

Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling

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[Abstract: The contemporary biblical counseling movement faces six crucial issues. One issue concerns our foundation; the other five concern how we build on that foundation. First, the ‘same old issues’ which we always have addressed remain lively issues in the contemporary world. Second, the questions of motivation must be addressed in the same detail with which biblical counseling has addressed questions of behavior. Third, we need to clarify the ways in which human responsibility and suffering relate to one another. Fourth, many elements in the counselor-counselee relationship need to be understood and practiced better. Fifth, biblical counseling needs to interact with a wider audience. Sixth, we need to develop the nuances in our view of secular psychology.]

The Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 1988. CCEF’s anniversary is a symbolic anniversary for the entire nouthetic-biblical counseling movement. An anniversary is a time to take stock. Where have we come from? Where are we? What issues that now face us will determine our future?

I have identified six crucial issues facing contemporary biblical counseling. These six are not the only issues. They are, however, the issues I believe merit the adjective ‘crucial.’ If we address them we will grow in wisdom. If we neglect them we will stagnate or even distort the counsel of God. I have attempted to look at contemporary biblical counseling (both our articulated theory and our run-of-the-mill practice) in the light of Scripture. Each issue is an issue both of theory and of practice. How do we think about people biblically? How do we counsel them biblically?

#1. The ‘same old issues’ still face us.

The first issue is an old one. The problems that animated biblical counseling at its start twenty years ago remain live problems today. Counseling in the

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Christian church continues to be compromised significantly by the secular assumptions and practices of our culture's reigning psychologies and psychiatries. Biblical-nouthetic counseling was initiated to provide two things: a cogent critique of secularism and a distinctly biblical alternative. The traditional insights, strengths, and commitments of nouthetic counseling must be maintained. Biblical counseling operates within the world-view of the Bible, with the Bible in hand. It is centered on God even (especially!) when it thinks about man. It is centered on Jesus Christ, who became a man in order to save us. It is centered in the midst of Christ's people, who are called to pray for one another and to counsel one another in love.

Secular psychologies remain major enemies of the church in the late 20th century. We face a zoo of systems united by only one thing. At best, 'god' is a comforting auxiliary to the human psychic drama. At worst, he/she/it is a delusion. Lacking God, the human problem (and the power to understand and to solve that problem) is perceived to lie somewhere within or between human beings. Christ died for nothing.

The enemy was not only 'out there' somewhere. "We have met the enemy . . . and they are us," Pogo once remarked. Secular psychological modes of thinking continue to inhabit the church of the living God. Witness the rampant 'self-esteem' and 'need' psychologies which bypass the man-God relationship in order to make the human psyche the place "where the action is." The living God is shriveled into an actor within an all-important psychic drama. Witness the church hiring essentially secular psychologists, referring to and deferring to their 'wisdom' for solving 'personal problems' and 'relationship and lifestyle issues.' Witness an ongoing intellectual confusion and eclecticism that pursues truth in some blend of secular psychology and biblical Christianity. We must continue to provide a distinct alternative in both the content and practice of counseling.

Biblical counseling must reaffirm and finely tune its distinctive intellectual content. We must continue to 'think biblically,' letting biblical categories lead our understanding. We must continue to reject secular categories from a self-consciously presuppositional standpoint. The climate of scholarly opinion has not changed drastically. The same old pattern of rehashing ideas and practices of secular psychology continues in the books, journals, schools, seminaries, and professional organizations of the Christian counseling world.

Biblical counseling also must continue to reaffirm and develop its counseling methods. We must continue to develop counseling as Christian ministry—intended to produce conviction of sin, the joyous reception of Jesus Christ, and renewal of life. Biblical counseling must continue to repudiate the notion of a

‘counseling profession’ disconnected both structurally and intellectually from the nurture, instruction, love, discipline, authority, and friendship of the body of Christ. The patterns of professional practice have not changed drastically. Christian clones of secular methods continue to dominate the practice, no less than the literature, of the Christian counseling world.

Does this mean that nothing has changed in twenty years? I do not think so. In a number of ways 1988 is more opportune than 1968 for a message of presuppositionally consistent counseling to be heard. The intellectual climate has changed. Thomas Kuhn and other secular philosophers of science have made presuppositional modes of thought common intellectual currency among Christians and non-Christians alike. The ground has been cut away that makes psychology and psychiatry seem like ‘neutral, objective scientific truth.’ Under the “all truth is God’s truth” slogan, with its notion that both science and the Bible were revelational, cartloads of undiluted secularism were hauled into the church. But now the sciences have lost much of their pretense to objectivity. Christians of various stripes also have made presuppositional styles of thinking common. Francis Schaeffer introduced the evangelical reading public to a generally presuppositional mode of thought. C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, and Harry Blamires expounded in charming fashion the idea that we should “think Christianly.” Paul Vitz and William Kirk Kilpatrick have been read and applauded widely for their crisp analyses of secular psychology’s covert religious character. None of the above has articulated the biblical counseling alternatives as clearly as it has diagnosed or hinted at the failings of secularism. But all the above have plowed the ground. The message of biblical counseling, restated for contemporary hearers, may fall well on more receptive ears.

It is not redundant to call Christians to be radically biblical. Many ears still attend to the persuasive voice of secular psychology. It is not redundant to call Christians to be exegetically biblical. The Bible abounds in riches yet to be mined and applied to counseling. It is not redundant to call Christians to be biblical in practice as well as in thinking. Biblical counseling is an expression of church life. The equipping and overseeing work of the pastors and the one-anothering of the rest of the body of Christ are intrinsically counseling activities.

This first crucial issue restates where we have stood for the past twenty years. The five crucial issues which follow are newer issues. These are areas where our grasp of what it means to be biblical must be extended significantly. Issue #1 : hold fast to the foundation. Issues #2,3,4,5,6: build on that foundation.

We have had twenty years to show our strengths—and our weaknesses. An honest self-assessment reveals a number of questions, shortcomings or growing

pains we need to face as a movement. But the implications of this first crucial issue must be felt throughout the discussion that follows. Whatever changes and development need to occur within the biblical counseling movement must occur only on the foundation already laid: biblical categories of thought generating biblical methods of ministry.

#2. The questions touching on human motivation must be explored and integrated more firmly within both our theory and practice.

Nouthetic counseling has comprehended uniquely that the goal of counseling should be nothing less than visible obedience to the Lord. No other counseling system perceives that this is the central issue facing troubled, sinful, and suffering human beings. The counseling world around us (Christian and non-Christian alike) is agog with speculations about human motivation. Biblical counseling rightly has stressed behavior (love and good works) as the simple and accessible evidence of true change.

Biblical counseling must walk a fine line, however. There is patent ‘danger to the left of us.’ Speculative psychological systems pretend to an analytic insight into the motivations of the human heart. Biblical counseling has been suspicious rightfully of psychodynamic ‘explanations.’ Purely mythical constructs like id, ego, and super ego are deified. Self-esteem or ‘needs’ become the magic crucible from which all human life flows. My ‘self-talk’ is invested with supreme power to determine the course of my life. Our wariness at such pseudo-explanations perhaps carries over (illegitimately) into a wariness towards the whole subject of motivation.

Those to the ‘left’ forget that the dynamics of human psyche have to do with God! Always. Without exception. There is no ‘psychodynamic,’ no ‘motivation,’ independent of what people are doing with God. Human psychology is theological because human beings are ‘with-respect-to-God’ creatures. The prime action is in the man-God relationship, not in an encapsulated psyche whose component parts relate to one another according to some supposed pattern. What goes on in the psyche expresses and registers man-with-God dynamics, not some supposedly independent psychic structure, conflict, or need.

But we who are sensitive to ‘danger on the left,’ to rank speculation about the motives and motivational structure of the human heart, often forget there is ‘danger to the right of us’ as well. We depart from the Bible if we ignore motives and drift towards an externalistic view of man. The caricature that we are ‘behavioristic’ indeed may be true more often than we would like to admit. The Bible itself tells us behavior has ‘reasons.’

Behavior flows “from within, out of men’s hearts” (Mark 7:21), as we all know and affirm. But both our theory and practice have not given this area the attention it needs. We must become as familiar with the practical, everyday details of ‘faith and idolatry’ as we are with the details of those acts of sin and righteousness which flow from our hearts. The changes for which biblical counseling must aim are both internal and external.

I am not saying that there is a fatal defect within existing biblical counseling. Our problem is a lack of emphasis and articulation. We already have a first approximation of the biblical view of motivation in Jay Adams’ “desire orientation versus commandment orientation.” He has described perceptively the two-sided, basic structure in biblical fashion, but there is a wealth of detail to fill in. Filling in that detail will make us realize that motivational issues play a far more prominent role than we have realized, both conceptually and in counseling practice.

Attending to this area will change the way we think about people and the way we counsel: nothing will be lost, but much will be gained. I believe that we will linger in areas we now rush over in our counseling. Picture to yourself an artist’s representation of a human being which is a collage of photographic snapshots and charcoal sketches. We biblical counselors have photographic likenesses, in living color, of the hands, feet, and tongue. We know the terrain in some detail; hence we feel comfortable attending to these areas in our counseling. But we have only a rough charcoal sketch of the head and heart; so we quickly run out of issues to explore and things to say.

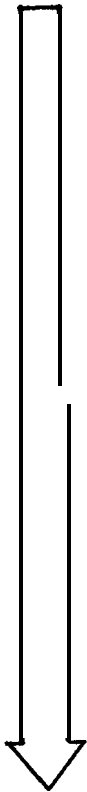
Figure 1 (pages 58 to 59) portrays the structure of biblical change. Heart leads to walk. Idolatry leads to disobedience; faith leads to obedience. Change of heart leads to change of walk. Every visible sin roots in a far more massive invisible sin. What is the change biblical counseling aims for? B M B* is rank moralism: “do’s and don’t’s” A-B M A* is pietism: “Let go and let God.” B M A*-B* is a subtler error. The put-off(B), put-on (B*) and faith in Jesus Christ (A*) are all present. But the structure of “false faiths” (A) is neglected. This is the configuration into which I fear nouthetic counselors often drift. We fail to minister the full inner impact of the conviction of sin. Hence the desperateness of our need for Jesus Christ is weakened. Hence the renewal of mind and heart by the promises of God practically is downplayed. We become incipiently moralistic. Biblical change is A-B M A*-B*. The inordinate, swarming desires of the flesh are treated in the same detail as the works of the flesh, the simple desires of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and the fruit of the Spirit.

Is our current view of motivation inaccurate or unbiblical? No, but many

Figure 1

58

Ruling Orientation
of 'heart'



Fleshed out in
'members' or 'walk'

59

**'Broad way'
leads to death**

Specific pattern of

inordinate desires
fear of man
idols
playing God
flesh
conformed to world
earthly minded
'felt needs'
'deep yearnings'
autonomy from God
goals/expectations
false trusts
self-righteousness
etc.

A



**Specific behavior to
'put off'**

works of flesh
outward sins
typical 'performance'
and
'preconditioning'
problems
sinful reactions,
responses,
attitudes, thoughts

B

**'Narrow way'
leads to life**

Specific new

faith in Jesus Christ as
Savior and Lord
fear of the Lord
trust in God
obedience that is faith
delighting in law of the
Lord
renewed mind
heavenly minded
dependency on God
desires of the Spirit
grip on promises of God
'ears to hear'
etc.

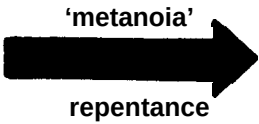
A*



**Specific behavior to
'put on'**

fruit of the Spirit
obedience which is
from faith
fruit of repentance
'how to's ' of biblical
living
love and good works
disciplines of Christian
life
use of gifts

B*



sordid and gorgeous details must be seen and understood for the whole picture of man to take on flesh. At the very least, attending to the motivation issues will transform Adams’ “presentation, performance, and preconditioning levels” of problem analysis. A fourth dimension, an enriched ‘desire versus commandment orientation,’ will be woven systematically in as fundamental to the other three.

People often present a stew of problems: anger, desires, frustrations, fears, immorality, confusion, defensiveness, cruelty, interpersonal disasters, instability, misery, substance abuse, and anxiety. These defy simple categorization on a behavioral problem list! But such a confusing stew can be tied, item after item, to organizing themes in a person’s life. The Scripture presents many such themes: pride, the fear of man, mammon, the desires of the flesh, idolatry, trust in man and so forth. Biblical counselors need to learn to think thematically about the heart. When we do not think about characteristic motivations, the counselee’s ‘relationship with God’ tends to be approached purely through outward disciplines: devotional life, church attendance, and the like. When we do address the motivational issues biblically, the counselee’s relationship with God becomes a counseling issue we can get our hands on. “Trust in the Lord” (that most generic and abused piece of wonderful counsel!) comes to life against the backdrop of specific false trusts. Usually “trust in the Lord” is vague and ineffectual because it is tossed like some Season-all into the stew of a person’s life. Counselees in effect trust the Lord to give them their ruling desires, without ever repenting in depth of those desires. But “trust the Lord instead of trusting in. . .” does work because it is biblical. It has the concrete two-sidedness of biblical repentance and mind-renewal.

Biblical counselors can say, “Bill, you became angry at Sally, got depressed, barked at your boss, and then took drugs because you were absolutely ruled by wanting your own way — with Sally and with everything else.” Counseling typically should deal in detail then with ‘what rules Bill?’ His ‘relationship with God. . . and with his false gods’ would become the stuff of concrete counseling that tackles the heart. Counseling at this point is strongly interpretive, helping Bill to make sense out of the welter of problematic actions, words, thoughts, and attitudes which characterize his life. Conviction of sin will land him squarely before God as a repentant idolater as well as an angry, depressed substance abuser prepared to change. As he truly understands himself and Christ’s grace, the necessary behavioral changes will ‘make sense’ from the inside.

We waste our breath (and precious truths) if we first talk about biblical ways to control anger, counteract depression, communicate with one’s wife, show proper work attitudes, and restructure one’s life to eliminate drug addiction. Those

should come second as the fruit of repentance. How many times we would-be biblical counselors waste our breath because we do not deal well with motivation problems. Biblical counselors must look carefully for the ‘false gods’ if we are to minister the ‘first great commandment’ and the promises of God as concretely as we minister the ‘second great commandment.’

In conclusion, it seems to me that critics of nouthetic counseling have been right in discerning a gap, or at least relative inattention, in our treatment of motivation. Their alternatives to our lack have been so appalling that we perhaps might feel excused for not heeding their criticism. I propose that we hear their criticism in addition to avoiding their alternatives. Or perhaps it is truer to say, I propose that we hear the Scripture. Our critics criticize in order to dismiss us. Scripture admonishes to mature us. We need not fear the biblical alternative, of course. The categories we are not yet using well are biblical categories.

#3. The relationship between human responsibility and human suffering needs a great deal of clarification.

Crucial issue #1 established our foundation for faith and practice. Crucial issue #2 made us rethink the nature of biblical change. Crucial issue #3 now challenges us to rethink our vision of the counselee and the counselee’s situation. How do we see and understand the people whom we counsel? What kind of attention do we pay to the kind of world the counselee inhabits? How important are the counselee’s past and present circumstances?

One of the most refreshing characteristics of nouthetic counseling has been its affirmation of human responsibility. The counseling world, Christian and non-Christian alike, concocts elaborate systems which rationalize sin by making people fundamentally victims determined by forces outside their control. Contemporary victim theories abound within psychological, medical, sociological, and Christian spheres. All such theories rob people of moral responsibility and insert some determinism at the foundation of human life. Biblical counseling has resisted seeing people as determined—whether by heredity, the sins of others, organic imbalances, poor models, unmet needs, mental forces imposing on us as ‘illness’ or demonic inhabitants.

In attacking notions of ‘man as victim,’ biblical counseling has reaffirmed the biblical notion of human responsibility. In most graphic terms, on the day of judgment God will ask, “What did you do?” He will not ask, “What happened to you?” Nouthetic counseling has gone on to deal forthrightly with the omnipresent human tendency to rationalize, to portray oneself as a victim whose problems and sins are someone or something else’s fault. Victim theories ground our sins in our

pain and our 'needs.' Let sins be derivative, and some other problem primary, people will not need Jesus Christ. In Christian guise Jesus becomes a need-meeter who makes victims feel better, not a Savior who purchases sinful men for God with His own blood.

We have been wary of any emphasis on man as victim, for every version around is tainted by sin's aversion to acknowledging sin. All this said, we still need to appreciate and clarify the many ways people are sufferers and fully responsible if we are to be faithful to the perfect fit between the Bible and human life. We have made a strong affirmation of human responsibility: the role of 'the flesh.' We have not discussed as fully the impact of the world and the devil as they master and shape human life. We have mined and processed certain biblical riches; there are other riches which we have not scrutinized as closely.

There is a biblical view of man as a sufferer. We can say it even more plainly: there is a biblical view of man as a victim. Biblical counseling has been misunderstood repeatedly to say that all problems are a result of personal sin. Why the misunderstanding? Surely we have talked about the role of Satan, for example in Job's situation. Surely nouthetic literature and practice take seriously that people are sinned against, abused, criticized, tempted, or rejected. What about the impact of other 'general hardships' of life: poverty, injustice, physical disabilities, allergies, sickness, and bereavement? Of course.

Because nouthetic counseling is sensitive to the Scripture, none of these areas has been neglected wholly. It at least has been implicit that man is both responsible and a sufferer. We are guilty and victims. Some of the misunderstanding of biblical counseling is caricature, from people who know all too well that 'man is responsible' would undermine their whole counseling theory and practice. Some of the misunderstanding comes from people who simply do not understand that the gospel underlies biblical change. They think 'man is responsible' would legitimate judging people and nagging them into change with exhortations to will power. The gospel of Christ says, instead, that human responsibility legitimates presenting the kindness of Jesus to people and seeking the power of the Spirit to change.

But another misunderstanding highlights a problem, a crucial issue for contemporary biblical counseling. Our treatment of the victim side of the biblical portrayal of man has been anecdotal and occasional, not systematic. Under issue #2 we noted that rampant speculations about human motivation should not keep us from tackling the motivation questions biblically. Equally, rampant and systematized blameshifting should not deter us from developing the biblical view of how the things we suffer affect us.

Certainly in the biblical view sin is something we are ‘led into’ by an enslaving master, Satan. We are blinded, powerless, led by the nose, tempted, attacked, deceived. In other words, we are victims of a slavemaster. Certainly in the biblical view sin is done to us as much as we do it to others. And sin is something we are ‘taught’ by others, provoked to, encouraged in by the ‘world.’ In other words, we are victims of oppression. Certainly plain old hardship provides many of the chief temptations to us all. It is no accident that ‘temptation’ and ‘trial’ are the same Greek word, *pirasmos*. In other words, we are victims needing deliverance from suffering. We are even victims (justly) of the curse of God and delivered from wrath by the mercy of His Christ. All this said, certainly sin is the product of the flesh, with its lusts and desires. In other words, we are fully responsible! The Bible is not embarrassed to speak of world, flesh, and Devil as co-conspirators, of man as jointly responsible and victim. The Bible is not embarrassed to speak of Jesus Christ as the Savior of people who are both guilty and oppressed.

The biblical notion of man as victim is, after all, the source of much of the compassion with which our Deliverer approaches His groaning people. Our God has compassion on sufferers — who are also sinners responsible for their responses to suffering and even may have brought suffering on themselves.

Is the nouthetic counselor needlessly skittish about hearing and entering into the counselee’s suffering for fear of encouraging blameshifting? I suspect so. Yet for me one central avenue of approach into the life of my counselee, my friend, my fellow, is through his suffering. His body is in pain. Satan is mounting assaults on his faith. He has had a lifetime of ungodly influences which persist into the present. He is experiencing situational uncertainties: his job future and his wife’s health. Such a recognition, and the patience to hear it, even to pursue it, will not sabotage recognition of his responsibility. It rather will set his responsibility firmly and realistically in context. His characteristic sins often were and are forged in reaction to suffering and being sinned against.

Unbiblical views construe man-as-victim to be a reason, an excuse, a cause for our faulty and negative actions. Biblically comprehending man-as-sufferer is never meant to answer, “Why do I sin?” It does answer, “When? Where? With whom? Under whose influence?” It describes the situation in which one is tempted and tried. With new eyes, the situation of suffering becomes the “when, where, with whom, and against what” within which he will learn faith and obedience. We have said loudly, “responsible !” The biblical balance, ‘responsible amid hardship,’ has been more understated and assumed.

But what is understated and assumed easily becomes ineffectual. I suspect that at times we simply have been deficient in our counseling world-view, have been

sub-biblical in the name of being biblical. Would anyone deny that ‘nouthetic’ counseling practice often has been less than biblical in its sensitivity to suffering people? Biblical counselors often have worked for change in how people react to suffering without adequately attending (in word and deed) to how they experience and interpret suffering. One reason is because the biblical doctrine of man-as-sufferer-whom-Christ-delivers has not been understood as clearly as the doctrine of man-as-responsible-whom-Christ-forgives. What we suffer powerfully influences us, even rules us with an iron hand. What we suffer is then the context within which operate both human responsibility and Christ’s power to set free.

We are sensitive to errors on one side of us, to the diminution of human responsibility by appeals to psychosocial trauma, situational stress, physiological causes, or demons. Are we as sensitive to the errors on the other side, to views of human responsibility which are essentially moralizing, evidencing a firm faith in will-power, self-discipline, and mind-control? There are unbiblical forms of ‘responsibility’ just as destructive as unbiblical forms of ‘victimization.’

Do we subtly appeal to human will-power? Do we know how to put together the fact that counselees are often ‘very rebellious’ and ‘very hurt’ at the same time, without washing over the latter just because our counselees and our culture make it primary? Do we labor hard and patiently to help counselees grasp the biblical view of suffering and temptation as the context within which to understand both their responsibility and God’s grace? Do we discount Satan and his attacks on people? Do we brush over discussion of situational hardships as mere blameshifting? Do we move quickly past physical or emotional pain to tackle immediately the counselee’s responsibility for his reaction? Are we patient? Do counselees know we understand how they experience life? Do we pray seriously because our biblical world-view teaches us that people cannot do it by will-power but need the direct grace and power of God?

Counselees typically want to change their circumstances. Nouthetic counselors typically want to change the counselee’s behavior within those circumstances. The two can lock horns needlessly. Patient and sympathetic entry into the counselee’s circumstances often can open the door for biblical categories to reinterpret those circumstances. As suffering is seen through God’s eyes, biblical categories then expose the lusts of the heart which seek particular circumstantial blessings rather than the Giver of gifts and promises. On such a foundation particular steps of obedience can be mapped out. The behavioral changes proposed will not be selected arbitrarily off a generic list of good things to do. Instead, the behavior appropriate for that individual (those ‘good works prepared

in advance by God') will flow specifically from three intertwined strands of biblical understanding: the counselee's behavior, motives (Issue #2), and situation (Issue #3). The second and third strands need to be brought up to the level of development which the first strand has enjoyed.

Our critics' perception that our practice is often defective has been accurate, even if their alternatives are misguided grossly. The biblical alternative, another of the crucial issues in contemporary biblical counseling, is to articulate the full biblical view of both man and man's situation in all its power, realism, compassion, and subtlety. Then, by the grace of God, we must mature in wisdom to practice counseling in the light of such truth.

#4. We need to press much further in understanding the biblical data about the counselor-counselee relationship.

Crucial issue #1 reaffirmed our epistemological and practical foundation. Issue #2 probed the nature of change. Issue #3 reexamined our understanding of the counselee and his situation. Issue #4 asks, "What is the nature of the relationship between the counselor and counselee?"

We all know that we are to 'love' those we counsel. Biblical counseling is "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4: 15). What does this mean in practice? Nouthetic counseling uniquely has comprehended the authoritative, shepherdly, and truth-speaking elements in biblical love. We are known (perhaps notorious) for seeking to reflect the directive, confrontational, and authoritative style of counsel which the Bible repeatedly evidences.

The counseling world, Christian and non-Christian alike, abhors 'authority.' It equates authority with authoritarian. Instead, a therapist uses a relationship of acceptance to elicit healing forces from within the counselee. Biblical counseling rightly has stressed that the lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of His Word demand that counseling be authoritative if it is to be loving. We have avoided emphasizing the counseling relationship for fear that it smacks of transference, unconditional positive regard, and man-centeredness.

There is 'danger to the left of us' in various secular constructions of the counselor-counselee relationship which zealously avoid any overt authority (covert authority is, of course, present in every counseling system). But there is also danger to the other side. The biblical view of the counseling relationship has non-authoritative elements, in which the 'counselee' sets the agenda, in which 'the relationship' is central to constructive counseling taking place! The Scripture demands that we probe the interplay between authority and mutuality characteristic of healthy biblical relationships. We must mirror the variety of counselor-

counselee configurations which the Bible portrays as vehicles for the Lord's authority.

Given the ways we historically have fought against unbiblical notions, it is perhaps no wonder that nouthetic counselors even have tended to be a bit suspicious of the counselee, have insisted on maintaining control of the agenda, have aimed for quick and obvious changes, have hesitated to appear too caring, have been leery of long-term counseling relationships. We need to rethink this. In fact, the authoritative shepherd who decisively intervenes is only one of the modes of biblical counseling. It is not even the primary mode. It is the backup mode for when the primary mode fails. The most characteristic biblical counseling relationship is a long-term friendship, consisting of mutually invited counsel and generating dependency on God as well as constructive interdependency on one another. The authoritative, short-term intervention is the emergency, life-saving measure. Is this a new message within nouthetic counseling? Far from it. There always has been a peculiar (and biblical!) tension within nouthetic counseling between short-term 'restorative' counseling and ongoing 'preventive' counseling.

On the one hand, nouthetic counseling has stressed the authoritative ministry of the Word. Adams has written at length about the counseling role of the pastor as "God's professional" and about the connections between remedial counseling and church discipline. His books on counseling method, in particular *The Christian Counselor's Manual* and *Ready to Restore*, set forth a model of counseling that is relatively formal with well defined roles. The counselor leads, sits behind the desk, sets the agenda, interprets authoritatively from the Bible, confronts, encourages, and guides. The counselee provides honest data, commits himself to counseling, and follows the remedial steps outlined.

On the other hand, from the beginning nouthetic counseling has had a 'peer counseling' thrust which de-professionalizes counseling. It says all wise Christians are competent to counsel one another. The lay counseling emphasis of *Competent to Counsel* implicitly and explicitly downplayed the formalized notion that counseling meant a competent expert served a needy client. In fact, the daily life normality of mutual counsel, which the Bible presupposes, often has become an invigorating reality in churches influenced by nouthetic counseling. In this 'peer counseling' mode counseling moves out of the office and into all of life. Counseling verges into honest friendships, child-rearing, marriage, discipleship, small groups, and all the 'one-anothering' that Christians do with each other.

Biblical counseling, then, not only has implied "6-12 weeks of strongly

interventionist and directive counseling.” It also has implied how my best friends and I ought to relate to each other over the next thirty years: as equals, honestly and mutually encouraging one another in a long-term (even lifelong!) ‘counseling’ relationship. Such counseling rarely requires one to confront the other. The basis is self-confrontation. The ‘agenda’ emerges only in the give and take of seeking to know and encourage one another.

One of the crucial issues in contemporary biblical counseling is the further articulation of the relationship between the more ‘authoritative, frankly remedial’ elements of counseling and the more ‘mutual, ongoing encouragement’ elements. Adams’ emphasis has been on the former. This is evidenced most clearly by the relatively ‘formal’ counseling model which his lay counseling book, *Ready to Restore*, presents. Adams comments:

Lay counseling must be both preventive and remedial. But in this book we shall be concerned almost exclusively with nouthetic, or remedial, counseling [page 10].

Our goal is systematically biblical counseling, the ministry of God’s truth in love. The ‘nouthetic’ part of biblical counseling is the ‘fence.’ It is the backup mode of biblical counseling. It is for when the sheep leave the green pastures to wander out into the desert. The ‘paracletic’ part of biblical counseling is the ‘field.’ It is the primary mode of biblical counseling, containing all the mutually edifying, encouraging, one-anothering, nourishing, praying, and loving that is the normal Christian life. It is as much a two-way street as possible. It is as egalitarian as possible. It is as biblically ‘non-directive and client-centered’ as possible.

Figure 2 (page 68) portrays the relationship between the authoritative ‘fence’ and the mutual ‘field’ in which counseling takes place. We are well known for having the fence. We are probably the only formal counseling system around that even realizes that love has a fence. There is a time to confront a counselee frankly. But I submit that it is very important that we become equally well known for the ‘field.’ It is, after all, the place where most of the joys, changes, and constructive counseling take place. ‘Preventive’ is too bland to describe the field of love. Perhaps we should call the center of the circle ‘invited’ or ‘wise peer’ counseling.

Within the field of love there is a spectrum between invited counsel from a respected person and a more fully peer relationship. Parents, disciplers, pastors, elders, and other wise people often may be in the mentor role. People seek out someone whom they respect and trust, who they know cares for them. Full mutuality under the Lord’s authority is always the desirable goal. It is, of course, unattainable in a world with children, with new converts, with great sanctification

FENCE OF LOVE:
necessary boundaries
to guard life in the Spirit

Counsel from
authoritative
shepherd

Counsel with
trusted, wiser
friend-shepherd

FIELD OF LOVE:
arena of normal and desirable
practice of life in the Spirit

Mutual counsel
between wise peers

Figure 2

needs in old converts, with warfare and hardships. But when we are all ‘fully taught,’ this is what we shall all be like. The peer reality can be realized in part, and it ought to be fully integrated into our vision of biblical counseling’s central intent. The fence is the boundary of life; the field is the life.

I see a series of benefits coming out of developing neglected elements in the counselor-counselee relationship. I briefly will sketch four benefits. First, we will gain greatly in flexibility to relate differently to different counselees. There are various ways for structuring the counseling relationship. A brief, highly structured intervention (say over 6-12 weeks) may be the appropriate strategy for helping ‘person A’ at a certain stage of his life. It may be wholly inappropriate for ‘person B,’ who would benefit more from ongoing accountability, friendship, and greater mutuality with a wise friend (equally biblical counseling).

Second, by articulating a dominant ‘peer mode’ whose boundaries are the ‘authoritative mode’ we open the door wide for all Christians to counsel. Many counseling gifts are given by God to people who rarely will be called to take an authoritative position towards another. Articulating the way in which biblical counseling is a ‘fenced field of love’ will free people to see that the very heart of biblical counseling is open to all with wisdom.

Third, biblical counseling barely has touched on many potential strengths that flow from the counseling relationship. ‘The relationship’ is a powerful tool in counseling. We must not let the secular emphases on transference and unconditional positive regard make us shy away from exploring a rich biblical vein. Paul continually counsels and teaches biblical truth in the context of his personal relationship with his hearers. His joys, prayers, anguish, fears, trials, needs for prayer, wonderments about his hearers, tears, memories, attitudes, plans, hopes, these and more are continually on the table. Is our relatively impersonal and objective pastoral counseling biblical here? Are we simply mirroring the professional detachment of our culture’s forms of psychotherapy?

One consequence of enhanced appreciation of the relationship between the counselor and counselee is that more attention will be paid to events within the counseling process itself. Immediate data, features of the relationships between counselor, counselee(s), and God played out right in the room, can be particularly useful grist for the mill of biblical counseling. The counselee not only will bring outside life in, to be worked on in counseling; counselors will be attentive to the continuity between outside life and counseling. How are we treating one another? Biblical changes in attitude and actions that happen right within the friendship of counseling (from both parties!) can then ripple out into the rest of life.

Fourth, as we enrich our perspective on the biblical counseling relationship,

we will change the ‘flavor’ of much of the counseling we do. The vast bulk of biblical counseling will not look authoritative. In fact, it is desirable that a pastor aim to de-emphasize the authoritative, formal, confrontive, and unilateral elements in his counseling as much as is appropriate to the case at hand. We should save the fence for when it is really needed. How many counselees have been needlessly confronted — perhaps even put on the defensive — when they would have confronted themselves if a probing and inviting question had been asked? Biblical counseling, like healthy family life, has a minimal number of confrontational and disciplinary events. All the other forms of constructive relating create the dominant tone.

In summary, biblical counseling always has contained the seeds of two complementary visions of counseling: one relatively more authoritative and the other relatively more mutual. The former has been articulated in detail. The latter always has been more implicit—more the logical implication of the competency of wise people to help one another. These other dimensions in the counselor-counselee relationship must be articulated explicitly.

#5. Biblical counseling must be contextualized to new audiences.

The crucial issues of motivation, suffering, and the counseling relationship each concern our conceptual balance and the way we go about our counseling. Crucial issue #5 is a different sort of issue. It focuses on with whom we speak about what we believe. Biblical counseling needs to interact with a wider audience. We generally have spoken to the ‘conservative pastor in the trenches’ and to the ‘counseling-minded lay person.’ We have given them tools to counsel more confidently and effectively. Our target audience has been the local church.

Biblical counseling must cultivate other audiences. We need to do so for our own edification as a truly biblical movement. We need to do so in order to edify others with what God has given us. I would like to propose one particular audience into which biblical counseling must be contextualized. We need to speak with Christian academics. We have barely begun to generate meaningful dialogue with the faculty and students in Christian colleges and seminaries.

Biblical counseling has been a grass-roots movement, finding its home in healthy local-church life. This is a great strength. Biblical counseling gets established in local churches because it works to transform lives. It works to transform lives because it is God’s pattern for ministry—love woven through with truth. But we generally, and unfortunately, have been shut out from intellectual and educational centers. We have shut ourselves out because we have not addressed that audience. Biblical counseling does have intellectual integrity and

power and yet is not speaking to the more intellectual segments of Christian culture. Indeed, it often is dismissed as anti-intellectual and simple-minded.

How do we explain this and answer the charge? I believe that the answer essentially boils down to a matter of audience analysis. Jay Adams wrote to the local church. He consciously selected his audience. He spoke the language of persuasion to that audience. Like any good preacher of the Word of God, he concealed his intellectual 'bones' within vivid illustrational and practical teaching. He gave people something to respond to, believe in, and act upon. He did not dwell on qualifications, counter-instances, and nuances. He simply sought to speak clearly, simply, and persuasively. Of course he over-generalized and over-simplified. This was not because Adams does not believe in complexities and vexed questions. It was because he does believe in the primary importance of certain central, life-changing, and essentially simple truths.

Critics have misread simple for simplistic. Biblical counseling is informed by a highly developed theological tradition. Its roots are as 'intellectual' as they are practical. Biblical counseling, however, like the Bible, is anti-intellectualistic. This has generated a certain basic criticism of academia and the secular professions. The counseling world, Christian and non-Christian alike, guards its turf by creating technical vocabularies and professional structures into which aspiring counselors must be initiated. Biblical counseling rightly has stressed that wisdom lying open on the pages of Scripture is the sole criterion for counseling. We have opposed their pretension to proprietary rights over knowledge and efficacy in the arena of counseling. We have opposed the professional elitism inherent in secular psychology, an elitism mirrored in most 'Christian counseling.' We have opposed the notion that non-biblical experts possess the turf of 'psychological, emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal problems.' We have opposed the obscurantism which substitutes technical jargon for plain talk, which confuses a label or diagnosis for true knowledge. We even have thought that academia was not the primary arena in which to discuss counseling. It is a secondary arena with well institutionalized pretensions to primacy. So we have addressed the church because biblical counseling is meant for the daily lives of God's people.

The grass roots always will and always should be the primary constituency for biblical counseling. First things first. Among counseling systems nouthetic counseling has seen uniquely the centrality of Scripture, obedience to the Lord, human responsibility, the fence of love, and the local church ministry. But, as in the other crucial issues, we must redress imbalances. We need to reach out to the educational wing of the church of Christ. If we neglect Christian academia, the development and spread of biblical counseling will be hindered seriously.

Much of the rejection of biblical counseling in Christian academia is because of the offense of the message. We have challenged the intellectual and practical habits of secular professionalism, habits which are rampant in the educational institutions and professional organizations of Christian counseling. But I am persuaded that much of the rejection is also because we have not yet spoken their language. The offense is not the message but the medium and style. Within a context of genuine dialogue we need to articulate the same truths in a form that is culturally ‘hear-able.’

At minimum, we want people to disagree with us intelligently and not on the basis of a caricature. Repeatedly I have encountered gross misunderstandings of what biblical counseling was all about in people who are not as far from our basic commitments as we may think. I have encountered a number of folks from The Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) — our ‘arch foes’ when it comes to counseling — who have thought of us as crudely behavioristic, lacking even the rudiments of a view of inner life and motivation. They think Adams’ comments about a ‘feeling orientation’ meant biblical counseling discounted emotions as bad or irrelevant just as it discounted everything about motivation and thinking.

But ‘feeling orientation’ is actually a profound motivational concept stated in street talk. It has nothing to do with whether emotions are good or bad, important or trivial. ‘Feeling orientation’ is meant to communicate vividly to counselees: children or adults, illiterate or educated. Our lives get in trouble because we interpret life via unexamined subjective experience (“I feel that. . .”) and because we live for what we want (“I feel like. . .”) The most profound issue in every person’s life is whether he is ‘feeling oriented’ or ‘Lordship oriented.’ Is he ruled in detail by world, flesh, devil, desires, and idols? Or is he liberated into the rule of the Lord whose love and grace we trust and delight in?

‘Feeling orientation’ often communicates well to the man in the pew or counseling office. But it bewilders scholars who wrestle to make more precise sense of human motivation and emotions. The term confuses them rather than edifies. Is that their fault? It is no more their fault than if I tried to counsel a troubled teenager by alluding to the *epithumiai tes sarkes* without providing extensive translation and illustration! The solution? Analyze our audience. Contextualize our insights to the questions they are asking and the language they speak. Biblical categories have a powerful and subtle explanatory power. We are not being heard through the misunderstandings of what we are saying. The responsibility to create understanding is first of all ours.

Many are alienated from our message for bad reasons, not good reasons. I have

found many CAPS people come to respect what we are saying once they understand it. Some love it. It is something for which they have been looking but do not know where to find. We need to build relationships. Some people have experienced us, or imagined us, to be prickly, impolite, and unfriendly. It is our fault if we allow such an image to be perpetuated.

We need to speak a different language to target a different people group. At the simplest strategic level we must employ the article and book that deal with theoretical questions, ambiguities, and complexities. We must have at least some 'non-popular' writing. Our immediate goal must be to generate an extended dialogue, to listen as well as to hear. This strategy differs from the sermon, which consciously simplifies in order to edify immediately. Of course I believe that those who oppose us need the insights about psychology and biblical counseling that we have. But I also believe that we need the (many?!) allies and constructive critics we will find amid the current 'opposition.'

To date we have reached thousands of Christian people with the message of biblical counseling. We need to continue to reach these same people as our primary focus. The local churches are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. But we also need to analyze a different audience and expend some legitimate effort in reaching the educational wing of Christendom. Is addressing academia simply a nice idea to be attended to someday? I think it is a crucial issue now. The future of the local church is involved! Where are the church leaders and counselors of tomorrow being trained today? They are being trained in institutions where biblical counseling is dismissed with a wave of the hand.

We are on a narrow base at the moment. I am convinced with my whole heart that God has given us 'biblical-nouthetic counselors' some outstanding and needed insights. Richard Lovelace, in summarizing the counseling needs of the church of Christ, commented, "The counseling approach which is most likely to help in congregational renewal is a tuned and adapted form of nouthetic counseling."¹ This paper is in part a call for such 'tuning and adapting' to occur in some critical intellectual areas. But the crucial issues facing us are social as well as intellectual. I am convinced that we are shut up in a fairly narrow sector of believing Christendom and that to spread the word more widely will bless, stimulate, and change us as much as edify others.

#6. The relationship of biblical counseling to secular psychology needs to be clarified publicly.

We need to clarify the nuances in our view of secular psychology. Our rejection of secularism has been 'in the headlines.' The subtleties of the biblical

response to secular knowledge have been ‘in the fine print.’ Both halves of our view need to be developed if we are going not only to squeeze error out of the church but also to speak cogently and persuasively to a psychologized culture.

“Wait a minute,” you might be thinking, “I thought you dealt with psychology when you discussed the abiding relevance of the ‘same old issues’ that nouthetic counseling has always stressed!” Perhaps it seems a paradox, but the final crucial issue for contemporary biblical counseling is the need to define more clearly the nuances in our relationship to secular thinking. The relationship of presuppositional consistent Christianity to secular culture is not simply one of rejection. Half of what biblical presuppositions give us is a way to discern the lie that tries to make people think about themselves as autonomous from God.

But the other half of what biblical categories do is give us a way of appreciating, redeeming, and reframing the culture of even the most godless men and women. We, after all, even are able to use the ‘data’ gathered from godless counselees, reinterpreting their own perceptions back to them in biblical categories that turn their world inside out and upside down!

The critics of nouthetic counseling forget (and perhaps even those who like our opposition to secularist thought forget) that Jay Adams spoke from the beginning of a legitimate role for psychology. Right from the introduction of *Competent to Counsel* the door was open for a properly constructed relationship between secular psychology and biblical counseling:

First, I am aware that my interpretations and applications of Scripture are not infallible. Secondly, I do not wish to disregard science, but rather I welcome it as a useful adjunct for the purposes of illustrating, filling in generalizations with specifics, and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture, thereby forcing the student to restudy the scriptures.

Biblical counseling has never developed in any detail what that properly constructed relationship would look like or do. We have been busy establishing and defending where we stand.

I previously have spoken of secular psychology as an enemy of biblical faith and biblical counseling practice. That stated, it is important to remember that historically Christians have done a number of different things with their enemies. There is error ‘to the left of us’: capitulation and compromise with the world. We live in a Christian counseling world captivated by psychology. There is also error ‘to the right of us’: running from our enemies, flatly rejecting them, perhaps fearing them, and separating ourselves. This latter temptation is the one nouthetic counseling faces. As in the previous crucial issues there is an imbalance that

needs to be corrected if we are to be more fully biblical.

Christians not only have capitulated or isolated themselves. Sometimes Christians fight with the weapons of truth and love. We are called not only to be stimulated by detailed error and to reject that error. We are called also to redeem error by placing distorted bits back within their proper biblical framework. The evangelistic and apologetic strength of biblical counseling hangs in large degree on such an endeavor. Clear presuppositional thinking creates three strategies.

First, Christians should be stimulated by their enemies. We are forced to sort out what the Bible does say positively. Enemies are incredibly useful. In the sovereignty of God enemies act as catalysts. Unbelievers often have thought long and studied hard in areas that Christians have neglected. The close study of human beings for the purpose of changing them was one of these areas. Biblical counseling was a product of such negative prodding. Biblical presuppositions undergird a strategy of exposition provoked by questions that secular thought and practice raise for the church.

Second, Christians should oppose their enemies frankly. Knowing what we believe gives us a basis to reject what is wrong. Unbiblical concepts and practices have been understood, analyzed, and rejected as false teaching. Biblical counseling is well known for rejecting secular psychology. Secular theorists are false prophets. Those who import their ideas into the church are deceived, at best, and wolves in sheep's clothing, at worst. Biblical presuppositions undergird a strategy of negation.

Third, Christians should love and convert their enemies. We have answers that are richer, truer, fuller. Our answers incorporate the very insights which non-Christians distort. We make these shine in their proper framework, proportion and balance within the categories of biblical truth. I am proposing that we think hard about this third strategy towards our enemies. Paul used this strategy in Acts 17:22-31. His evangelistic and apologetic strategy in Athens was based on capturing three particular unbiblical thoughts (verses 23 and 28). He reframed them, making them function in a biblical world-view. Did he 'integrate' paganism and the Word of God? No, Paul meant wholly different things from the original authors' intent. Consistent presuppositional thinking comes to fruition not only in strategies of exposition and negation. Biblical presuppositions also undergird a strategy of capture.

Presuppositional thinking has these three beauties. We have revelled in the first two but feared to look into the third. It smells dangerously of 'integration.' But it is not integration. It is wholly different. Grasping this difference is a crucial issue for contemporary biblical counseling. Beauty #1: we learn biblical

categories, often through the catalyst of our enemies. Beauty #2: we attack every shred of secular thinking which would wrench human life out of context and deny God. Beauty #3: we have categories to reframe every tiny bit of secular thinking so it functions as a comprehensible part of the God-centered world. We know what they are really looking at.

Beauty #3 is central to the evangelistic strategy of biblical counseling. By it we redeem what was lost. We take ‘insights’ stolen from God and distorted to work within an alien system. We presuppositional Christians need to ponder Beauty #3. We have received the benefit of #1 in order to appreciate biblical truth. We have shouted out #2 in order to hold the fort against alien ideas. But Beauty #3 is what a large group of Christians need to hear from us. It is what also will speak to the secular psychological world. Psychologists, Christian and non-Christian alike, are right that ‘biblical truth’ and the rejection of error often have coexisted with massive ignorance about how in-the-flesh people really worked. They have sought to look closely—but they have misinterpreted what they see. Let us provide the eyeglasses that bring even error into submission to God. Beauty #3 provides the paradigm shift, the conversion experience, that changes the way familiar data looks. Beauty #3 will draw many who are currently both intellectual and psychological, Christians and non-Christians, into useful partnership within the biblical counseling movement.

One of the ironies (whether it is bitter, humorous, or sublime I am unsure!) attending the contemporary Christian counseling world is that we, of all people, are the ones who successfully will ‘integrate’ secular psychology. ‘Integrationists’ are too impressed with psychology’s insights to be able to win them to Christ. Integrationists have missed the point that the big question between Christians and secular psychologists is not, “What can we learn from them?” The big question is, “How can we speak into their world to evangelize them?” But it is also fair to say that presuppositionalists have missed that the big question between biblical counseling and Christian integrationists is not, “How can we reject and avoid them?” The big question is, “How can we speak constructively into their world?” The key to both big questions is an ability to reframe everything that psychologists see and hold dear into biblical categories. If we do our homework, then biblical counseling not only will be a message for the psychologized church. It will be a message for the psychologized world.

Think about this: if biblical counseling is true, if it is indeed biblical, it will have a wide evangelistic and apologetic thrust. Is it premature to envision the conquest of the world when we, like the French Resistance in World War II, still are fighting an underground battle for our lives within our own homeland?

Perhaps. But let us open our eyes to the fact that this is to what we will be called someday — and just perhaps we are called to start now.

Is it premature? No. At minimum there are thousands of Christians, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, college psychology majors, counselees drinking from a different well who can be won by an approach that interacts with and radically reframes what enamors them about psychology. Usually what makes error enamoring is a perceived lack in their church and Bible experience. The real Bible and biblical counseling make up these lacks in ways people never have dreamed. I am not minimizing the opposition we will continue to face. Biblical counseling, by definition, treads on the toes of those whose intellectual, professional, and educational lives have been staked on the validity of secular psychology. But there are lots of Christians out there looking for a paradigm shift in which they can believe. More than we realize. Maybe there are non-Christians as well.

We must do our homework in Beauty #3. We must state, and illustrate concretely, the riches of our position towards secular psychology.² This is one of the crucial questions facing us. Presuppositional thinking gives powerful tools we barely as yet have begun to use. We need these tools if we are to raise our sights to the possibility of doing evangelistic work at a high intellectual level with the secular, psychological, and psychiatric communities. If we are faithful and prayerful, the hour will come.

Conclusions.

Each of the crucial issues facing contemporary biblical counseling is a test, illuminating where we are. Each delivers a challenge, calling us to where we must go. Each holds a promise, inviting us to the fresh wisdom that will come as we explore the riches of Scripture and life and as we pursue new friendships within the body of Christ. Biblical truth is balanced, elegant, and potent to transform lives. Our exploration of neglected riches will bring biblical counseling practice into greater conformity with such truth. The way we as a movement face these six crucial issues will determine the scope, depth, and future of our usefulness to the Lord.

In a thoughtful and thought-provoking personal letter John Carter of Rosemead Graduate School, one of the leading critics of nouthetic counseling, commented that nouthetic counseling could only speak to audiences “who already shared Jay Adams’ perspective.” There was little that could be done creatively within the “radically biblical perspective” because everything such a limited perspective could say had been said already either explicitly or implicitly.

As a movement we were likely to stagnate into rehashing among ourselves the thoughts of one man.'

Carter's words are sobering and challenging. If he is right, we are less than biblical. For the Bible portrays itself as a fountain of life, granting fresh wisdom to all who ask and dig, producing ministry that changes lives significantly. If he is right, then this article has been wrong, and it is a pathetic dream for me to lift up my eyes and see the whole world waiting. But I think our vision always has outstripped far our attainment, because it is a biblical vision. If we are indeed biblical, then the foundational presupposition, "radically biblical counseling," will generate a dynamic of life, growth, and expansion, not stagnation. It will liberate, not limit.

Jay Adams is the only author I ever have read who publicly and repeatedly has invited co-laborers to work and write in areas he barely has touched. The unexplored and undeveloped regions are more numerous than the explored. Biblical counseling's main treasure is a few big and provocative ideas. Biblical ideas. God's ideas. Seminal ideas that have implications beyond what we even can imagine. There is much more to learn and then to say. I can do no better than to close with this: the subject of this paper, indeed the subject of every section of this paper, demands at the very least a definitive book or two.

FOOTNOTES

1. Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), p. 218.
2. See my "Human Defensiveness: The Third Way," *Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, for one attempt to do this at a high level of generality.
3. Personal correspondence with John Carter, November 4, 1980.