Spirit works through them in us.

Wasted Bones... Rejoice in the LORD

- I. Law/Gospel Pastoral Counseling**
- II. Christian Counseling**
- III. Observations on Authors and Books**

I. Law/Gospel Pastoral Counseling

PSALM 32

1. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
2. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.
3. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
4. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the day of summer.
5. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will contrition. confess my transgressions to the Lord" – and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
6. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.
7. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.
8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.
9. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.
10. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.
11. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

A. (1-2) Confidence is given that God does forgive sins because of Christ. Objective Justification.

B. (3-4) Specific Law is spoken and heard.

C. (5a) Sin is acknowledged. The sin is against God. True

D. (5c) Specific Gospel is spoken and heard.

E. (6-7) Faith in God's forgiveness in Christ is confessed.

F. (8-10) Sanctified Christian living is discussed. The fruits of Repentance.

(vs. 9-10 are a warning not to produce fruits that are driven by Law, but by the Gospel.)

G. (vs. 11) The joy of Christian living is experienced.

Repentance is about change. Psalm 32 describes King David's repentance. The aim of this psalm is to teach the readers the wisdom of sincere repentance. In so doing, God gives us an outline of repentance. "David invites all who read this psalm to follow him in confessing their sins to the Lord and receiving the peace and comfort which forgiveness brings. No burden is more painful than an awareness of guilt and the impending judgment of a holy God. No joy is greater than confidence of forgiveness and peace with God" (Brug, 1989, p. 138).

On the previous page I have set Psalm 32 in the left hand column and in the right column I have put an outline of the psalm, which I would suggest we call "the Repentance Model."

A. Vs. 1-2 Confidence Is Given That God Does Forgive Sins Because Of Christ – Objective Justification

- "1. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
- 2. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

II Cor. 5:14 "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."

II Cor. 5:18-21 "All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Romans 4:4-8 "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Blessed are they
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man
 whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Romans 5:8-9 "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since now we have been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

The objective fact is that Romans 5:8-9 is God's work for the world of sinners (II Cor. 5). This gives us the joyful assurance that Jesus Christ died for us. Our forgiveness is God's verdict because of Christ. It is God's forensic act.

"Blessed is the man... in whose spirit is no deceit" (Ps. 32:2). These words show us the necessity of true repentance. Christ died and arose for all people. The debt has been paid for all. "God has declared the sins of the whole world forgiven, only those who receive this promise with sincere repentance and faith benefit from it" (Brug, 1989, p. 137).

Objective Justification gives us the assurance that God will hear our confession and that our faith is the receiving organ of God's forgiveness. Our fear of God is removed. We have the boldness and confidence to go to our God and make our confession trusting in Jesus, our Savior.

The expression of God's love to a troubled individual is the basic purpose of Law/Gospel pastoral counseling. It seeks to restore the sinner to a right relationship with God by using God's tools – His Means of Grace in a very personal way. The individual is brought by the power of the Holy Spirit to what Curtis Lyon calls, "Gospel Resolution" (Lyon, 1991, p. 1). "The central teaching of our Christian theology is God's declaration that the world is forgiven of all sin for the sake of Jesus Christ, because of his life, his death and his resurrection. Jesus' work of redemption is universal. Every sinner can be told unquestionably and unconditionally that his or her sins have been forgiven. God's work in Christ is a completely finished product" (Lyon, 1991, p. 1). We have a completed Gospel of forgiveness to share. Methods and outlines of procedure and communication skills may vary, "but the work, the power, and the tools never will" (Lyon, 1991, p. 2). The troubled sinner is restored to a penitent, believing, forgiven, confident relationship with God by God, the Holy Spirit, using His tools – His Word and Sacrament – Law and Gospel. In the first two verses of Psalm 32 King David describes the joy of and the result of this newly restored relationship with God.

"Blessed is he
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.
 Blessed is the man
 whose sin the Lord does not count against him
 and in whose spirit there is no deceit."

In this psalm God invites us and all believers to enjoy the benefits of this new state. All of these blessings and benefits are found for us by God *ἐν Χριστῷ* and *ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, if there is to be any lasting blessing and benefit. Christ **for us** is where we start. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (II Cor. 5:19).

This is our starting point. This is the grace of God in Christ that gives us the joy and confidence to confess our sins to God. We have a completed Gospel of forgiveness. It is done – by Christ, God's Son.

B. Vs. 3-4 Specific Law is spoken and heard.

Ps. 32:3-4 "When I kept silent,
 my bones wasted away
 through my groaning all day long.
 For day and night
 your hand was heavy upon me;
 my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."

Ps. 51:3 "For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me."

Ps. 51:5 "Surely I have been a sinner from birth,
 sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Romans 2:14-15 "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."

I Cor. 8:7 “Since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.”

Romans 3:20 “Through the Law we become conscious of sin.”

Isaiah 57:21 “‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’”

II Samuel 12:7,9 “‘You are the man!’ ... “‘Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own.’”

King David had no peace. He had sinned with Bathsheba. He had arranged to have Uriah killed. He describes his lack of peace for his soul: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” Physical pain and trouble were his lot because he was not right with his God spiritually. His impenitence bothered his conscience. He knew his sin, but he was too stubborn and too proud to admit it. He had no peace.

“‘You are the man!’” Nathan told him. You killed Uriah and took his wife. Nathan began his confrontation with David with a story that raised the king’s ire against a man who had everything, yet took from his neighbor who had almost nothing to feed a guest. Then David heard specific Law. “‘You are the man!’” You “struck down Uriah... and took his wife.” Genesis 4:10: “‘What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.’” Matthew 4:17: “‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’” John 4:17-18: “‘You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.’”

The Law that is spoken is specific to the sin. The approach may be like a feather duster parable of Nathan the prophet. But when Law is applied, it is like a thunderbolt that convicts us of our sins. “‘You are the man!’” Read through the words of Christ to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. There is praise and there is rebuke. Law is spoken specifically. It is not a general, “‘You know that we are all sinners.’” It is specific.

Revelation 2:4-5 “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”

Revelation 2:14-16 “Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore!”

Revelation 2:20-22 “Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.”

Revelation 3:1-3 “I know your deeds; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.”

Revelation 3:15-16,19 “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth... ..Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”

God's Law as a mirror, spoken in love, rebukes those whom God loves. Quoting Luther, the Formula of Concord defines the Law: "Anything that preaches concerning sins and God's wrath, let it be done how or when it will, that is all a preaching of the Law" (FC, V, *Triglotta*, p. 955). "Therefore [we shall set forth our meaning:] we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God; and it threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. For as Luther writes against the law-stormers [Antinomians]: Everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the law, whose peculiar office it is to reprove sin and to lead to the knowledge of sins, Rom. 3:20; 7,7" (FC, V, *Triglotta*, p. 957).

Romans 3:20 "Through the law we become conscious of sin."

Romans 7:7 "I would not have known what sin was except through the law."

The Law is not a Means of Grace. It is rather a means to an end. The Law serves the Gospel. It prepares the soil of the heart to hear and appreciate the Gospel seed. "We cannot assume that the law has already done its work just because a person is hurting. Sin causes the pain, not the law" (Lyon, 1990, p. 34). "Only when people experience God's judgment on sin will they appreciate the importance of Christ's redemptive work" (Lyon, 1990, p. 34).

C. Vs. 5a&b. The Sin Is Acknowledged. The Sin Is Against God. True contrition.

Psalms 32:5a&b "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.'"

Psalms 38:3-6, 18 "Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning... I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin."

Psalms 51:4-5 "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

II Samuel 12:13 "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'"

Psalms 51:17 "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Luke 15:21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'"

II Cor. 7:10 "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation."

Acts 20:21 "I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus."

True contrition is more than sorrow. Sorrow might be sorrow over having been caught or sorrow over the shame I have brought to myself or my family or my nation. True sorrow that is Godly contrition is sorrow that I have sinned against God. It is the acknowledgment that my mind has been hostile to God and that I have sinned against him specifically in thought, word, and deed. True contrition is general for all my sins. True contrition is specific for one special sin or for a specific group or listing of sins. True contrition is a deep terror of conscience that I have slapped God in the face by the sins that I have done. True contrition is more than words or a feeling. True contrition is a humble state of being that allows for no pride and no excuse and no self-justification and no conditions and no, “Yes, I have sinned, but...”

In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article XII, we read:

In order, therefore, to deliver pious consciences from these labyrinths of the sophists, we have ascribed to repentance [or conversion] these two parts, namely contrition and faith. If any one desires to add a third, namely, fruits worthy of repentance, i.e., a change of the entire life and character for the better [good works which shall and must follow conversion], we will not make any opposition. From contrition we separate those idle and infinite discussions, as to when we grieve from love of God, and when from fear of punishment. [For these are nothing but mere words and a useless babbling of persons who have never experienced the state of mind of a terrified conscience.] But we say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin, and which grieves that it has sinned. And this contrition takes place in this manner when sins are censured by the Word of God, because the sum of the preaching of the Gospel is this, namely to convict of sin, and to offer for Christ’s sake the remission of sins and righteousness, and the Holy Ghost, and eternal life, and that as regenerate men we should do good works (*Triglotta*, p. 259, 28 & 29).

We also quote the following two points which are rejected as heresy by the Apology to the Augsburg Confession.

“II. That by attrition we merit grace...

IV. That on account of contrition, and not by faith in Christ, we obtain remission of sins” (*Triglotta*, p. 257, 18 & 20).

When people we are counseling show contrition and confess their sins, we want to breathe a sigh of relief. The Law has done its work. We thank God for it. It is important to make sure that the false justifying baggage still isn’t in our member’s life and thought pattern. Contrition is a total admission of guilt. “For when confession is made to God, it must be made with the heart, not alone with the voice, as is made on the stage by actors. Therefore, such confession is contrition, in which, feeling God’s wrath, we confess that God is justly angry, and that He cannot be appeased by our works, and, nevertheless, we seek for mercy because of God’s promise” (*Apology, Triglotta*, VI, p. 283).

It is also important for us to realize when we come to contrition in a counseling situation that many people are very comfortable to stay there. Feeling guilty becomes their way of trying to pay for their sins. If they did not continue to feel guilty, if they were comforted by the Gospel, they would feel that they had not really accepted the guilt of their sins and that they were not really right with God. Even some of our good members may come to us and say, “Pastor, X is not really sorry for his sin. Look at how happy he is.” Our member feels that X should be sad for a long time to show his/her contrition. We are overjoyed if the deep terror and sadness at sin is gone after the Gospel has been heard. We pray that X is happy because X has heard and believed the Gospel.

Contrition is not a permanent state for the believer. Contrition is a passing through state. We pass through contrition to get to absolution. Absolution and the joy of the Gospel is the end of the road. Contrition is

one of the stepping stones to cross the river. The Holy Spirit carries us across on the Gospel to the joy of living a Christian life.

D. Vs. 5c. Specific Gospel is spoken and heard.

Psalm 32:5c “And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

II Samuel 12:13 “Nathan replied, ‘The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.’”

Proverbs 28:13 “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

I John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

II Corinthians 2:7 “You ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.”

Matthew 9:2 “Jesus... said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.’”

“Ministers in the church have the command to remit sin; they do not have the command to investigate secret sins. And indeed, they absolve from those that we do not remember; for which reason absolution, which is the voice of the Gospel remitting sins and consoling consciences, does not require judicial examination” (*Apology, Triglotta, VI, p. 283*).

Specific Law applied to specific sin and specific Gospel applied to specific contrition and confession does not mean that sins must be publicly confessed for them to be absolved. Confession and contrition are not conditions or requirements for absolution. Christ crucified and arisen is the only condition and requirement. So many of our sins are secret. God’s payment for our sins in Christ is complete and full. “It is finished!”

τετέλεσται!

I John 1:7 “The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin.”

Colossians 2:13 “When you were dead in your sins... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.”

Start with Objective Justification. Continue with specific Gospel. “Jesus died for that sin, also.” Very often people acknowledge the wondrous work of Christ for sins, but cannot see how God could ever, even in Christ, forgive the monstrous sin that is troubling their conscience. Follow Curt Lyon’s “Take them on a trip to the cross” method outlined in *Counseling at the Cross*. Use the “Baby Steps” approach:

When Jesus suffered with the nails going into his wrists, for how many people did he hang on the cross? Did he get nailed to the cross for you too? Did the nails go through his wrists for this sin of yours also?

When the sword pieced his side for the sins of the world, did it pierce him for your sin of XXXXXX also?

When Jesus arose in victory for how many people did he arise?

Did he arise also for you? For which sin of yours did he also arise?

Take nothing for granted. God has left no sin out of the burden that our Savior took to the cross for the world – for you and me – for our troubled member. The Gospel is for all. Do not let your member pass from your study without hearing its promise. Do not let him/her leave your presence without assuring him/her that Christ crucified applies to him/her. Share with your members and apply to them the completed Gospel of forgiveness. By Grace:

Isaiah 53:5-6 “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Hebrews 7:27 “Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.”

Himself – offered up – once for all! Check out what the Holy Spirit says to the situation we are working with today. The message may seem to be the same so that you can say it by rote. Don’t follow that temptation. Individualize it for the sake of applying it meaningfully to your member. The Gospel is the warp and woof of your message of comfort. Our fathers recognized this. So do we. As it applied to David, to the woman at the well, to the woman taken in adultery, to the terrified jailer at Philippi, and to the repentant participant in the incestuous relationship in Corinth, so it applies to you and me and to all of our members. You are God’s ambassador with the message of reconciliation. What a blessed privilege God has given for you to speak the Gospel in a specific way to comfort troubled souls! In the Gospel you have the solution to the spiritual problems that cause mental illness – even worse, that lead people to find their own resolution in the Law or in themselves and not in the Gospel.

Curt Lyon talks about this in *Counseling at the Cross*.

Christ’s work of redemption is a finished product, and that makes God’s declaration of justification by grace through faith the final word on the subject Forgiveness is easy to declare. All faithful preachers talk about forgiveness. The problem is that we usually talk about it only as a final declaration without emphasizing the process Christ completed to make the declaration valid. If a person confesses a particular sin to a pastor or counselor or friend, for example, the counselor can easily declare forgiveness and assure the sinner that the sin is forgiven. That is the truth. It is God’s truth and it will not change. What we many forget, however, is that the person may have been going through an entire mental process of payment for sin. The counselor has perhaps delivered the answer to the problem without making a vivid presentation of the process Jesus completed for obtaining the solution... We need to take the time to present the process, redemption, payment; and then we need to make the final declaration on God’s behalf as he gave us the authority to give it. ‘And so, your sins are forgiven’I believe strongly that we fail to recognize numerous occasions when our people are in the process of making their own payment for sin in their own chosen way and are closed to the presentation of the gospel, because they don’t see it as the answer to their needs. The final declaration means virtually nothing to those who are in the process of making spiritual payment on their own some other way (Lyon, 1991, pp. 77-79).

We may spend a whole hour talking about the Law and applying it to an individual’s life and specific sin. But we may spend only five minutes discussing with them and questioning them about the Gospel and its meaning to their lives. The disparity in time of application seems to be grossly out of proportion to the importance of the Gospel. Our declaration of the Gospel may usually be done in a preaching, lecturing way, rather than through careful questioning and application. Do we wonder, then, that our people often seek to find

Law solutions to their problems? We have done our best work at applying the Law. Be an ambassador of the message of the Gospel of Reconciliation. Work at doing your best with the Gospel.

I John 2:1-2 “If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

E. Faith In God’s Forgiveness In Christ Is Confessed

Psalms 32:6-7 “Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

Acts 16:30-31 “‘Men, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.’”

Mark 1:15 “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

I Corinthians 12:3 “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

Psalms 65:3-4 “When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions. Blessed is the man you choose and bring near to live in your courts!”

Ephesians 2:8-9 “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Romans 1:17 “In the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

The Holy Spirit will work his will in his way through the Gospel in the heart of the one that we are counseling.

Romans 10:17 “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

This is his promise. This is our confidence.

I Corinthians 3:6-7 “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow.”

We trust in this confidence as ambassadors of the Gospel message of reconciliation. We speak his Gospel joyfully and freely. When God works his faith we rejoice in his love and grace.

Believing the Gospel message is believing that Jesus Christ is the once-and-for-all-time complete sacrifice for all sins – for our sins. It is believing the message of absolution. It is believing that the waters of despair and guilt will not overwhelm us. Jesus has saved us. He is our hiding place. Jesus protects us from trouble and surrounds us with songs of deliverance. The terror of hell and the curse of the Law and the guilt of sin are removed. We are free. We have gone from death to life. We have gone from doubt to confidence – not in ourselves, but in Jesus. We find joy in being used by God to bring blessings to God’s precious people. Express your joy in your prayers and in your words to the one you are counseling.

Remember that your member experiences this same joy and confidence by God's grace through faith. Talk about it. Question them about it – not as if their feelings were the basis or the validation of their confidence, but as a check on how they have applied the message of reconciliation to themselves by the grace of God. Where are they in that process, in that growth of their faith? What further words and help will they need from you? Check it out. Then plan out your continuing presentation and application of the Gospel to them and plan out how you will immerse them in the Gospel in the immediate future by further sessions and suggested Bible stories and books to read. Plan the presentation and application of the Gospel as carefully and prayerfully as you planned out and prayed about the way you confronted them with the Law.

F. Vs. 8-10 Sanctified Living Is Discussed – The Desire To Amend. The Fruits of Repentance.

Psalm 32:8 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”

Although scene commentators understand these verses as God's reply to David, it seems best to take them as David's words of encouragement to his readers. David again contrasts the woe of the impenitent with the peace and joy of those who trust in God for forgiveness. He urges us to learn from his example. Don't be as foolish as David was when he covered up his sin and suffered needless anguish. Don't be like a stubborn mule that has to be dragged along by force. Instead, run gladly and boldly to the Lord for forgiveness. This is true wisdom” (Brug, 1989, p. 139).

Verses 9-10 are a warning not to produce fruits that are driven by Law, but by the Gospel.

Psalm 32:9-10 “Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.”

We expand Dr. Brug's interpretation of verse 8-10 to include instruction in the fruits of repentance. The fruits of repentance are fruits of faith in Christ. Faith in God's deliverance has just been expressed by the penitent. Now fruits of that faith and repentance became the topic of our discussion.

God changes the person through Law/Gospel pastoral counseling. Changing the person changes the blaming pattern relationship. Focus on the present and the future rather than the past.

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through when we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 6:1-14

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again: death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its mortal desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

The penitent produces fruits of faith and repentance because he/she wants to. He/she finds happiness now in doing things pleasing to his Savior. His/her new life glorifies God. Yet, his/her new life is constantly threatened because of the continuing existence of the old Adam within him/her.

Romans 7:14

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:1

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud

but gives grace to the humble.”

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

As Christian pastors we give guidance from God's Word for sanctified Christian living. "And for this reason it cannot be correctly said that man before his conversion has a *modus agendi*, or a way, namely, of working something good and salutary in divine things... Nevertheless, no *modus agendi*, or no way whatever of working something good in spiritual things can be ascribed to man before his conversion.

But when man has been converted, and is thus enlightened, and his will is renewed, it is then that man wills what is good (so far as he is regenerate or a new man), and *delights in the Law of God after the inward man*, Rom. 7, 22, and henceforth does good to such an extent and as long as he is impelled by God's Spirit, as Paul says, Rom. 8, 14: *For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. And this impulse of the Holy Ghost is not a *coactio*, or coercion, but the converted man does good spontaneously, as David says, Ps. 110, 4, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power*. And nevertheless that also [the strife of the flesh and spirit] remains in the regenerate of which St. Paul wrote, Rom. 7, 22f.: *For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members*. Also, v. 25: *So, then, with my mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin*. Also, Gal. 5, 17: *For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things ye would*.

From this, then, it follows that as soon as the Holy Ghost, as has been said, through the Word and holy Sacraments, has begun in us this His work of regeneration and renewal, it is certain that through the power of the Holy Ghost we can and should cooperate, although still in great weakness. But this [that we cooperate] does not occur from our carnal natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Ghost has begun in us in conversion, as St. Paul expressly and earnestly exhorts that *as workers together with Him we receive not the grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. 6, 1. But this is to be understood in no other way than that the converted man does good to such an extent and so long as God by His Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads him, and that as soon as God would withdraw His gracious hand from him, he could not for a moment persevere in obedience to God (*Triglotta*, Formula of Concord, Article II, "Of Free Will," Paragraph 62ff, p. 907).

For the Law says indeed that it is God's will and command that we should walk in a new life, but it does not give the power and ability to begin and do it; but the Holy Ghost, who is given and received, not through the law, but through the preaching of the Gospel, Gal. 3, 14, renews the heart. Thereafter the Holy Ghost employs the Law so as to teach the regenerate from it, and to point out and show them in the Ten Commandments *what is the [good and] acceptable will of God*, Rom. 12, 2, in what *good works God hath before ordained that they should walk* Eph. 2, 10 (*Triglotta*, Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article VI, "Of the Third Use of God's Law." Paragraph 11, p. 965).

A Warning Not To Produce Fruits That Are Driven By The Law, But By The Gospel.

Ps. 32:9 "Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him."

Romans 7:4 to 8:1 is a long, heartfelt cry of pain from the New Man of Paul as he sees the destruction of sin that his old Man would bring into his life. There are two confident and joyful passages at the end that express the victory in this struggle that is Christ's – that is ours through faith in Christ.

I Peter 5:1-11 is filled with advice. Do we consider this advice 1. Ceremonial Law for the New Testament time? 2. Gospel admonition? 3. The Third Use of the Law as it applies as a guide to sanctified Christian living? 4. Christian common-sense advice from God's inspired writer to God's Christian people? 5. Practical directives and advice in the area of attitudes and behavior from one servant of God to others who desire to serve God and who are living in a certain place and time but which advice and directives have application to all places and times? We have probably agreed at one time or the other with all but the first of these classifications regarding the type of advice given in I Peter 5:1-11. The term "Gospel Admonition" is not my first choice.

How do you classify the advice, suggestions, and directives that you give to your members who have expressed their contrition and faith in Christ and received Christ's absolution through you (are penitent) and now, desiring to live a joyful Christian life filled with fruits of repentance, ask you, "Pastor, how do I (we) change my (our) sinful habits of communicating and relating?"

Don't we consider our answer to be practical directives and advice in the area of attitudes and behavior from one servant of God to others who desire to serve God and who are living in a certain place and time but which advice and directives have application to all places and times? When this advice and these directives are in accord with the will of God is this not an application of the Third Use of God's Law?

God and the counseling pastor love the penitent and want him/her to continue to live the new life and enjoy its benefits to the fullest, carrying out his/her function in the building of the Body of Christ. That is why the counseling pastor

- a. directs and applies the Law in its third use for the happiness of the member;
- b. warns about roadblocks and problems to joyful Christian living;
- c. points to end results;
- d. points to examples;
- e. forewarns regarding the intensity of the struggle and repeated failures;
- f. assures of the Savior's forgiveness and his sustaining help; and
- g. directs to sources of strength in the Word and Sacraments and in God through prayer (with appreciation to Professor Harold Johnes).

The counseling pastor directs the penitent counselee to fruits of repentance. Experiencing repentance and forgiveness is also an enabling experience by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now the person wants to do and can do things that were unthinkable and impossible before. Many doors that were previously bolted shut are now open for him/her. By God's grace he/she:

- a. forgives others,
- b. genuinely seeks the benefit of others,
- c. finds joy in serving others,
- d. recognizes individual God-given responsibilities and willingly strives to carry them out, and
- e. recognizes and even rejoices in God's discipline (with appreciation to Professor Harold Johnes.)

One of the most immediate fruits of repentance is that the blaming pattern is lessened or it ceases entirely. When this happens and we see signs of acceptance of personal guilt and a cessation of justifying and accusatory blaming we have a fairly good earthly checkpoint that God's Law and Gospel have done his work within the member we are counseling. We then know that it is time to concentrate upon the fruits of repentance.

"A change in the heart also changes what the heart produces" (Schuetze & Matzke, 1988, p. 20).

Luke 6:43-45 “No good tree bears bad fruit... The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.”

II Corinthians 5:14-15 “Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for these and was raised again.”

Should these fruits ever be prescribed by the pastor? The best answer is a qualified, “No.” It is always better that the pastor through counseling lead the member to realize from the application of Law and Gospel in the previous sections (A through E) that certain fruits are natural for those who are repentant of certain sins. The voluntary desire of tax collector Zacchaeus to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back four times what he might have cheated anyone out of certainly comes to mind here (Luke 19:1-10). A desire to redress the wrong that we have done is a basic fruit of repentance. A desire not to sin that way again is another natural fruit of repentance. Consider Jesus’ words to the woman caught in the act of adultery: “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11), are both a command to produce a specific fruit of repentance and a directive of love and advice for Christian living from her Good Shepherd to her. When these fruits are not understood or caught by the penitent, they may need to be explained and eventually, even demanded by Christ’s undershepherd.

Repentance calls for proper fruits. Scripture does not outline these in detail for every situation.

When the crowds came out to be baptized by John, he said to them, ‘Produce fruit in keeping with repentance’ (Luke 3:8). This was not to earn forgiveness. Fruit is a result and not a cause. It is evidence of repentance, not directly a part of it (Schuetze & Matzke, 1988, p. 237).

When the tax collectors and soldiers asked John the Baptist what fruits of their repentance they should show, John replied that they should function properly and morally in their professions.

The Samaritan woman brought others to Christ. Nothing specific is mentioned regarding the man from Corinth. David repented but remained married to Bathsheba, who became the mother of Solomon, the forerunner of the Prince of Peace. Paul tells the Ephesians that they who have come to know Christ should put off their old self, and put on the new self. They should put off falsehood and speak truthfully, whoever ‘has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need’ (Ephesians 4:28).

The term ‘fruit’ implies willingness and a degree of spontaneity. Fruit is produced without legal compulsion. The Formula of Concord quotes from Luther’s preface to his commentary on Romans: “Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us and regenerates us of God, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind, and all powers, and brings with it [confers] the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing. Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, it has wrought them, and is always engaged in doing them... And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders joyful, fearless, and cheerful towards God and all creatures, which [joy and cheerfulness] the Holy Ghost works through faith; and on account of this, man becomes ready and cheerful, without coercion, to do good to every one, to serve every one, and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace on him, so that it is impossible to separate works from faith” (*Triglotta*, Formula of Concord, IV, p. 941). Hence we find that Scripture has not set

up a code book that specifies the exact form which fruits of repentance must take in the case of every sin. But broad principles can be recognized.

Fruit of repentance is to desist from the sin for which one repents.

Fruit of repentance is to restore, if possible, what sin has ruined.

“Fruit of repentance is to amend one’s sinful life, to replace evil with good.

“Fruit of repentance is to do all to the glory of God, whether we eat or drink, or work or play” (Schuetze & Matzke, 1988, pp. 237-238).

We remember that because of our weak faith and our Old Adam we often need directives regarding the fruits of repentance. We are not perfect Christians.

A note is important here about borrowing from the secular world in Law/Gospel pastoral counseling. Communication skills, called “microskills” by Allen Ivey, should be a part of every pastoral counselor’s library of skills. They can be used in presenting either Law and Gospel and in every phase of the repentance model. These microskills include the basic skills of culturally and individually appropriate eye contact, body language, vocal qualities, and verbal tracking. They include the appropriate use of open and closed questions; the critical observation of the counselee’s nonverbal behavior, verbal behavior, and discrepancies, conflicts and incongruities in logic; encouraging, paraphrasing, and summarization; and reflection of feeling. These basic microskills include confrontation and developmental assessment, focusing on a certain area of the member’s words, and reflection of meaning. More advanced microskills include influencing skills and strategies such as directives, logical consequences, interpretation, the use of self-disclosure by the pastor, advice, information, explanation, instruction, feedback, and an influencing summary (Ivey, 1988). (*Intentional Interviewing and Counseling*, is the name of Allen C. Ivey’s book. It is an excellent self-help and self-teaching tool. It may be obtained through the Seminary Bookstore.)

The integration of various theories of counseling such as Rational/Emotive Therapy, popularized by Albert Ellis in the secular field and adapted by William Backus in the Christian counseling field; Family Therapy, popularized by Murray Bowen and others and adapted and noted by Schuetze and Matzke in *The Counseling Shepherd*; and Solution-Focused Therapy, which is one of the brief therapies and was developed in Milwaukee by Kim Sue Berg, Eve Lipchek, Elam Nunnally, and others and has been popularized by Michele Weiner Davis’s book, *Divorce Busting*, should be noted as theories of Law, rather than solutions of Gospel. These theories would be especially useful in the areas of the Repentance Model where the Law is being proclaimed: Specific Law is Spoken and Heard, Fruits of Repentance are discussed and encouraged. Rational/Emotive or Cognitive skills would be useful in personal counseling. Family Therapy skills are useful for instructing in family relationships and for helps in building and rebuilding them. The skills of Solution Focused Therapy are especially helpful because they are designed to be brief, practical, and to stress forgiveness (not dwelling on the past but on the present and the future,) to find solutions to relationship and personal problems. Blaming patterns and justifying arguments are noted as not being very helpful and the counselor quickly tries to get the counselee to concentrate upon solutions to what is troubling him/her. It fits in very well with this section of the Repentance Model which examines fruits of repentance.

G. The Joy of Christian Living Is Experienced

Ps. 32:11 “Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!”

Here we come back full circle to an understanding that Jesus died for all and that God loves and forgives us because of Jesus – Objective Justification.

Ps. 32:1-2 “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sins the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.”

This is the joy of our Christian living.

II Corinthians 5:4 “Christ’s love compels us.”

Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Lamentations 3:22-23 “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Psalms 73:25 “Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, I desire nothing on earth.”

Psalms 16:5-11 “Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Isaiah 25:9 “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him, let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”

Romans 14:17 “For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Galatians 5:22 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit.”

Objective Justification is the continuing basis for our joyful Christian living. It is the reason for our desire to serve our Lord with a repentant and changed life of good works. “The love of Christ compels us. Directives and suggestions for our Christian life are found in the descriptions of the apostles and the early Christians in the Book of Acts. I Peter 5:1ff is an example of these descriptions and directives.

What some people call Christian self-esteem is really the joy of Christian living. Our confidence comes from the love of God for each one of us in Christ Jesus. Our trust that we are children of God, redeemed by Christ Jesus gives us confidence and joy. We know who we are. We are unique and special to our God of love. He sent his Son to be our Savior. We are bought with the price of his blood. We are his own now and forever. Therefore, we joyfully desire to serve our God according to our New Man.

We daily repent, for we daily sin much. We have the confidence of God’s love and forgiveness. God’s Law and Gospel applies to us each day of our lives. God’s Law has made us wasted bones. God’s Gospel leads us to rejoice in the Lord.

II. Christian Counseling

The vocation of Christian Counselor barely existed 25 years ago. November of 1992 saw 2,300 Christian mental health professionals gathered for a convention in Atlanta, Georgia. The Christian counseling movement has especially flowered among evangelicals. A May 17, 1993, *Christianity Today* article entitled, "The Therapeutic Revolution: How Christian Counseling Is Changing the Church," notes that a 1991 *Christianity Today* poll of evangelicals showed that 33 percent of those polled sought professional help from Christian counselors versus only ten percent who went to their pastor for help (p. 25).

Some warnings were sounded at Atlanta '92. "James Dobson said, 'If I had to boil everything I have to say to you into one thing, it would be to be followers of Jesus Christ first, and mental-health professionals second. And keep it in that order.' Chuck Swindoll warned, 'There's a lot of schlock stuff being passed off as Christian counseling by a lot of schlocky people.' Gary Collins, Atlanta '92's national coordinator, warned of two dangers in his keynote speech: 'Number one, that we will abandon the church. And the second danger is that our field will take over the church'" (Stafford, 1993, p. 25).

There are different kinds of Christian counselors. There are Christian counselors who are Christians who happen to be doing secular counseling. Some Bible passages and a veneer of Christian morality is a part of their offering. There are Christian counselors who rightly understand Law and Gospel and strive to bring people to repentance in counseling. Some of these are pastors who are doing much better counseling than they give themselves credit for doing. There are Christian counselors who define themselves as "spiritual people" who are looking for clients that they can serve in Christian congregations and Jewish synagogues and any other type of spiritual gathering place. Usually they will contact you to tell you about their "spiritualness" and invite you to refer members to them. There are Christian counseling agencies that will only serve members of their own denomination. There are Christian counseling agencies that have a denominational name in front of there but that will have non-denominational and even non-Christian therapists and an open door client policy. The majority of what are called Christian counselors today are associated by denominational membership or in spirit with evangelical theology. Most of what is written in the field of Christian counseling is colored by evangelical theology.

This last point is perhaps the key point that I want to make. Most writers in the field of Christian Counseling are from the reformed tradition and most are evangelical. The strong evangelical backlash against all things humanistic and scientific and secular, motivated perhaps by their desire to eventually produce a theocracy in America or in preparation for the millennium, makes the thought of Christian counseling a necessity for the evangelical. Thousands of counselors, most of them trained in secular counseling and in psychology are available to meet the felt need for Christian counselors. It should be noted that state licensing requirements demand certification of counselors and that only a few seminaries (Fuller being one of them) are accredited to train someone who can call himself or herself a counselor and qualify for insurance payments.

As noted above, my study has not been complete in this area. However, a quick reading of and perusal of various authors caused the following doctrines of Scripture to be red flagged as areas of concern. There are probably many more.

The first is the doctrine of Scripture, itself. Curt Lyon offers 25 pages of examination of authors in the Christian counseling field in his 257 page master's thesis entitled: *The Holy Scriptures As Source And Norm For Doctrine And Practice In Pastoral Counseling and Psychology*. After this lengthy study he gives his definition regarding the authority of Scripture as viewed by the majority of the evangelical Christian counseling writers: "Scripture is a useful tool that can be used in different ways to help people improve their emotional and physical condition and their personal and human relationships" (Lyon, 1987, p. 160). Lyon adds,

This definition falls far short of the ones we have used to express our own convictions about Scripture as our source and norm. The definition purposely conveys the impression that Scripture is not nearly as important to modern writers in the area of pastoral counseling and psychology as it is to the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. We cannot say that Scripture

has no place among them. It does. That position is not the same authoritative position we would give Scripture. The authority and value of Scripture changes from writer to writer. The importance of law and gospel, sin and grace varies from unimportant to very important. Generally speaking, none of the writers in this area of pastoral work convey the same convictions about Scripture as source and norm that we hold in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Our definition of Scripture as source and norm among modern writers is intended to express our disappointment” (Lyon, 1987, p. 160).

We would agree. Reason is the basis for their Reformed and Arminian theology and reason is also placed above Scripture in their pastoral theology and psychological writings – Reason/Scripture and not Scripture/Reason.

The Christian counseling movement has no established leader. It has no denominational government. It has no doctrinal discipline. It often appears to be theological anarchy. It often is. This anarchy makes it very difficult to characterize the movement in a general way.

Several Christian counseling writers have a misunderstanding about what the soul is and in what the image of God consists. The soul is thought of as being mortal and unable to exist without the body. (Myers, D. G., 1991, in Malony, (Ed.), 1991, p. 424). The soul is thought of as being the mind of man (the lower soul) and the spirit of man (the upper soul) (Reese, R. & Minirth, F., 1993, p. 30). (These two authors do feel that the soul is immortal).

For some of these writers, the image of God is not the righteousness and true holiness mentioned in the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:23-24), but the rational mind with which God created man and which makes man different from the animals. Working with this non-Scriptural definition it is understandable why these same writers do not feel that man lost the image of God in the fall into sin.

For most of these writers, original sin is non-existent, or it is a genetic deficiency. It is definitely not an *accidens* that is a total depravity as the Formula of Concord defines it in Article I. Without a Scriptural understanding of the doctrine of original sin, the entire doctrine of sin and the doctrine of free will are askew in their theology and practice.

Conversion is also corrupted since synergism is alive and well in evangelical theology. Justification and sanctification become mixed. Justification becomes ethical rather than forensic. Justification becomes a process following infused grace that, combined with good works, will keep a person on the road to salvation or make works necessary for salvation.

This all affects repentance and the power of the Law and Gospel as God’s tools in effecting repentance. Prayer is thought of as a means of grace. A discussion of repentance is almost non-existent in most of the Christian counseling books.

When not done from a Law/Gospel, repentance base, Christian counseling may encourage a person to so strongly look within himself/herself that he/she may lose sight of Christ. So much of psychology is a directive to have the client study self and improve self. This has become a strong part of Christian counseling also. We have only to think about Robert Schuller and his *Peace of Mind Through Possibility Thinking* here.

Jay Adams ignores and decries the psychological, while using and promoting psychological techniques throughout his books. *Competent to Counsel*, Adams’s most famous book, was written in 1970, at a time when Freud’s theories and some of the more radical of the psychotherapies were still very popular. Some of his points directly referred to Freud and others and may not be as applicable today. But Adams ignores the fact that much of mental illness has physical causes as well as spiritual and emotional causes. Adams goes too far in his statements rejecting psychology. We are not Christian Scientists in the mental health field.

Most Christian counseling authors make no mention and therefore no application of the doctrine of Objective Justification, losing the greatest tool for comforting the depressed in the Scriptures. Few Christian counseling authors mention repentance.

suicidal ideation. You could understand this correctly. Or, you could take what he says as being very synergistic and even semi-Pelagian.

2. For those who are already believers, Habermas feels that some psychological methods can help people find ways to achieve reconciliation of interpersonal differences and victory over doubt. I do believe that family therapy and solution-focused therapy have a lot to offer here. Medication that helps a person overcome the physical causes of depression and other mental illnesses certainly applies to this section of methodological strengths for psychological methods.

Habermas argues for an integrative approach to counseling that stresses Biblical principles above the psychological. He is critical of the arguments of the Bobgans in several major areas (Habermas, 1993, pp. 33-35).

1. The critics fail to differentiate between doctrine and methods.
 2. Their critiques of others are not applied to their own positions as rigorously.
 3. Many of them use the same methods that they critique.
 4. Not all common sense methods used by psychological counselors must be labeled as being non-Christian.
 5. Scriptural errors in some parts of psychology do not necessarily invalidate all psychological methods.
- We quote from a part of Habermas' summary in his article. We do not totally accept his whole summary. We have appended his article to this paper.

Some contemporary psychological doctrine differs with Scripture at a number of crucial points, especially on the reality of sin and on our inability to attain ultimate answers by human power. On the other hand, some methods are consistent with both the biblical data and psychological theory. Many people on both sides of the debate might agree with these conclusions, but the day-to-day practices of some counselors and the books written by a few critics often give the overall impression that we should ignore or battle one another.

We need to be thoroughly biblical in our counseling methodology, knowledgeable about biblical theory and practice, and able to use Scripture as the supreme authority. We need to build our worldviews on biblical foundations, and use psychologically-articulated methods and theories that are consistent with sound doctrine (Habermas, 1993, p. 35).

Some Christian counselors seem to be saying: "This is what God says is wrong. This is what God says is right. Now, go home and fix it by doing this and doing that!" There is no Gospel in their method. As expected by those so strongly influenced by evangelicalism, there are many who speak the Law and call it Gospel and who speak the Gospel and call it Law. There is a lot of moralizing done in the name of Christian counseling. Yet, "doing this and doing that," can be an expression of law that is helpful in guiding Christian living for the penitent. When the penitent couple is before you and asks: "Pastor, we do want to get along and make our marriage work. We just can't seem to break the past patterns of talk and action that have been sinful. We are so sorry for them, but we don't know how to replace them. Can you help us?" We can point them to Genesis Two. We can use the marriages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples of what not to do and what to do. We can point to Ephesians Five. We can also direct them to use some of the techniques of communication outlined in Weiner-Davis's *Divorce Busting* and Ivey's *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling*, and Schuetze & Matzke's *The Counseling Shepherd*, and Curt Lyon's *Counseling At The Cross*. So much of what these authors (just cited) write about is just plain common sense. Other parts of it are the fruits of observing and working with people as they relate to each other. In the case of the latter two books the Law/Gospel presentations are excellent and the counseling techniques taken from secular psychology are helpful and not in conflict with Scripture.

As pastors we will always be integrationists who are strong on the Scriptural, Law/Gospel, Repentance side of the continuum. But we will not be afraid to direct our troubled members to see their family doctor if we

feel that they are depressed. More than likely there may be a physical problem that needs to be addressed along with the spiritual problems that have afflicted them.

When we think about referring our members to Christian counselors we will need to have critically examined these counselors beforehand, if we plan to refer. We will want to continue to be working with our members. We will probably not be able to take for granted that the counseling that they are receiving by a Christian counselor will be Law/Gospel oriented.

Despite the concerns we have presented about Christian counseling, it should be noted again that the field is filled with a multitude of practitioners and writers with different viewpoints and different ways of integrating psychology and Scripture. There are some good Christian counselors who share our view of Scripture and doctrine. Obviously, the word Christian or Biblical before the word counselor in the title does little to identify what a counselor actually believes and how he/she practices. It would be a wonderful help to our pastors if a WELS program of certification for Christian counselors could be developed. I envision that preparation for certification would involve classroom training and supervised field training and would need to be developed and monitored by the COP. Only state-certified therapists would be eligible for COP certification. Even a network of counselors in each district of the Synod would be helpful to answer questions and to help pastors refer members.

At the present time we may fear to refer to a Christian counselor. But, he/she may be better than an atheistic, actively anti-Christian secular counselor. Yet, sometimes a secular counselor who values the integrity of his/her client's faith may be a better choice than a Christian counselor who pushes his/her evangelicalism upon your member. This will especially be true if you can be an active part of the counseling team.

The important thing is to critically interview no matter who the counselor is or claims to be. Get to know the counselor. Let the counselor grow to trust you. Together, with a good family doctor who knows something about mental illness, you will make a good team to serve your member well.

III. Observations on Authors and Books

Several caveats are necessary before we begin.

1. Many of these books have not been read by me.
2. Most have only been personally perused.
3. My opinions are very subjective.
4. We will outline this section in the following way:
 - a. Books I have read and personally recommend – rationale.
 - b. Books I would like to read in somewhat of a priority order – rationale.

a. Books I have read and personally recommend – rationale.

The Bible – read it with the view of seeing what it has to say about human personality and human existence and God's solutions. Read it to understand Law and Gospel as God would have Law and Gospel be applied to all of his people. Always the best source.

Schuetze & Habeck (1974). *The Shepherd Under Christ*. NPH.

Schuetze & Matzke (1988). *The Counseling Shepherd*. NPH. Read and reread these two WELS classics to better understand church discipline, marriage, divorce, remarriage, and family relationships. These are excellent sources.

Lyon (1991). *Counseling at the Cross*, A faithful application of Law and Gospel. His “babysteps” approach is especially helpful. His attitude towards professional counselors is enlightening. His stress on Objective Justification is refreshing in the area of Christian counseling. Almost all Christian counseling writers ignore this key doctrine.

Bondow & Kelm (1993). *Through the Looking Glass and Back: Your Passport To Identity*, NPH. An examination of self-image that includes Law and Gospel and Repentance. Excellent. An interesting, but different approach.

Lyon and Juern (1993). *Pressed Down, But Not Forgotten - Depression*, NPH. This is a well-rounded Lutheran approach and discussion of the most common mental illness. It is highly recommended and is well-written. Again, the mention of Objective Justification is appreciated, although it is not as strong as in Lyon’s previous book.

Ivey, Allen E. (1988). *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing. This is an excellent self-teaching tool for learning basic communication skills. Note my previous description on page 30 of this text. This is a secular text. The skills are basic to every bit of pastoral counseling. This book should be read by every pastor. It is required reading for current seminary students.

Weiner-Davis, Michele (1992). *Divorce Busting*. New York: A Fireside Book. This is one of the few self-help books that I would recommend. It applies a brief therapy called Solution Focused Therapy to marriage relationships. This is a secular book. The skills suggested are practical and workable for a pastor’s schedule. They fit well into the Repentance Model in the area of the Fruits of Repentance because Solution Focused Therapy concentrates on communication skills to stop the blaming patterns that develop in troubled marriages and begin searching for and practicing solutions in the area of communication skills. One of the remarkable things about this book is its stress upon forgiveness. Once you have forgiven your spouse, you concentrate upon the present and the future and not upon the past. (Of course, forgiveness is described and promoted from a purely secular point of view.) I highly recommend this as a skills text. It will be required reading for seminary students this spring.

Minirth, Meier, & Ratcliff (1992). *Bruised and Broken*. Grand Rapids: Baker. This book is not recommended for its theological insights. Minirth and Meier are known to belong to the “tack a few Scripture passages on the end of psychology” school of Christian counseling. It is recommended for the simple way the authors present and describe mental health illness. Although not all illnesses are covered, it is easy to read and understand.

Sue & Sue (1990). *Counseling The Culturally Different*. New York: John Wiley and Sons. A classic in the field of cross-cultural counseling. Although somewhat deep and repetitive, the insights presented in this book will be helpful. It is totally secular and humanistic in its approach. If I had read something better, I would recommend it. This area of our pastoral training has been grossly neglected. This is the best I have to offer at this time. But, we ought to have read something authoritative in this area to help us communicate to people of all ethnic and cultural orientations.

b. Books I would like to read in somewhat of a priority order – rationale

Walker, Clarence (1992). *Biblical Counseling With African Americans: Taking a Ride in the Ethiopian’s Chariot*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. This is my first choice because of the topic, not because of the quality of the book. I have not read it. I feel that we need to do better in our ministry to people of differing ethnicity and culture. We ought to be reading in this area.

Koehler, Walter J. (1982). *Counseling and Confession*. St. Louis: Concordia. High on the list because of its publisher. It may turn out to be lower on the list after reading it. The title is intriguing.

Books by Larry Crabb. He is one of the most Scriptural of the integrationists. I would probably begin with *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling*. (1975). Zondervan, and follow with *Effective Biblical Counseling*. (1977). Zondervan. Crabb is a very popular writer. I have appreciated his concept entitled: “Spoiling the Egyptians.” He is a prolific writer.

Books by William Backus. I would begin with *Telling the Truth to Troubled People* (1985). Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers. This book describes mental health disorders as *Bruised and Broken*, did above. Backus uses the Rational/Emotive Method of secular theology and tries to integrate it with Christianity. He wants us to lead people to tell themselves the truth and to stop believing the lies they tell themselves about themselves. This book is valuable because of the descriptions and the suggestions for counseling which it contains for various types of mental illnesses. Backus is another prolific writer. Books by Gary Collins. Collins is a recognized leader in the field of Christian counseling because of his involvement with organizing Atlanta '92 and '93. He is also the organizer and founder of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the publisher of the magazine, "Christian Counseling Today." I would begin with his basic text: *Christian Counseling*. (1980), Waco: Word Inc.

Books by Jay Adams. I would probably begin with *Competent to Counsel*. (1970), Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Adams is a very prolific writer. He is anti-psychology in perspective, but uses a lot of psychological techniques.

Reese & Minirth (1993). *Growing Into Wholeness*. Chicago: Moody. The Minirth-Meier clinics have produced some prolific writers. A textbook from this company is Meier, Minirth, Wichern, and Ratcliff (1991). *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling: A Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker. A writer I have heard good rumors about from their camp is Don Allender.

A family of authors I have not perused is Martin and Deidre Bobgan. They should probably be higher on the list to give some balance to all the integrationalists. One of their book titles is *Psychoheresy*.

Benner, David G. (1992). *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-term Structure Model*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Benner is the editor of the *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology*. *Strategic Pastoral Counseling* intrigues me because it provides an outline of a five session case study as a model and help for pastoral counseling.

I could go on and on with authors and titles. The collection at the Seminary Library is rather slim in the area of modern Christian counseling authors. We are working at upgrading it. But you might begin by examining some books at the library before you purchase them.

Two unpublished books that I need to read are Lyon, *The Holy Scriptures as Source and Norm for Doctrine and Practice in Pastoral Counseling and Psychology* and Westendorf, Rolfe, *Law, Gospel and Self-Esteem*.

A final caveat. I may thoroughly disagree with my own recommendations once I have read some of these books. I would appreciate your input on them if you have read them or when you read them. Thank you.

RESOURCES

Brug, J. (1989). *Psalms*, Vol. 1. In R. C. Ehlke & J. Jeske (Eds.). *The People's Bible*. Milwaukee: Northwestern.

Habermas, G. R., "A house divided?" in *Christian Counseling Today*. (October, 1993) pp. 32-35.

Ivey, A. E. (1988). *Intentional interviewing and counseling*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.

Lyon, H. C. (1991). *Counseling at the cross: Using the power of the Gospel in Christian counseling*. Milwaukee: Northwestern.

Lyon, H. C. (1987). *Holy Scriptures as source and norm for doctrine and practice in pastoral counseling and psychology*. Unpublished master's thesis. Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Myers, D. G. (1991). The mystery of the ordinary. In H. N. Malony, *Psychology of religion*. (pp. 405-432). Grand Rapids: Baker.

Reese, R. & Minirth, F. (1993). *Growing into wholeness*. Chicago: Moody.

Schuetze, A. & Matzke, F. (1988). *The counseling shepherd*. Milwaukee: Northwestern.

Stafford, T. "The therapeutic revolution." In *Christianity today*. (1993, May 17). pp. 25-32.

Triglotta. (1921). St. Louis: Concordia.