



**SOCIAL WORK AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING: CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT**

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# Social Work and Biblical Counseling: Curriculum Development 2015 NACSW Conference Grand Rapids, MI

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# Biblical Counseling Course in Social Work Education

- ▶ Does our Christian faith inform our practice?
- ▶ Are there unique identifiable Christian practice interventions that must be rooted in our understanding of the Scriptures and experience of God that can be located in a social work curriculum?
- ▶ Is Christian social work legitimate or do we still carry the stigma of being 'second class'?
- ▶ Are we prepared to build a unique knowledge base using Christian values and skills?

# Student Learning Outcomes

- ▶ Comprehend the basic theoretical approaches to biblical counseling.
- ▶ Apply the concepts of biblical counseling to his/her own life.
- ▶ Demonstrate competence in biblical counseling by working with a spiritual companion.
- ▶ Document personal growth in understanding biblical counseling in a journal.
- ▶ Further competence, growth and healing through the use of experiential exercises.

# Social Work Practice Applications

- ▶ Social workers in private practice with a Christian focus
- ▶ Social workers in private practice without a Christian focus but whose clients are Christian and want prayer or other types of Christian interventions.
- ▶ Public settings where Christians accessing services there request prayer or other interventions compatible with their belief system.
- ▶ Social work is of essence a form of ministry that fulfills Jesus' commands to love (Matthew 22:34-40) and to serve (Matthew 25:31-46).

# Foundations of Biblical Counseling

- ▶ Teaching biblical counseling is more than teaching techniques. It implies that:
  - ▶ Jesus is at the center of the healing experience
  - ▶ The person's needs get met through an encounter with Christ
- ▶ Relational/community focus
  - ▶ Wounding occurred in community.
  - ▶ Healing best occurs in community.
- ▶ Any concept, technique, or skill used must be compatible with biblical principles

# The Upward Journey

- ▶ The social worker's own journey with God will be reflected in his/her work with the client.
- ▶ Informational paradigms of ministry will give way to the following transformational paradigms:
  - ▶ Learning To Knowing
  - ▶ Knowledge To Change
  - ▶ Principles To Presence
  - ▶ Periods of Time To Moments in Time
  - ▶ Reading Scripture to Experiencing Scripture
  - ▶ Prayer to Communion
  - ▶ Working to Waiting

# The Inward Journey

- ▶ The social worker's look at his/her own pain.
- ▶ Henri Nouwen's book *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* challenges social workers to minister from a place of embracing our own brokenness rather than one of distance and objectivity.
- ▶ The social worker is called to be in touch with her own wounds so as to identify with the suffering of others, and point them to the Eternal Wounded Healer.
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 1:3,4 instructs us that the source of help is Christ's suffering, moving into the social worker's place of pain so that comfort can overflow through the caregiver to other people.

# The Outward Journey

- ▶ Disconnection: “a condition of existence where the deepest part of who we are is vibrantly attached to no one, where we are profoundly unknown and therefore experience neither the thrill of being believed in nor the joy of loving or being loved.” Larry Crabb
- ▶ Jesus calls his followers into community possessing the following characteristics:
  - ▶ Covenant connection
  - ▶ Grace
  - ▶ Empowerment
  - ▶ Intimacy

# Theoretical Foundations of Biblical Counseling

- ▶ The practice would be informed by the biblical theoretical framework of those developing the system. Each professor developing coursework must examine his/her comfort and expertise with theories of biblical counseling such as those below:
  - ▶ Spiritual warfare (Neil Anderson),
  - ▶ Nouthetic (Jay Adams),
  - ▶ Relational (Larry Crabb, Dan Allender, Nancy Groom),
  - ▶ Emotional healing (David Seamonds, Terry Wardle, Paul Coneff), etc.
  - ▶ Neuroscience (Curt Thompson)

# Christian Applications of Psychological Theories

- ▶ Psychoanalytic Theory
- ▶ Narrative Theory
- ▶ Cognitive Behavioral Theory
- ▶ Attachment Theory
- ▶ Learning Theory
- ▶ Systems Theory
- ▶ Crisis Intervention Theory
- ▶ Neuroscientific Advances
- ▶ And many more

# Elements of Christian Counseling

- ▶ The Use of Story
- ▶ Prayer as an Intervention
  - ▶ Inner Healing
  - ▶ Confession and Repentance
    - ▶ Personal Sin
    - ▶ Generational Sin
    - ▶ Corporate Sin
  - ▶ False Beliefs
  - ▶ Patterns and Structures
- ▶ The Use of Scripture
- ▶ Spiritual Warfare

# Sample Syllabus



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