

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

### I. TRENDS IN THE PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY

**For several decades the profession and science of psychology have been moving away from the classical methodologies popular through the 1950s and '60s.** The three main methodologies are Freudianism (psycho-analysis), Skinnerism (behaviorism), and Rogerianism (self-esteem approach).

**Vestiges of these methodologies underlie the popular versions of psychology marketed to the public in books, broadcasts, and lay seminars** (J. Henry, Psychology, Education, the Church, and the Misuse of Science: The Evolutionary Legacy of Six Men, Parts 1 and 2, <creation concepts.org>, 2004), but professional psychology in the last thirty years has positioned itself as a truly experimental science. **Humanistic psychologists realize that the classical methodologies have a high recidivism rate, so in the attempt to understand the mind, they are turning to scientific research and away from anecdotal analysis.**

The Biblicist discerns that laboratory research will not yield the understanding the humanist seeks, but at the same time this **research has been confirming exciting creationistic and biblical truths that buttress the case for a genuine Christian psychology.** For example, new research has confirmed again and again that man is not conditionable like an animal if he is strong in spirit. Thus rather than confirming the presuppositions of humanism, the new research is revealing what the Bible has always taught. The Biblicist can embrace this research. It is his friend.

In academic settings, the move toward scientific laboratory research in psychology is manifested in two major ways: (1) professional psychology programs now require laboratory work in a substantial number of psychology courses: and (2) courses in social work are nearly absent, and counseling courses are diminished significantly, in most modern professional psychology curricula.

**Indeed, the push for psychology courses to be rigorously research-based is so strong that a student's decision to enroll in the typical introductory non-lab-based psychology course is seen as indicating a "maladaptive scholastic style -- possibly antiscientific mindedness"** (C. Nathanson et al., 2004, The challenge to cumulative learning: do introductory courses actually benefit advanced students?, *Teaching of Psychology*, 31(1):5-9, p. 5).

**To avoid encouraging "antiscientific mindedness" among psychology students, Nathanson et al. recommend "advertising psychology courses more properly as science-oriented to avoid misleading potential students" (p. 5).** The profession of psychology is turning away from "[p]sychiatric labels that lack adequate research support ... such as codependency," and other similar qualitative terms (Mission statement, 2005, The Commission for Scientific Mental Health Practice, P.O. Box 741, Amherst, NY 14226).

**Accompanying the shift toward greater rigor in the psychology profession is an increased desire for advanced academic training by psychology majors.** One study revealed that "a majority of psychology majors - including freshman - voice interest in graduate school." However, "majors often appear poorly informed about specific qualifications for graduate school."

As a result, **"most majors obtain employment with a baccalaureate, and they express relative dissatisfaction with those jobs"** (D.W. Rajecki and S.L. Anderson, 2004, Career pathway information in introductory psychology textbooks, *Teaching of Psychology*, 31(2):116-118, p. 116). Indeed, less than 5% of 1999 graduates with only a bachelor's degree in psychology are "employed in psychology or in a field related to psychology" (APA, 2003, Psychology: Careers for the Twenty-First Century, <www.apa.org/students/brochure/brochurenew.pdf>, p. 9).

Accordingly, **Rajecki and Anderson "recommend specific career pathway information for inclusion in beginning textbooks." Alternatively, such information should be included in the content of the General Psychology course itself, as well as in courses beyond.**

Not only does professional psychology view rigorous lab based courses as a necessity, but the research arena is also affected by this shift. **Research funding is increasingly shifting to projects that explore the action of pharmaceuticals on a molecular level.**

**APS President R.W. Levenson notes that several decades ago, research was geared toward "psychological measurement" of changes in emotions affected by various stimuli, but now attention has turned to understanding pharmaceutical and neurotransmitter mediation in real time in "cognition, development, perception, personality [and] social processes"** (R.W. Levenson, 2005, Basic research funding, *Journal of the American Psychological Society*, 18(2):37-39, p. 37).

Levinson's sentiments are not new. The journal *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* (Vol. 4 no. 2, Summer 1997, p. 91) observed, **"Since clinical experience consists of anecdotal impressions by practitioners, it is unavoidably a mixture of truths, half-truths, and falsehoods.** The scientific method is the only known way to distinguish these, and **it is both unscholarly and unethical** for psychologists who deal with other persons' health, careers, money, freedom, and even life itself **to pretend that clinical experience suffices and that quantitative research on diagnostic and therapeutic procedures is not needed."**

Accordingly, modern psychology programs are different from several decades ago. For example, most psychology programs no longer offer a "Clinical & Counseling" course, as shown in Table 1. Similarly, Abnormal Psychology used to be a standard required course, but now is an elective in many psychology programs (Table 1), because **the teaching of psychology has shifted to research oriented courses and topics such as neurophysiology (Appendix 1).**

**Clinical and Abnormal Psych Courses in Undergraduate Psychology Programs, 2006**  
(NO = not offered)

<u>School</u>	<u>Clinical &amp; Counseling</u>	<u>Abnormal</u>
USF	NO	PSY 4143/elective
UF	NO	PSY 3144/elective
FSU	NO	PSY 4143/elective
BJU	Ps502/Nouthetic	Ps 501 <sup>1</sup>
Faith Bapt	Nouthetic	NO <sup>2</sup>
Maranatha	NO	NO <sup>2</sup>
Northland	Nouthetic	NO <sup>2</sup>
PCC	NO	NO <sup>2</sup>
Pillsbury	NO	NO <sup>2</sup>
Cedarville	NO	PSYC 2640
Colorado Chr.	PSY412/el	PSY 302
Cornerstone	NO	PSY 353
Hope College	PSY410	NO
Regent	NO	Required
Southeastern	NO	PSYC 3003
Taylor U.	NO	PSY 300/elective
Wheaton	NO	PSYC 348/elect.

<sup>1</sup>Psych minor only

<sup>2</sup>No psych minor or major

## II. TRENDS IN GENERAL PSYCH INSTRUCTION

**The general psychology course is the foundation for the psychology curriculum, so it is particularly important that "best practice" be followed in this course.**

To be consistent with the trends documented in Section I, the general psychology course must (1) be presented as quantitatively scientific; (2) keep the possibility of graduate school and research before the students, and (3) ensure that students are aware of quantitative research-oriented career subfields in psychology.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) periodically performs extensive surveys of undergraduate and graduate psychology programs and professors throughout the U.S. to measure "the most common and most important topics and skills" in the field of psychology (ETS, 2005, Major Field Tests: Psychology, ETS, <www.ets.org/hea>, April 26).

**In effect, the ETS performs a huge web review to know what U.S. educational institutions are emphasizing in their psychology programs. The ranking of topics is in the form of the percentage of questions given to each topic on the Major Fields Test (MFT).**

In the years from 1994-2005, there were few changes in topic rankings (ETS, 2004, Major Field Test in Psychology: Test Specifications, ETS, Princeton, NJ). However, the changes that did occur were quite significant. Reflecting the shift, documented above, away from topics that have traditionally been qualitatively or (virtually) anecdotally based, **the weight given to more qualitative concepts of "memory" and**

**"thinking" has decreased by 16% (from 7% to 6%), whereas the more quantitative aspects of "memory" and "thinking" have retained their 1994 ranking. Further, "clinical and abnormal" topics have also decreased 16% (from 12% to 10%).**

Reflecting the shift toward quantitative methods and research, **the weight lost by more qualitative "memory" and "clinical and abnormal" topics has been picked up by "measurement and methodologies."** The increase in these topics was 33% (from 9% to 12%).

**Since the ETS topic categories reflect priorities and changes within the profession of psychology, the general psychology text utilization and class coverage should also reflect the ETS current priorities.** This is especially true since, according to Nathanson et al. (p. 5), the general psychology course is responsible for forming and shaping a student's attitude and future in the field of psychology. The student's attitude must be shaped to fit emerging patterns in the profession to guide the student into a successful and rewarding career in psychology. **The emerging professional patterns emphasize graduate-school- and research-oriented preparation. Topics emphasized in the general psychology course must also reflect these trends.**

As discussed in Section I, non-research emphases lead to career dissatisfaction, and in fact, **less than 5% of graduates with only a bachelor's degree in psychology are "employed in psychology or in a field related to psychology"** (APA, 2003, Psychology: Careers for the Twenty-First Century, <www.apa.org/students/brochure/ brochurenew.pdf>, p. 9). **According to David G. Myers, psychology is in the midst of a "neuroscience revolution" to which "today's psychological science is more attuned" than ever** (D.G. Myers, 2002, *Exploring Psychology*, Worth, New York, p. xiii). The general psychology course must reflect these trends.

## III. A WEB REVIEW OF THE TRENDS IN SECTION I

Consistent with the trends documented above, a web review of psychology curricula yields the following results obtainable from each school's on-line course catalogs:

**1. Typically, an increasing number of psychology courses for majors are research and lab-based** (e.g., UF, USF, FSU). UF states: **"Each of the areas of the [psychology] department offer laboratory courses** designed to acquaint [the student] with the methods and approach to research in a particular subfield of psychology. You must take one of these courses as part of the requirements for the [psychology] major." **Specific APS and APA subfields are presented in Section IV below.**

Among additional schools offering lab based psychology courses are the following smaller Christian colleges:  
**Hope College**, which has PSY 200, Research Methods, teaching basic principles of lab experimentation in

psychology. **Five additional research oriented directed study courses** offered at Hope College are listed in Section V.

Hope College has one of the strongest research-based psychology programs of any small private school. Incidentally, David G. Myers, author of the widely used gen psych text *Exploring Psychology* (Worth, New York, 2004), is a professor at Hope College.

Cedarville has PSYCH 4950, **Senior Research Project**, in which students "prepare an **independent research project ... and a publishable paper ...**"

2. **Practicum courses have become the exception** in most contemporary psychology curricula. This is documented below in Section V.

3. An increasing number of curricula is including the nouthetic methodology. This is discussed in Section VI.

#### IV. APA/APS PSYCHOLOGY CAREER SUBFIELDS

The APA and the APS have defined a set of psychological disciplines that reflects the current trends in psychological research and professional practice. The career subfields listed below are from "Psychology: Careers for the Twenty-First Century" (APA, 2003, pp. 4-6):

1. Cognitive and Perceptual Psychologists
2. Developmental Psychologists
3. Educational Psychologists
4. Engineering Psychologists
5. Experimental Psychologists
6. Forensic Psychologists
7. Health Psychologists
8. Industrial/Organizational Psychologists
9. Neuropsychologists
10. Quantitative Measurement Psychologists
11. Rehabilitation Psychologists
12. School Psychologists
13. Social Psychologists
14. Sports Psychologists

The APA list of career subfields also includes three items not listed above, namely, Clinical, Counseling, and Evolutionary Psychologists.

According to the APA, most doctoral and master's graduates in psychology do not have a career in these areas (*ibid.*, p. 8), and most psychology graduates with bachelor's degrees "find jobs in administrative support, public affairs, education, business, sales, service industries, health, the biological sciences, and computer programming," none of which involves clinical or counseling career pathways (p. 9).

Conservative Christian Colleges such as Clearwater Christian College in Clearwater, Florida, would find that the evolutionary paradigm runs counter to an emphasis on biblical, recent, fiat creation (Clearwater Christian College, Catalog, 2006-2007, p. 2, Goal #8), so the Evolutionary Psychologists career subfield is not taught at schools such as Clearwater Christian.

#### V. EXTENSIONS OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION ("INTERNSHIP") IN VARIOUS PROGRAMS

Three extensions of classroom instruction exist in psychology programs: (1) laboratory experimental work; (2) library research/literature review; and (3) APA subfield placement.

In Table 2 on the next page, NO means that the course is not offered. **Directed studies, practicums, and internships are almost always electives.** Most schools offering such options allow only one semester (3 or 4 credits) for that type of experience, as shown in Table 2. **As the trend toward research intensifies as documented above, the trend is away from mandatory practicums.**

#### VI. NOUTHETIC COUNSELING OFFERINGS IN VARIOUS PROGRAMS

Akamai University, a **secular** school, states that, "Unlike other [methodologies], **Nouthetic Counseling begins with two presuppositions: a) abnormal behavior is caused by sin, organic illness, or Satanic influence, and b) the Bible is God's authority for how we are to live**" John Williamson, 2004, Course description for Nouthetic Christian Counseling, Akamai University, <[www.Akamaiuniversity.us](http://www.Akamaiuniversity.us)>, December 15). See Appendix 2.

Akamai University offers Nouthetic Christian Counseling as REL 550 for 3 credits. Nouthetic Counseling is also offered at Bethany Divinity College as Cc-531 for 3 credits.

The nouthetic methodology is taught at other schools, according to Donn R. Arms, Executive Director of the Institute for Nouthetic Studies, in Greenville, S.C. (864-233-3297; [donnarms@nouthetic.org](mailto:donnarms@nouthetic.org)). Mr. Arms is a doctoral candidate at BJU, and states that the following schools are known to teach the nouthetic methodology:

1. Bob Jones University
2. Faith Baptist Bible College and Seminary
3. Master's College and Seminary
4. Northland Baptist Bible College
5. Shasta Bible College
6. Westminster Theological Seminary (California)
7. Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary
8. Central Baptist Theological Seminary
9. Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary
10. Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (SBC)
11. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBC)
12. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

**Conclusions.** Psychology programs nationwide are trending toward a stronger quantitative emphasis in the general psychology course, a greater preparation for psychology lab research on the graduate level, toward nouthetic counseling, and away from required Clinical and Counseling, Abnormal Psychology, and Practicum courses. **Some of these trends are more pronounced than others, but the move away from the older anecdotally-based methodologies is undeniable.**

Table 2. Elective Extensions of Classroom Instruction in Psychology Programs, 2006

School	Max Dir Study Credit	Max Prac Credit	Max Intern Credit	Comments
USF	3	NO	NO	In PSY 4913, Directed Study, "the student plans and Conducts an <b>individual research project</b> or program of directed readings under ... [faculty] supervision ..."
FSU	3, twice	NO	NO	PSY 4911-4914, Directed Individual Study, include <b>"lab research, field experience, library research, etc.,"</b> as a culmination of the psychology program.
UF	4	4	NO	PSY 4905, Individual Work in Psychology, is a directed study similar to USF PSY 4913, and FSU PSY 4911-4914. PSY 4949, Community Work in Psychology, is "psychology [research that] is done in clinics, community health programs, <b>the armed forces, industrial and corporate research units, etc.</b> " This course is done in a research context, and is listed in UF course information under "Research in Psychology": "The foundations of research skill should be established in the undergraduate years. Particularly if you anticipate going to graduate school in psychology or in other related professional areas, you should consider obtaining some first hand experience in research while an undergraduate."
Cedarville	NO	NO	9	PSYCH 4990, Psychology Internship
Colorado Christian Liberty	NO NO	NO 3	3 NO	PSY 450, Psychological Internship PSYC 499, Agency Placement Practicum, requires 125 hrs and a 10 page position paper. "The <b>practicum</b> is an experiential application of the <b>research</b> and theories from the previous psychology courses."
Hope	6	NO	4	There are five directed study type courses: College PSY 290, Supervised Study in Psychology, has lab experimentation and field placement options. PSY 390, Advanced Research, A "psychology <b>laboratory</b> course [providing] experience with an actual [laboratory] research program." PSY 395, Studies in Psychology, lectures in <b>experimental techniques</b> . PSY 490, Special Studies, "advance ... supervised projects" involving lab or library research. PSY 495, <b>Advanced Studies, experimental techniques</b> for mature students. PSY 496, Psychology Internship, "closely supervised practical experience in a professional setting."
South- Eastern	NO	NO	NO	Southeastern has a psych major requiring 36 hours in psych, but no field experience courses.
Taylor U.	4	4	NO	PSY 450 is Directed Research. PSY 393 is Practicum.
Wheaton	4	NO	4	There are two directed study-type courses. PSYC 495, Independent Study, involves "individual library or Experimental research." PSYC 499, Honors Thesis, is "an independent project requiring <b>original research</b> developed in a scholarly paper and culminating in an oral examination." The internship is PSYC 496, Internship.
BJU	NO	NO	NO	No psych major; only a psych minor
Faith Baptist	NO	NO	NO	No psych major or minor
Maranatha	NO	NO	NO	No psych major or minor
Northland	NO	NO	NO	No psych major or minor
PCC	NO	NO	NO	No psych major or minor
Pillsbury	NO	NO	NO	No psych major or minor

**NEUROPHYSIOLOGY IN AN ERA OF CHANGE**

Modern psychology has been moving away from a reliance on Freudianism, Skinnerianism, and other flawed ideologies which characterized psychological therapy until approximately 1960. **There has been a shift to the use of various drugs to "assist" human behavior at the neurological and synaptic level.**

This paradigm shift has not filtered down significantly to the "pop psychology" establishment (Christian or otherwise) or to the secular education establishment. The latter continues to advocate the discredited views of G. Stanley Hall and E.L. Thorndike as the basis for successful classroom management (J.Henry, Psychology, Education, and the Church: The Evolutionary Legacy of Six Men, <creationconcepts.org>, 2004).

The first drug-based therapies were little more than stabs in the dark. Crude mediation of psychological problems by drugs resulted in needy patients becoming homeless street people, a problem which continues to some extent now. **The educational establishment, realizing the failures of its erstwhile heroes such as Hall and Skinner, has also opted for drug-based therapies for ADHD and other difficulties.** These efforts have also been stumbling, with calls in Congress to end over-medication with popular drugs such as Ritalin.

Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies have not been blind to these difficulties, which clearly relate to an ignorance of how psycho-active drugs work in the body. Especially since 1980, there has been an explosion of research efforts at universities and within the pharmaceutical companies themselves to unravel the functional mechanisms of these drugs. Trade journals (e.g., *Chemical and Engineering News*) and technical publications (e.g., *Science*) discuss new research results regularly. Much understanding has been gained, but much remains to be learned. Some significant advances of the last twenty years include:

1. The development of "chiral" drugs; it is now understood that many harmful side effects are caused by a single mirror-image form.
2. The partial unraveling of the neurological action of commonly prescribed drugs such as Prozac.
3. A finer understanding of brain chemistry, beyond the gross mechanisms postulated decades ago for neurotransmitters.

In addition, it is now understood that the neurological and even the synaptic structure of the brain is changeable over time by (1) external stimuli and informational input; (2) hormones; (3) stressors. Drug chemistry is currently being evaluated in the light of this larger picture.

As we enter the future, what do these developments mean for the science of neurophysiology and for the psychological and counseling professions? The future will be characterized by the following changes:

1. **Continued development of neurophysiology as a science relying more heavily on the chemistry of brain and drug functions, including knowledge of relevant chemical reactions on the synaptic level.**

2. A continued departure from a therapeutic reliance only on descriptions of brain gross anatomy and function.

3. An increased emphasis in psychology on the micro-chemistry of brain function.

4. **A continued shift in the counseling profession away from outmoded views held as recently as a few decades ago, to the role of counselor as more of a medical practitioner.** Indeed, the once popular Rogerian "self-esteem" therapy is increasingly under attack. Its major remaining strongholds are the "pop psychology," educational, and ecclesiastical establishments. For documentation of this claim, see the paper referenced above.

It is difficult to foretell how this last shift (#4) may completely develop. In the medical profession, there are many levels of practitioners, ranging from the certified nursing assistant, through the certified nurse practitioner, the LPN, the RN, the physician assistant, and the MD. It appears that the counseling profession may experience a similar development, with social workers, for example, being on the bottom rung of the ladder as implementers of chemical therapies worked out by others, and with Ph.D. psychiatrists working hand-in-hand with MD's and chemists to elucidate the successful drug therapies of tomorrow. **At any rate, the future counselor at whatever level will be expected to be familiar with emerging developments involving brain and drug chemistry.**

Of course, an understanding of drug chemistry is a two-edged sword which allows for abuses as well as benefits. **The conservative Christian college should be teaching the biblical constraints on these emerging developments, as well as the developments themselves.**

**APPENDIX 2.****PRINCIPLES OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELING**

The concepts below are compiled from *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (TCC), by Jay E. Adams, Zondervan, 1986; first published in 1979 by Presbyterian & Reformed.

This compilation is designed to be a framework around which a college professor, counselor, or church worker can build a syllabus.

All Bible references are those suggested by Jay Adams in the context of the concepts listed. The instructor can supply additional passages as the Holy Spirit shows him that they are relevant.

**The page number precedes each entry.** Suggested class lecture headings are also included below.

**There are fifteen headings, an average of one per week in a fifteen week semester.**

**I. NOUTHETIC COUNSELING IS NOT BASED ON ANY HUMAN COUNSELING SYSTEM.**

ix What is "nouthetic counseling"? "Nouthetic" is derived from the Gr. *nouthesia*, "The fullest and principle biblical word for counseling." **Thus nouthetic counseling is counseling done according to biblical principles.**

ix Counseling is verbal; "it implies the verbal element." Verbal confrontation is implied, with the purpose of causing change.

**II. ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD ASPIRE TO COUNSEL NOUTHETICALLY.**

x Christians have a responsibility of carrying out appropriate biblical verbal confrontation (i.e., counseling). Secular "psychotherapists" have "usurped that role." They are really "secular priests" doing "what religions have long since tried to do [JA quoting P. London, *The Modes and Morals of Psychotherapy*, 1964, pp. 65, 163]." In other words, all Christians have the responsibility to learn to counsel nouthetically, i.e., biblically. The word "counselor" should not mean a "professional counselor." **It must be understood to mean all Christians who have learned the Scriptures well and how to apply the Scriptures in appropriate verbal confrontation.**

**III. THE BIBLE IS THE CORE OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELING.**

xiii "The Bible is the basis for a Christian's counseling because it deals with the same issues that all counseling does." The Christian, the goal of counseling is to see others transformed into God's image (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

4 Man has been dependent on outside counsel since before the Fall, and since the Fall continues to be dependent on counseling. The Fall itself (Gen. 3) demonstrated that "[man] was dependent upon outside counsel; [and] he was capable of being changed by counsel." The Fall also demonstrates the consequences of wrong change by unbiblical counsel.

8 The saying, "All truth is God's truth" is a fallacy. Much of what we believe to be true may not be true. Thus the Christian cannot accept secular claims under the belief that secular claims must necessarily contain truth. Counseling is either godly (Psalm 1) and true, or ungodly and false. **Thus the Christian must follow biblical principles in counseling, and avoid blending secular concepts with biblical teachings on counseling.**

12-13 The Christian counselor must understand "all that the Scriptures say on a given topic." Any book such as TCC, and any course, can introduce the Christian to only a fraction of what the Bible says on any topic. Every Christian is responsible to study the Bible for himself to learn it very well. We cannot substitute the church, the school, or any other venue for diligent and strenuous personal Bible study. This study must be primarily content oriented as well as devotionally oriented; cp. the authoritative teaching of Jesus as over against the speculations of the Pharisees (Matt. 7:29). In short, **the Christian must be able to exegete the Scriptures well in order to counsel nouthetically (i.e., biblically).**

19-20 "At least a certain amount of biblical exposition ought to accompany any authoritative directive." The Christian should not let his own opinion substitute for the Bible. **He must know where to go in the Bible to formulate biblical**

**directions rather than human opinion.** This enables the counselee to verify the biblically based directives for himself (Acts 17:11).

22 Christian counseling with borrowings from secular sources is not really christian counseling. "Christian counseling itself must be free from eclectic borrowings and influences *in order to set forth a genuine and viable alternative.*" The nouthetic counselor should never perceive that his biblical foundation is restrictive or inferior. Our God, the Counselor (Isa. 9:6) is unique, with thoughts and ways which are not the world's thoughts and ways.

#### IV. COUNSELEES MUST KNOW THE BIBLE TO KNOW GOD'S WILL.

26 **God's will is not determined by circumstances but by biblical directives.** For example, a Christian may not marry an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14-18). **Many counselees are in difficulties because they do not know this.** Passages such as Rom. 8:14 and Gal. 5:8 are not about decision-making; "the question in view is sanctification."

29 There are many specific life issues for which the Bible does not spell out God's will, e.g., what color shirt to wear, what to have for breakfast. In other words, "many options lie within the box" of God's will, and "it is right for the Christian to choose [among biblically allowable options] out of his own preferences."

30 "Circumstances - often referred to as open and closed doors ... often provide help for making preferential decisions among several [biblically allowable options] when [one] is in God's option box." Only biblical directives, however, can tell us that we are in "God's option box" or not. **Circumstances, "open and closed doors," and "putting out a fleece," and a feeling of inner peace or of being led by God, cannot and must not substitute for biblical directives.** Counselees need to know the biblical directives for knowing which options are within God's will.

#### V. THE GOAL OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELING IS SANCTIFICATION.

35 All counseling aims at a change in the counselee's behavior. **Biblical counseling aims at sanctification in the counselee producing the fruit of the spirit.** The love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and temperance are exactly what all humanistic counseling systems are seeking but cannot produce.

36 "According to 2 Tim. 3:15-17, the Word was designed to transform behavior. That transformation has two phases: (1) *An instantaneous* phase [at the moment of salvation]; (2) *A gradual one* [called sanctification] in which transformation continues throughout the entire course of the Christian's earthly life." **The goal of nouthetic counseling is to bring about sanctification.** Non-Christians cannot be sanctified. They need salvation. Thus nouthetic counseling is possible only with Christians. Unbelievers need evangelism ("pre-counseling").

38-40 Ps. 139 teaches that God is all and in all. "God is man's environment" (39), not in a pantheistic

sense, but in the fact that there is no place where God is not. Every sinner being at odds with God is also at odds with this divine environment. Thus "[t]he unsaved world exists in a completely hostile environment that it neither understands nor likes" (38). "Every sinner is aware of the discomfort in his environment [but he] fails to articulate the true nature of the problem" (39). In contrast, "When sinning, the Christian also shares something of this discomfort, but he knows what to do about it (1 Jn. 1:9 ...)" (40). Thus the nouthetic counselor can lead the Christian into a biblical understanding of how to resolve his discomfort, but the non-Christian must first be evangelized and come to the Lord in salvation before his discomfort can be truly resolved.

43 "The 'religious' has been conveniently separated from the 'secular.'" "Secular" means "without God," and there is no part of life without God. "All life is God-related ..." The nouthetic counselor must help the counselee to see this, and to reject extra-biblical "solutions" to his problems.

47-49 "[Nouthetic] counseling will be done *under God*" (47). It simply acknowledges the truth which secular systems deny - that God is over all and in all. This is a great encouragement, because God "will be a *very present help in time of trouble.* ... There will be a sense of expectancy to see God work" (47). Secular counseling cannot share this optimism. The counselee also needs to understand that "problems are a part of God's plan and purpose" for him (47). Secular counseling cannot share this perspective either. To foster these attitudes, "Counselors will find it necessary, therefore, to instruct counselees in proper biblical attitudes and stances toward prayer ..." (48) "In Him we live and move and exist (Acts 17:28)" (49). Thus man is not autonomous but has a God on Whom he must depend. **The counselee must be taught to depend on God for working through his problems.**

#### VI. A COMMON NEED OF COUNSELEES IS BIBLICAL FAITH.

51-54 Besides lack of biblical understanding about prayer and depending on God, **counselees suffer from lack of biblical perspective about life's problems.** They claim, "Life isn't fair" (51). The counselee must be instructed in biblical faith (Heb. 11). Biblical faith "takes the long view in dependance upon [what God's Word says]" (52). God's ways and thoughts are above ours. He desires the Christian's ultimate good (i.e., sanctification, to be like Christ). The counselee must apprehend that, "We can only worship a God Who is beyond us" is His thoughts and ways (53). Attempting to understand all of God's ways is sin, because we are attempting to reduce God to an understandable but inferior status. This is like the sin of idolatry, in which people attempt to worship deities no higher than themselves (Isa. 44:9-20). Further, God does not desire that we understand everything (Duet. 29:29). He desires that we have faith in Him and His ways.

57-59 **Understanding the names of God promotes biblical faith.** *El-Shaddai* (Gen. 17:1) reflects God's sufficiency. *Jehovah* reflects that fact that God always keeps His promises and is absolutely dependable. God is the Christian's *shepherd* (Ps. 23:1), a comforting name implying tender, loving

safety. "Christ's own favorite designation for God" was *Father*, reflecting God's familial care and concern for all His children. **The nouthetic counselor should instruct his counselees to meditate on what the Scriptures say about God in His names.**

#### VII. A COMMON NEED OF COUNSELEES IS BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER.

61-62 **Prayer is central in nouthetic counseling.** "The counselor must pray for himself and his counselees" both in private and in counseling sessions (62). "[A]t crucial points in a series of sessions, the only appropriate action to take is to pray" with the counselee if possible, or silently and privately (62).

64 Counselees should be given "homework assignments" to establish regular family devotions and personal prayer patterns.

67 **Lack of instruction in prayer starts early in many Christian homes.** "Few children are taught (or taught how) to bring their problems to God. At home and in school, they are reared according to an uneasy doctrine of self-sufficiency ..." There is lack of confession for sins committed, leading to an accumulation of unresolved problems leading to the need for counseling later in life. It is never too early for the counselee to learn to come to God in confession, adoration and thanksgiving, and to teach his saved children to do the same.

#### VIII. A COMMON NEED OF COUNSELEES IS BIBLICAL GRATITUDE.

73-74 "Counselors must look for ingratitude and work zealously to overcome it" (73). Counselees must be taught "to pray thankfully rather than worry (Phil. 4:6)" (73). Counselees must also understand that, "Prayer limited to petition is not Christian" (74).

76-78 **Prayer alone should not necessarily be considered the complete biblical solution to a problem.** There must be an action after the prayer: "But what did you pray that the Lord would give you the strength and wisdom to *do?*" (76). **Prayer without action may be an ungrateful petition.** "In the Bible, prayer is regularly couples with *action*" (78). Prayer followed by action means the counselee is learning to be grateful for how God will work.

81-82 God doesn't respond to resentful prayer or prayer uttered in unforgiveness (Mark 11: 23-25); "resentment is one of the most common problems that counselees struggle with" (82). **The counselee must be taught principles of biblical forgiveness.**

83-84 "*God doesn't hear self-centered prayer* ... The words, 'If it be Your will,' are a very significant addition that every counselee must learn to add" (83-84). "God's will must be sought for *His* sake," not to satisfy the whims of the counselee (84).

86 The counselee must learn that "unanswered prayer may also be God's *favorable* response to proper prayer."

88-91 The nouthetic counselor's teaching can be successful only as the counselee is led into discipleship, with the counselor as the model, even as Jesus modeled before His disciples the life He expected them to live. Nouthetic counseling cannot be merely academic and didactic. **The counselor must model the Spirit's fruit - being kind, tenderhearted, longsuffering, etc. - which the counselee is to grow into showing.**

## IX. COUNSELEES NEED TO BE TAUGHT BIBLICAL NORMS FOR BEHAVIOR.

98 The life of Christ, "not sociological polls, provides the norms for human living." **Much of the behavior the counselee may consider "normal" may be maladjustment due to either personal or original sin in the human race.**

99 **Counselees need to be instructed that "attributes" such as "temperament" are actually habits of behavior.** "The idea of temperament [is] a concept not discussed in the Scriptures." The reason is that every Christian has the Holy Spirit working in His life to transform his "temperament" into behaviors showing forth the Spirit's fruit.

100-102 Not only the life of Christ, but also man as originally and sinlessly created, exemplifies the Creator's norms for human life and behavior. "The Christian accepts Adam, as created (prior to the fall), as an example of normal human life" (101). This is in addition to the fact that "what is normal for a human being is what Christ said and did" (102).

105-106 What does sinless Adam show about human normality? Adam was made from the earth (Gen. 2:7), showing that as sinlessly created, man possessed "identification, harmony and continuity with this world" (105). The body is no more inherently evil than the spirit. Indeed, "the sinless Christ came, was baptized, and died *in a body* ..." (Col. 1:19, 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:1, 4:2, 5:6-8)" (106). "Man does *not* function better apart from the body, as some claim in order to relieve themselves of their present God-given responsibilities" (106). **The counselees must learn to be grateful for his God-given body rather than resenting it.**

107 The fact that Satan is a spirit shows that the spiritual is not inherently superior to the physical body. "If [the counselee] uses the presence of sin in his body as an excuse [for tolerating his own unbiblical behavior], the counselor may point out that sin, itself, is no more in the material aspect of his nature than it is in the spiritual ..."

110 Though man has spiritual and material aspects, these are not separate entities. "The *emphasis* in the Scriptures ... is upon the *unity* of these entities." One is not above the other. Each is equal in value. 1 Thess. 5:23 says, "May the God of peace sanctify you *completely*; may our *entire* being - spirit and soul and body - be kept blameless." Paul here is not dissecting the whole of man into three separate parts, but is emphasizing that **the spiritual and material aspects of man are a unity which God is sanctifying in its entirety.** The counselee must learn therefore to value his body, putting aside habits that harm the body, e.g., lack of sleep, a faulty diet, lack of exercise, drunkenness, relying on drugs for happiness, etc.

114 **The counselee must be instructed to pray and act on *internalizing* biblical behavior patterns.** He must not simply be allowed to give lip service as "agreement." Otherwise, counseling for him will fail. Internalization means engaging his *heart*, his innermost being. The view of one's innermost being, the heart, as being only emotional, is faulty. "Nowhere in the Bible is the *head* set over against the *heart* ... The reason why head and heart are set over against one another ... is that the term *heart* includes the *intellectual* side (Job 12:24, 36:13) ... In the Bible, human beings are said to talk, reason, plan, understand, think, doubt, perceive, make mistakes, purpose, intend, etc., *in their hearts.*" **Striving for biblical behavior norms, therefore, requires that the counselee plan and intend purposefully to act, with God's help, in a manner consistent with biblical norms.**

114 Set over against the heart in the Bible "is, without exception, *the visible, outer man.*" **The counselee must be instructed against hypocrisy**, in which outwardly he puts on the appearance of following biblical norms, but inwardly he is not (i.e., not depending on God, is faithless, prayerless, ungrateful, resentful, unforgiving, etc.).

119 Animal behaviors are not normative for humans. "God has directed no law to the animal world."

123 When the counselee has learned to generalize biblical directives to the problems in his life, "counseling is coming to an end." At this point the counselee has internalized biblical behavior norms.

124-135 **What are some other behavioral norms seen in Adam?** (a) "Adam was not fashioned for solitary, isolated living. ... In distorted form unsaved persons both long for and try to fulfill the longings for social contact" (126-127). **The answer to a counselee's loneliness lies in Christian fellowship available in the body of Christ** (to be discussed in greater detail below). "The 'lone-wolf' Christian is sinning" (130). (b) "Adam was created as a working being. ... It is never right not to work. ... [Paul] denounced lazy Christians in 2 Thess. 3:6-15 as "disorderly (a key word associated with persons who avoid work) ..." (133-135). **Counselees often have difficulty with disorderly, undisciplined lives due to laziness, especially if they are not working regularly and productively.**

141-157 How did the fall affect counseling needs? (a) **Sin has changed human nature, but not the biblical norms for behavior.** Now all men are totally depraved. Total depravity "does not mean that every person is as bad as he might be. Rather, the idea behind the word *total* is that *in all parts and aspects of his life he is depraved* ..." (141). The counselee therefore must be taught not "to speak as if there were a part of human nature that was not only not sin-affected, but also not sin-generating ..." (Rom. 6:16, 19)" (142). The counselor must be aware of the corrupting affect of sin in all thought and action, and teach the counselee the same awareness. (b) **Sin has caused guilt.** "[A] sense of guilt, per se, is not harmful. [Guilt] can be a friendly warning [of a violation of biblical norms]. ... Instead of attacking [the guilt], a wise counselor will recognize that a sense of guilt flows from true guilt (a violation of one's standards) and can be removed

properly only by dealing with the guilt (violation itself" (145-146). If the counselee's guilt stems from an extra-biblical "standard," he needs instruction in biblical norms for human living and decision making. (c) Sin - personal or original - has caused physical and spiritual disfigurement and perversion, trouble, confusion, unfaithfulness, sorrow, lawlessness, and ignorance (147-151). But "[t]he counselor's task is to help the counselee to put pain [and other suffering] into a proper (biblical) perspective (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18)" (156). "Learning and growth often take place under the discipline of suffering" (157).

161-163 Like "temperament," habits are often used by counselees to avoid taking needed steps toward biblical behavior norms. "Habit - the capacity to learn to respond unconsciously, automatically and comfortably - is a great blessing of God that has been misused by sinners" (161). Bad habits can be unlearned, because habits are not really inbred. The truth is that bad habits are learned, often in the context of family upbringing. "Bad `behavior patterns' are `passed down' (by precept and example) from previous generations, according to 1 Pet. 1:18 ..." (163). There are no "generational curses" that cannot be overcome with God's help and determination to follow God's Word. Further, "bad companions corrupt good habits (1 Cor. 15:33)" (163).

170-181 A final reminder: Success in nouthetic counseling means that the counselor disciple the counselee (170-171). This is not easy, but has great rewards. "[W]hat Jesus Christ obtained for His people in salvation is not merely what Satan took away from Adam. ... [In] Christ, humanity has been raised ... far above principalities and powers ... into the heavenlies to sit at the right hand of God" (180-181).

## X. COUNSELEES NEED TO BE TAUGHT BIBLICAL FORGIVENESS.

184 "Man's greatest need is forgiveness" - both from God and from others. "[B]ecause [counselees] are forgiven, they must also become forgiving persons as Ephesians 4:32 says ..."

186 Counselees must be taught not to name sin as "addictions" or "illnesses." "[N]either crime nor sickness can be forgiven. Crimes must be punished, sicknesses must be healed (or if that isn't possible, excused)." **Counselees must be instructed to label their transgressions as sin, and then go to God for confession and forgiveness.**

191 Counselees should be taught to follow Christ's norm in forgiving others (Lk. 23:34; the Lord's Prayer).

194-207 (a) Biblical forgiveness is not accepting the other person as he is. Christ did not do this, "otherwise, why did He die?" (194). (b) Biblical forgiveness is not "venting" (197). (c) Biblical forgiveness is not "forgiving ourselves." There is no biblical command to forgive ourselves or love ourselves (207). Indeed, counselees often have difficulty with self-centeredness and need to be taught to reach out to others in Christian love.

208-212 **The counselee needs to understand why the Christian asks God for forgiveness after being forgiven.** The forgiveness at salvation is *judicial*; forgiveness after salvation is *parental*, from God as a loving Father.

216-217 The counselee should be instructed that biblical forgiveness is based on confession. Even the English word *confession* is from Latin roots meaning "to say with." Confession means agreeing with God that we violated a biblical instruction (a norm for living). Confession is also linked with forsaking sin (Prov. 28:13). Without confession and forsaking of sin, the Christian has no parental forgiveness, and is out of fellowship with God.

218-220 "The Bible nowhere tells us that to get feelings out into the open and be honest about them is confession" (218). Instead, "a sin ought to be confessed as widely as the sin; direct effects extend (cf. Matt. 18:15ff)" (219). Some sins should be confessed only to God alone. When confessing to others, words should be carefully chosen, and "[t]here are things that ought not to be said (Eph. 5:12)" (220).

222-229 (a) An "apology" does not substitute for biblical confession and forgiveness. Apologizing allows the other party to downplay an offense without dealing biblically with it (222). **"[F]orgiveness is not a feeling ...** Forgiveness is a *promise*" to forget the offense, as God forgets our sins in Jer. 31:34 (228). In fact, we must "forgive in order to forget" (229), a fact that counselees often struggle with.

#### **XI. COUNSELEES MUST BE GUIDED INTO BIBLICAL SANCTIFICATION.**

234 Sanctification is a process. "Since this is true, it is possible (indeed, often necessary) for others to assist" the Christian. Counseling is an aspect of this assistance.

234-235 "Change is hard" (234). In fact, it is sufficiently difficult that the unbeliever cannot carry it off except in a superficial way (Jer. 13:23). The difficulty of change causes counselees to "*continually* confuse learned behavior patterns with inherited nature ..." (236). However, the Bible promises that the fruit of the Spirit is available to every Christian (Gal. 5). Spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11, Eph. 4:7) are not available equally to all Christians, but the Spirit's fruit is.

245 "[To] help a counselee to discipline himself toward godliness, a counselor must insist upon the regular study of God's Word ..."

251-258 Personality is changeable. The concept of inbred personality, like the concept of temperament, is really not biblical. "The Bible everywhere looks on personality as fluid" (251). **Thus the counselee's personality can change to match God's norms for human behavior.** Phil 4:6-9 focuses on the steps to change: (a) prayer; (b) renewing the mind with proper thoughts; (c) obeying God's commands. Further, "patience is bound up with love (1 Cor. 13:4)," i.e., patience manifests love. "The loving act (attitude) is often to restrain one's words or actions" (256). **Counselees need to be taught the practice of patiently responding, not over-reacting.** "The problem of many counselees is a self-centeredness" (257), and they need to learn to "actively temper [their] demands of others ... To become mellow, one must work at devising ways to be kind toward others. That begins by *thinking* of others" (258).

264-266 Finally, sanctification requires putting off sinful practices (Matt. 5:27-30). "Jesus calls on us to incapacitate ourselves so that we find it extremely difficult to sin again" (265). This may mean "breaking off bad influential relationships (1 Cor. 15:33), ... getting rid of pornographic materials, changing one's job, etc., etc." (266).

#### **XII. COUNSELEES MUST BE TAUGHT BIBLICAL PERSEVERANCE.**

267 All truly saved persons will persevere and never lose faith. Those who do not have lasting faith never had genuine, saving faith from the beginning (1 Pet. 1:3-5). **There is encouragement here: the counselee by God's help will endure.**

272-275 Pain, suffering, and other problems must be endured till God wills them to end. Suffering and pain may be caused by personal unconfessed sin, but it may be a result of the original sin in the human race. Nobody but God and the counselee can know which cause applies. Sometimes suffering "comes simply to honor God (Job; Jn. 9:1ff.)" (275). **There is encouragement here: the counselee is not being chastised or punished, but has been chosen of God to glorify Him.**

#### **XIII. COUNSELEES MUST BE TAUGHT A BIBLICAL RELATION TO THE CHURCH.**

276 "In many quarters, there is very little knowledge about and concern for the visible church on the part of Christians." [Counselees must be taught the importance of the local church (1 Tim. 3:15), a biblical allegiance to the local church, biblical conditions for leaving a church and when not to, how to pray for the church, etc.] See pp.

126-133 above for discussion about biblical norms for fellowship and social relationships.

294 The fact that the government has taken over the welfare responsibilities of the church does not absolve the church from continuing to show forth works of mercy.

#### **XIV. COUNSELEES MUST LEARN THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF DEATH & THE FUTURE.**

299 "We know that all do not enter bliss at death ... So we must conclude that if the recorded [out-of-body] experiences are true [in describing blissful sensations of being bathed in light, etc.], they do not really speak of death."

304 **The counselee must realize that God's rewards for right behavior are often delayed rewards.** It is the secular system which promises immediate gratification.

#### **XV. UNBELIEVERS NEED "PRE-COUNSELING."**

309-311 "if you counsel Christians and unbelievers the same way, there's something wrong with your counseling" (309). Unbelievers must be urged to come to Christ for salvation. Without this, since all problems come from within the heart (the innermost being), any change will be superficial at best (311).

313 Stressing outward change (with an unbeliever or a Christian) leads to a moralistic legalism. (But when counseling Christians, stress on inner change alone produces "a cold orthodoxy that is great on doctrine, but doesn't do much to change people's lives.")

320 "There are some things that you can do for an unbeliever so long as you make it clear that you haven't started counseling yet. ... What you do is preliminary; it is *precounseling*. ... [This means] that you are going to do some problem-oriented evangelism [i.e., not necessarily 'preaching the gospel' to them, but working on crisis management and pointing out that they need Christ really to resolve their crises]."

324 "[T]here is a point at which you have to say in precounseling, 'Whoa!' ... and say, 'This is as far as it can go.'" The Unbeliever then needs to trust Christ for salvation to make genuine counseling possible.