Part One

BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS AND VARYING METHODOLOGY

* One's methodology, model in counseling, or method of counseling will come from his presuppositions, or what he believes to be true.

* In counseling, your method to bring about change, or to deal with a person, will grow out of your basic view of man.

* One's attitude and treatment of people in counseling grows out of what one believes. (Illus.-- Hitler's idea of Jews being inferior race, or the treatment of blacks over the last 150 years.)

Man's basic problem is depravity, hence, the need of regeneration. The Bible must be the final authority in faith and practice. All systems of counseling in the past (or present) must be studied in the light of the Word of God.

Three Approaches to Counseling:

I. Expert Knowledge -- Proponents: Sigmund Freud and F. J. Skinner

II. Common Knowledge -- Proponents: Carl Rogers, O. Hobart & Mowrer

III. Divine Knowledge -- Proponents: Scripture, God's Revelation
    (Dr. Jay Adam's terms)

I. Expert Knowledge: These men held that only those possessing expert knowledge are competent to counsel. This view is much like Plato's, who believed that only the wisest among men should rule. In this approach, the expert must do it for the other person.

A. The Basis of Conventional Psychiatry

1. Freud has been the most prominent example of the expert knowledge approach. (He emphasized man's inner drives.)

2. Freud taught that man's main problem is poor socialization. The counselee, according to Freud, may have been---
   a. kicked around as a child,
   b. raised in a strict victorian-like home,
   c. influenced by an overly-dominant mother, etc.

3. He taught that this kind of wrong socialization builds a conscience that is over socialized, or overly sensitive.

4. His approach was that only the expert can solve these perplexing and complicated problems.

5. The Freudian-trained therapist uses two expert techniques that grow out of his expert diagnosis of the problem.
a. psychoanalysis emphasizes the development of the ego and the differentiation and the individualization of the self.

note:
His teaching was and is considered the first force in psychology! He was an Austrian physician who lived from 1856-1939. He popularized the study of the unconscious mental processes. He taught that our outward behavior (especially when abnormal) was the product of unconscious mental conflict. He placed a great emphasis on the unconscious process and would employ the use of hypnoses, dream analysis, and free association to ascertain what might be troubling the person. The therapist would try to determine who did what to the person!

He took a very dim view of religion, rejecting both the teaching, doctrine, and methods of theology and its conclusions. A religious experience to him was a child’s delusion. Freud referred to himself as a godless heathen, and a hopeless Jew. Maybe his teaching came from what he experienced as a child, and he was responding against his rearing and Jewish teaching. He emphasized sex as the basis of most every drive.

6. The expert knowledge approach is based squarely upon the premise (or presupposition) that man is NOT responsible for what he does.

7. Conventional psychiatry believes that:
   a. Mental illness exists.
   b. Probing into the client's past life is always an essential part of treatment. (Who did WHAT to the person?)
   c. Transference is an important part of the therapy process.

note:
The patient is taught to transfer to the therapist the attitudes he held or still holds toward the people in his past life. The therapist then helps the client to relive his past conflicts and explains to him how he is repeating the same inadequate behavior with the therapist.

d. Conventional psychotherapy is important in counseling. (The client needs to be made aware of unconscious mental conflicts. This is accomplished through the interpretation of transference, dreams, and free associations.)
e. All deviate behavior must be overlooked because it is considered a product of the mental illness! Since it is a part of such illness the person is NOT held responsible for it.
f. In this system it is not primary their purpose to teach people how to behave. The conventional therapist believes the client will behave more responsibly when he comes to better understand what is causing problems on the subconscious level.

Jerome Frank, in the book "Overview of Psychotherapies" wrote the following: "...Too many people today have too much money and not enough to do, so they turn to psychotherapy to combat the resulting boredom. It supplies novelty, excitement and, as a means of self-improvement, a legitimate way of spending money." "As recently as 30 years ago, no one questioned your right to be unhappy. Happiness was considered a blessing, not a guarantee. You were permitted to suffer pain, or fall into moods, or seek solitude without being analyzed, interpreted and discussed."
B. Behaviorism -- as represented by B. J. Skinner:

1. The behaviorist claims to be committed only to the use of factual evidence.

2. B. F. Skinner is devoted to the belief that man is a product of evolution -- not a created being.

3. The goal is survival and natural selection is the process (that is, survival of the fittest). (The stimulus is applied after the behavior rather than before.) Skinner taught that mankind is a product of his environment.

4. Both Freud and Skinner saw the counselees as not being responsible, but held others responsible for their actions.

**note:**
This approach is considered the second force in psychology. They would say... "All behavior is determined directly or indirectly by its consequences." This approach emphasized the outer drives and held that positive reinforcement is the power of behavioral engineering. This approach was formulated by J. B. Watson (1878-1958) who taught at John Hopkins University in Baltimore. He reduced man's behavior to chemical and physical terms, as he was greatly influenced by Pavlov.

**note:**
Freud saw the problem as poor socialization, that is, "What did society do to the person?" Skinner would say that man is not responsible because a determined animal cannot be held accountable. He taught that the environment was the cause of human behavior. By manipulating one's environment you can change the person's behavior.

**note:**
Conventional psychiatrists believe that ministers are a problem. They hold to the idea that ministers produce a feeling of guilt and an overly-sensitive conscience in people; therefore, they accuse ministers of being the culprits in the problems that many experience.

**Institutional psychology and psychiatry and methodology grew out of the following view (or their basic belief) regarding ministers. Their approach consists of five major tenets:**

1. They believe that ministers can do little for a person in a mental institution.

2. All the minister can do is support the patient's right to feel injured by others.

3. The pastor must understand that those admitted, who feel guilt, are no longer to be subjected to those from the outside. The pressure is to be removed so they might quietly lose their guilt and get well.

4. Pastors must consider those in mental institutions as violators of their conscience, but not victims of their conscience.

5. When the erratic behavior of the counselee is examined, it seems to be sin, but it isn't. The patient is not really responsible for his actions. He can't help what he is doing, he is sick. He blames himself for things he cannot help.
Why such teaching is wrong:

1. Most problems stem from a faulty relationship with God. Therefore, the pastor is the best prepared to help, not the most poorly prepared.

2. The pastor should never support the patient’s right to feel injured by others. (Significance and security are not the paramount needs in the person’s life.) The counselee is always responsible for his own actions, for resentment and bitterness are never justified. Two wrongs never make a right.

3. All of us have a moral responsibility to clear the conscience concerning whomever we have sinned against. The patient or counselee’s guilt may diminish when he is not confronted by the person on the outside, (or by the counselor) but all guilt is real.

4. People in mental institutions are not only victims, but also violators of their consciences. The pastor can play a tremendous role in helping the patient alleviate his guilt by confessing his sin and wrongs and by being reconciled with the offended person.

5. Any and all behavior not consistent with Scripture should be viewed as sinful behavior, and such behavior must be dealt with.

note: Why Skinner's approach is wrong:

1. Man is not a higher form of animal but rather a creation of God.
2. Environment doesn't totally determine man's actions, and man's decisions.
3. Experiments with rats do not tell us everything about man.
4. According to the Scriptures man is responsible for his behavior.
5. A changed environment is not man's primary need.
6. Man cannot provide the model, the power, or the environment for the change that he so desperately needs.
7. Man needs to be transformed. You may modify a person's behavior by a controlled environment, but it takes the Spirit of God to bring inward change.
8. In behaviorism there is no value, no standard, but everything is relative. By this means they seek to recondition the sinner.

While conventional psychiatry has fallen into quite a bit of disfavor, behaviorism has an impact on many modern approaches (even some who consider themselves Biblical) in counseling. Not all the tenets are embraced, but some aspects are held to or have influence.

II. Common Knowledge:

A. Non-Directive Counseling -- Carl Rogers

1. Carl Rogers believed that there is no need for an expert at all. He believed that all men have adequate knowledge and resources to handle their own problems. He played down the depravity of man (Cf. Romans 3:9-18; Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 1; 64:6)

2. His basic assumption was that people with unresolved problems were not living up to their own potential.
3. He taught that every person has the potential to do right. Deep within man lies the solutions to all of his problems. He believed that man at his core was good, not evil. (Norman Vincent Peale, Shuler, etc., lean in this direction.) He says that man has a spark of divinity in him; the task is to plug these in and to release the power inherent within.

4. Rogers taught that no authoritative standard from the outside should be imposed upon the counselee. No authoritative word may be spoken by the counselor to the counselee. Roger's approach was totally non-directive .."that you should not superimpose your convictions on someone else."

5. The counselor is a listener, a sounding board, and then one who reflects back to the counselee the ideas shared. He does not attempt to give advice, but to help the person see his inner potential to solve his own problems. The counselor merely seeks to rephrase the counselee's words and repeat them back to him to help him clarify his own thoughts.

note:
This is often called the third force in humanistic psychology. It was suppose to be a rebuttal to the first and second force (Freud and Skinner).

6. Rogers maintained that the study of animals and mental illness is not enough, that one must understand mental health. He taught that a study of the internal and external behavioral aspects was not enough.

7. Rogers felt that one's hopes, desires, feelings, emotions, etc., must be studied to understand the person. And he did not feel that the professional was the only one qualified to solve human problems.

note: Why Roger's approach is wrong.
1. Man does not have adequate resources within.
2. Man's basic problem is more serious than merely not living up to his or her potential.
3. Mankind at the core is sinful, inherently evil.
4. The counselor is not a mirror to merely help the person with the understanding of his own inner thoughts, etc.
5. The Biblical counselor does impose his moral standards on the counselee and they must be the standards of the Word of God, for it is the authoritative WORD.
6. God is sovereign, and His will and purpose are to be impressed upon the counselee. Human personality is not violated by the will, purpose and plan of God for the life.
7. The counselor must not adopt an accepting attitude toward sin.

B. O. Hobart Mower--(noted research psychologist)

1. Mowrer used words like religion-- sin-- and guilt, but drained them of any real Biblical meaning.

2. He saw man's problems as stemming from bad behavior and that the bad behavior leads to feelings of guilt.

3. He taught that guilt can be removed by confession and restitution. (This was strictly on a horizontal level.)

4. He taught also that guilt is the result of violating one's conscience. One's conscience is
usually violated by wronging another person.

5. Mowrer offers only a psychological lift--a good feeling from owning up to one's own sins. Confession is only on a horizontal level and cannot bring about the change the Bible calls the new birth.

6. In his methodology he stressed group involvement, and that answers could be found within the group. He did stress the need of honesty and openness.

He challenged the entire field of psychiatry. His teaching had a profound impact on conventional psychology and its view of religion. He challenged evangelical Christianity about selling its birthright for a mess of psychological pottage.

note: Mowrer's method was wrong, because...

Sin is against God, and neither man nor the group can atone for man's sin. Resources are in God alone, and confession must begin with God. Mowrer does not meet the need, but does touch upon truth. His main emphasis is upon bad behavior which man needs to confess. His basic idea is that one's problem stems from poor relationships with others and that through group therapy he can get back where he belongs.

note:

We need a framework in which we can properly function in counseling. Unfortunately psychology has not been that framework, either in the past or the more recent schools of thought.

Clinical psychology is one of the most unscientific sciences known to man. There are at present over 200 different schools of therapy, having roughly about 10,000 different techniques. This is proof that they do not have the answers. Which is right?

NEWER PSYCHOTHERAPIES ON THE SCENE: We will examine one of the newer approaches to counseling that have had an impact on Christians.

Some seem to be Christian in doctrine and principle, but on closer examination they contain only the ideas of men. Because they resemble Christianity on the surface, Christians fall for them, and their tenets are incorporated into the methodology of some well known counselors of today.

Here is the example of....

Reality Therapy--William Glasser

1. He taught the core of Reality Therapy as found in the three R's - reality, responsibility, and right-and-wrong.

2. He stressed that the person must see and deal with life as it really is--and that a distorted view of the actions of other people, of the events affecting the person's life, and one's actions can lead to emotional problems and hinder that person from behaving in appropriate ways.

3. He encouraged the patient to develop behavior that is realistic in terms of both the present and the future.

4. In the area of responsibility he stated, "It is not enough to help a person face reality; he must also learn to fulfill his needs in a responsible way."
5. He worked almost totally with outward behavior and taught that responsible behavior shapes positive thoughts and emotions.

6. He taught that every person has two basic needs—"The need to love and to be loved and the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others." Hence—significance and security, and self-worth or self-esteem.

7. His standards are all worldly standards and the methodology is totally self-effort to bring about change.

**note:** The study of the history of psychotherapy reveals the rise and decline of one psychotherapy after another with none seeming to disappear because a newer model, new version or newer idea comes along.

The Christian psychologists of recent years include all the following: Dr. Clyde Narramore, Henry Brandt, William Hulme, Wayne Oates, Carroll Wise, John S. Bonnell, Frank Minirth, James Dobson, Charles Solomon, Lawrence Crabb, Gary Collins, William Backus, Rollo May, Jay Adams, and many others.

Many of them are eclectic in their approach and they seek to amalgamate many of the methods of the world's psychologists into a workable system with some Biblical overtones.

The above list are professionals, and besides them are the many who are evangelical popularizers. These people are not embraced by the former group for the most part and are considered to be "overly simplistic" and in danger of doing harm by their "self-help" formulas for psychological stability and principles for spiritual growth. This group also includes a great cross section of theological bents and positions. They include such people as: Charlie Shedd, Norman Wright, Bruce Larson, Tim LaHaye, Bill Gothard, J. Allan Peterson, and many others.

Is Christian counseling simply a Rogerian, Freudian, or behavioristic approach with occasional prayer and reading of Bible verses tacked on? Or is counseling based on biblical assumptions that are in some way unique?

To baptize counseling systems like Skinnerian Behaviorism and Berne/Harris/Steiner views of Transactional Analysis into the Christian fold unconverted by adding on God's Holy Name and sprinkling in a few assorted scriptural proof texts, ultimately amounts to taking His Name in vain. Yet this is what many seek to accomplish in their methodology of counseling.

---

The following books would help the student to understand many of the unbiblical approaches to counseling that are popular today:

*Psycho-heresy* by the Bobgans, and *The Psychological Way/ the Spiritual Way* by Martin and Deidre Bobgan.

*Helping People Grow* by Gary Collins; *Your Place in the Counseling Revolution* by Dr. Jay Adams

**III. Divine Knowledge:**

*A Christian must start with a Biblical foundation and build from it a Christian methodology of counseling which rests upon and is consistent with the foundation* -

Statement made by Dr. Jay E. Adams
A. **We must begin with the Scriptures** (II Timothy 3:16,17; Romans 15:4; 15:14; I Corinthians 10:11).

B. **Too often in the past counselors have begun with external data.** They have begun with the findings of B.F. Skinner, Sigmund Freud, Carl Rogers, and others. Christian counseling must have a methodology that is Christian or Biblical in order to be Christian Counseling.

C. **Too often in the past the Christian has been guilty** of building upon the sinking sand of psychology. Many have tried to find Scripture texts to support the foundation already laid from the teachings of the world.

D. **Instead of beginning with psychology, we must begin with the Scriptures.** If the Bible is the Word of God, and if it is the final word for faith and practice, then it should reign paramount.

E. **We should know the Word of God** so well that we can properly evaluate teachings of psychology in the light of the “thus saith the Lord.” We should know the Scriptures thoroughly and comprehensively.

*note:* This is a tremendous contrast to the idea that everything is relative--what is good today may be bad tomorrow, what is good for you may be bad for me; every person is entitled to his own value system.

F. **The Bible is the book on Behavior.**

1. It instructs us how to live and not live.

2. It shows us what is acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior. It shows us step-by-step how we can bring about behavior and personality change.

3. The Bible lays the framework for interpersonal relationships. It gives practical advice on solving family, marital, and personal conflicts.

G. **Biblical Foundation**

Jesus Christ is the center of all Christian counseling. He is the chief Corner Stone. If this statement is true, then who should know more about the human mind, personality, and behavioral change than the Lord? If Jesus Christ is at the center, then He, as Psalm 139 indicates specifically and intricately designed every single person. He is the master designer of every life.

The following general presuppositions are very important:

1. The Bible is the inspired, inherent Word of God, the final authority regarding faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16,17). It thoroughly equips for living.

2. Man’s basic problem is a sin problem (Romans 1, Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 53:6; Psalm 51). If we begin with any other basis or foundation, we will not truly be able to bring about the behavior and personality change that God requires of man which is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit. We must believe that the basic problem is sin and therefore the remedy is Jesus Christ.
3. Man is responsible for his actions. God created man to make responsible choices. God does not excuse man's behavior. Each person is responsible for his or her actions. God does not look for reasons or excuses, so called. He judges man squarely on his response to Jesus Christ and the Word of God (James 4:17; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12; 21:8).

**note:**
Freud puts the blame on society. He said that man was not responsible for his actions or conditions and not responsible for getting out of his dilemma. Man is basically mentally ill because we have produced a too strict conscience, or "super ego" into the patient.

4. All problems fall into three categories-- organic, satan, or spiritual. One's emotions are not an entity in themselves, rather they are connected to one's thinking and behavior. Change one's thinking and behavior and one will change the emotions.

5. The Christian counselor should assume the person is suffering from spiritual maladjustment or sin. The spiritual problem will evidence itself in improper thinking or improper behavior, and doubtless both are involved, although the thinking is not as apparent.

6. Biblical counseling is directive in nature. The Bible is a directive book. Counseling is not just acting as a "sounding board", but it is warning, challenging, giving advice, guiding, admonishing and even rebuking.