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Issues in Integration: A

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Issues in Integration: A

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Paper presented at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies Western Region Annual Meetings, Portland, OR, June 1993.
Discussions of Christian counseling have identified several distinct definitions for what makes counseling Christian. Worthington (1986) suggests that the two major emphases of definitions revolve around context and content. By contextual definitions, counseling is Christian when it occurs in Christian and religious settings—churches, parachurch organizations, and the like. Worthington, Dupont, Berry and Duncan (1988) suggest that Christian counseling techniques (content) can be grouped into three categories. The first of these emphasizes the goal of counseling as conversion and discipleship or spiritual growth. In terms of content, Worthington, et al. distinguish two emphases; the first includes techniques derived from Scripture and the spiritual guidance literature; the second involves focus on Christian topics or issues as an emphasis of therapy or counseling.

Crabb (1978) and Kirwan (1984) are examples of persons who emphasize the goals as what is distinctive about Christian counseling.

An alternative proposed by Bufford (1992) is that what makes counseling or psychotherapy Christian is that it or the agents providing it are consecrated or set apart for the purpose of service to God and fellow man; this is a motivational explanation. This goal surely can include evangelism and discipleship, but it much broader; it includes service, which may not have the outcomes of evangelism or discipleship either as an immediate or long term goal.

Collins (1988) suggests that what makes Christian counseling includes unique assumptions, goals, techniques, and counselor characteristics. Among the unique assumptions are those of a Christian worldview; this implies that the therapist him/herself is Christian, though this important emphasis is more often assumed than stated explicitly.
Powlison (1992) suggests that there is no place for psychology in Christian counseling. According to Powlison, “the interpretive categories that psychologists use are highly distorted... They inevitably end up feeding covert of overt idolatries (Powlison, 1992; p.212).

Thus Powlison is both for Christian counseling and against Christian psychology; this places him within the Christian anti-psychology movement.
Table 1

Defining Christian Counseling

**Context**

*Church setting*

*Parachurch setting*

**Content/Interventions** (Means):

*Techniques* derived from

  - Scripture (Theology)
  - Spiritual guidance
  - Spiritual formation
  - Church traditions/practices

*Techniques* avoided if contrary to Scripture

*Issues/topics* of focus involve Christian faith

**Motivation/Goals**

  - Goal: Conversion, Discipleship/Spiritual Formation
  - Goal: Service to God, fellow persons (=consecrated counseling)

**Counselor characteristics**

*Assumptions/worldview*

*(Personal relationship with God)*

*Ecclesiastical role* (i.e., pastors)
Table 2

A Brief and Selective History of Modern Psychology and its Integration with Christian Faith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Wundt’s lab; beginning of modern psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Boulder Conference sets guidelines for clinical psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Tournier published <em>The meaning of persons</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Fuller Graduate School of Psychology founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Jay Adams published <em>Competent to counsel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td><em>Journal of Psychology and Theology</em> started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>CAPS Bulletin (now <em>Journal of Psychology and Christianity</em>) founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>APA Division 36 Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Western Baptist Clinical Psychology program founded (now GDCP at GFU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>APA approved Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td><em>Journal of Psychology and Christianity</em> begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>First International Congress on Christian Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Rech Conference on Graduate Training in Christian Psychology (Jones, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Second International Congress on Christian Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Wheaton Doctor of Clinical Psychology program begun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: dates mostly reflect conservative Christian views and events; adapted from Bufford, 1992.
Table 3
Integration Directions for the 90’s

1. Integration theory development
2. Continued polarization among Christian approaches
3. Lay counseling development
4. Mental health prevention in the church
5. Measurement of Religious constructs
6. Increased influence of psychology of religion
7. Process studies of Christian counseling
8. Outcome studies of Christian counseling
9. Further study of religion and health
10. Empirical study of mental health and demonic influence
Table 4

Themes in Christian Psychology and Counseling

1. Christian anti-psychology movement
2. Biblical counseling movement
3. Christian lay counseling
4. Pastoral counseling/psychology
5. Missionary psychology
6. Psychological measurement of Christian constructs
7. Christian marriage and family education/counseling
8. Christian recovery movement
9. Professional psychotherapy/counseling for Christians
10. Professional psychotherapy/counseling with Christian values
Table 5

Spiritual Disciplines

1. Concrete meditation  
2. Abstract Meditation  
3. Intercessory Prayer  
4. Contemplative Prayer  
5. Listening Prayer  
6. Praying in the Spirit  
7. Scripture: Counselor Pro-Active  
8. Scripture: Client Pro-Active  
9. Confession/repentance  
10. Worship  
11. Forgiveness  
12. Abstinence/fasting  
13. Deliverance  
14. Solitude/Silence  
15. Discernment  
16. Journal keeping  
17. Obedience  
18. Simplicity  
19. Spiritual History  
20. Healing  
21. Celebration  
22. Service  
23. Rest  
24. Fellowship

References


