

From Pastor Tony Sanelli

COUNSELING AS A MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

Do you have a Christian psychiatrist on staff? Do you know of any Christian counseling centers? On occasion, questions such as these are posed to me by both members of our congregation and those outside our local church. The questioners do not mean to imply anything negative about the church or pastoral staff. More often than not they are hurting people in need of help and care. However, they do evidence a paradigm for helping people deal with their problems that is informed by the broader culture.

In our society secular psychology and the social, behavioral and medical sciences have dominated and defined discourse about counseling for several decades. The result in many circles of the Church has been the development of "Christian psychology" or "Christian counseling" as a parallel. The fruit of this endeavor was the migration of counseling outside the church and pastoral oversight to trained professionals who have integrated humanistic anthropologies (views of man and his condition) with a spattering of biblical concepts here and there.

However, the questions may also simply be an indicator of a lack of communication and clarity on the part of the shepherds and staff. I have personally found it to be a combination of both. So how does GBC approach counseling? What do we do to help people address their problems? I would like to briefly address this matter in this article without writing a primer or an apologetic for "biblical counseling" per se. The church has grown to such an extent that we should take the necessary time to clarify such an important question for everyone.

Our Convictions

Simply put, our conviction from the very beginning of this ministry has been that counseling belongs in the church because it is the responsibility of the flock to care for each other. This overarching statement presupposes several other convictions that deserve exposition for which we do not have the space here. This presupposes that: 1) The vast majority of human problems are rooted ultimately in sin (Mark 7:21-23; James 4:1-8) 2) The scriptures provide us sufficient wisdom and guidance for "life and godliness" (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:3) 3) The local church is the instrument Christ has ordained to help sanctify and mold believers into His likeness (1 Cor. 12) 4) Caring for each other is commanded of every believer (Eph. 4:11-16) 4) God has sufficiently equipped the body of Christ to accomplish this for one another (Rom. 15:14) 5) The power to overcome problems is found in the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2:9-10).

Counseling, in essence, is discipleship and hence an essential part of the local church's ministry to bring the flock as a whole and its individual members to maturity. This was what the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote: "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28). This does not imply that all problems are simplistic or that believers have the same abilities and gifts nor that there are never any organic or physiological complications. It is simply to say that counseling does not belong exclusively to trained experts who are immersed in secular theories regarding the nature of man and bear no accountability to Christ's church on a local level. It is a ministry of the church! As inadequate as we are, God is ready and eager to work through us as human channels of His infinite grace to care and minister to others and help them overcome their problems—in Christ!

Looking Backwards

How have we put these convictions into practice in the past? Every elder at every stage of the history of our congregation has been instructed in the biblical and theological underpinnings of biblical counseling. In addition, they have been provided with a basic foundation in biblical methodologies for counseling. I myself was taught and disciplined in this aspect of ministry by Stuart Scott (*continued*)

May Calendar

Walk for Life
May 6

Women's Tea
May 6

All-Church Retreat
May 19-21

Office Closed
May 29

June Calendar

Church Picnic
June 11

**San Quintin
Mission Trip Begins**
June 23

Future Dates To Remember

Kids Camp
July 9-15

Jr. High Camp
July 16-22

Sr. High Camp
July 23-29

VBS
August 7-11

**All Church
Camping Trip**
August 17-21

Growing Together in the Knowledge and Grace of God

Weekly Calendar

Sundays:

Prayer: 8:15 am
Worship Services: 9:00 am & 11:00 am
Christian Education: 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Mondays:

Home Fellowship Groups: 7:00 pm

Tuesdays:

GSTM: 4:00-10:00 pm (*ends May 25*)
Home Fellowship Groups: 7:00 pm

Wednesdays:

Home Fellowship Groups: 7:00 pm
Senior High Youth Group: 7:00 pm

Thursdays:

Home Fellowship Groups: 7:00 pm
GSTM: 4:00-10:00 pm (*ends May 25*)

Junior High Youth Group: 7:00 pm
DVC Grace.: 7:00 pm

Fridays:

SF Men's Prayer Meeting: 12:00 p.m.
Cal Grace.: 7:00 pm

(*continued from page 3*) graders that would like to attend Kids Camp too. If you would like more information about any of these camps, you can contact me or visit Koinonia's web site at: And of course once again, we will be partnering up with several of our sister churches to put together our own High School Camp up at Mount Hope, this year's theme being along the lines of a spiritual boot camp. Please be praying that the Lord will use these ministries to do His will and purpose in the lives of young people, all for His glory.

Of course we will have our usual selection of pool parties, A's games and the like. But one addition from last year that many are anticipating again this summer is our "Late Night Young Theologians Society" which is open to all high school students that would like to stay after youth group on Wednesday nights to talk theology and dealing with various questions that come up. This was a big hit last year and we anticipate that it will be again.

Lots coming up. Lots to do. Lots to pray for.

In His Grace,

Chris

(formally with the Biblical Counseling Dept. of the Master's College). After a few years we brought up Stuart Scott and John Street (Dept. chair of Biblical Counseling at Master's college) to further instruct a select number of brethren who had expressed an interest in caring for others and/or were involved with leadership. These sessions came to a pre-mature conclusion when Stuart and John decided they could no longer teach in Northern California. Concurrent with this program we have utilized the Christ-centered training materials of Paul David Tripp (CCEF) and David Powlison (CCEF) and met with Paul for private instruction as well.

As the circle of those who have been exposed to some degree of biblical counseling has grown I have enfolded them and involved them with formal biblical counseling. What do I mean by formal? I mean that counseling is always happening because people in the body are constantly interacting, helping, exhorting and encouraging one another. Counseling is not something that happens in one magical hour every week in the counselor's or pastor's office. Nevertheless, there are times when people do not know whom to approach so they seek "counseling." This results in formal meetings with me, or another staff member or one of the brothers or sisters who have received training. On occasion, in some particular cases, I have sought the help of seasoned biblical counselors who share our convictions in order to expand the wisdom being brought to the situation.

Looking Forward

In our most recent members' meeting we mentioned that we are in the midst of planning the establishment of a more formal "counseling ministry" in the near future. What will this look like? Why is it necessary?

It is my personal conviction that it is every pastor's responsibility to remain involved in the ministry of personally caring for souls on more than a token level— even if he is the main teaching pastor. This, by God's grace, I have done for 10 years. However, when a flock grows like ours more people must be equipped and encouraged to minister in this capacity. Even with our present team of counselors we are not able to keep up with the requests for "formal" counseling (This incidentally, is one of the reasons we have not hung out a shingle as a "Counseling Center." Unfortunately, we have said too little and some have been confused as a result).

We saw this day approaching three years ago when we added Vince Cuomo to our pastoral staff. Vince has a Master's degree in biblical counseling from the Master's College and his wife Rainee is near completion of the same. Vince began as a part-time minister for our church and has focused on College ministry. Now, as a full-time minister, Vince will devote his time to College and the development of the counseling ministry. This will include further specialized training for those already counseling and training for others interested in this ministry beginning in the fall. Vince will be assisted by Tom Kruggel who has a burden for this ministry and is an elder in-training.

It is our hope to see the entire body as well as those interested in formal counseling better equipped to minister the grace of God to each other. Everyone who belongs to Christ has access to the all-sufficient grace of God.

If you are interested in learning more about the "counseling ministry" consider looking up the following links on the internet and reading "How People Change" followed by "Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands" as a primer to the subject. Meanwhile, keep watching for updates, encourage and admonish one another in love, carry each other's burdens, develop open and accountable friendships with other believers in small groups and when you don't see a way out please call the office and ask for help—we love you in Christ. 🙏

Biblical Counseling Links: www.ccef.org,
www.mackministries.org, www.nanc.org



Children's

Education

Sunday School Summer Session

As another school year comes to a close, we have many of the summer positions filled, but we still have a few more to go. As of this printing, we still have need for about 5 co-teachers and 4 substitute teachers. There are a needs during each service hour and in a few different age groups. If you have thought about serving as a teacher or helping out as a substitute, consider this as the perfect opportunity. If you are a member, or on your way to becoming one, and you are interested in possibly becoming a summer...

**Co-Teacher
Substitute Teacher
Emergency Substitute
Helper**

...please contact me in the office (676-1584), via email (or in person anytime you see me.) I'd be happy to answer any of your questions and help you feel confident about serving the Lord and our children in this wonderful ministry opportunity to regularly bring the teaching of God's word to our kids. If you are thinking that you can't serve because you will need a couple of Sundays off because of vacations, please don't let that hinder you. Each class will have two teachers and two subs assigned to it, needing only two of the four of you there each week. So vacations and the like can and will be worked out on a weekly basis.

It is a tremendous blessing to be a part of our children's spiritual lives and I'd ask that you please pray about maybe serving yourself or at least pray that the Lord will raise up people to fill the needs we currently have. And as always, please pray that the Lord will be gracious to our children by either bringing them to faith or building up their existing faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And remember to pray for and thank our teachers for the wonderful job they do.

In His Service, Chris Kiiskinen

Praying For Missions

Pray...to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. Eph 6:19

**There are so many ways to pray for missions!
God has given us a great privilege to participate through prayer
in the world-wide work of His kingdom.**

Begin by praying for the lost. [Http://www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net) is a great website about unreached people groups where there is no church strong enough to present the gospel to that culture, or no church at all! Pray that GBC might one day adopt a specific people group, supply the missionaries, funds, and prayer to plant a church that will share the gospel throughout that people. Pray for God's glory. John Piper writes that missions exists because worship doesn't. God is glorified when his name is proclaimed among the nations so that those people worship him, acknowledging him to be God.

Pray for the ministries of our missionaries. Pray for boldness (Eph 6:20), and kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Col 3:12), and love that abounds in real knowledge and all discernment (Phil 1:9). Pray for the Spirit to convict and to teach the people they minister to. Pray for the word of the Lord to spread rapidly and be glorified through their ministry (2 Thes 3:1). Pray for leadership to develop. By definition, missionaries are those who cross cultural barriers to bring the gospel and they need to adapt to and understand the people they seek to reach, and do it in a second language. That is not easy. They need perseverance and graciousness and humility. Pray for the relationships that the missionaries develop within their new community. They need to know the joy of following Jesus in a way that is evident to those around them.

Pray for the missionary and for their families. Pray that they will be imitators of God (Eph 5:1), and filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Pray for wisdom to balance their competing demands of work and family. Pray for the education of their children, often in third world countries, and out of touch with the "home" culture in the US. Pray that they could model the Christian family within the new church, as the believers may not have other examples of Godly parenting. Whatever you pray for your own children and grandchildren, pray the same for the missionaries. Pray for their health and strength.

Pray for the missionaries prayer requests. Periodically, those are provided in a Sunday bulletin insert and in this newsletter. Take that home and use it to pray for the missionaries. Pray with your family for the missionaries, teaching your children about missions, and about praying. Pray in your own quiet times, and pray that God would send laborers into his harvest (Matt 9:38). Maybe God has chosen to send you! Or maybe God has chosen you to send and fund others. Pray about it.

Pray scripture for the missionaries. For example, as you read 1 Thes 1, pause and pray that God would also enable the missionary's church to be an example to all the believers in the neighboring territories, and that the word of the Lord would go forth from them to every place, just as it did from Thessalonica.

Finally, pray that the missionaries and their congregation would be kept from the evil one (John 17:15). Thank God for our missionaries because through them the gospel is being proclaimed throughout the world (Rom 10:14-15). Pray that the people would turn from the idols they now follow and turn to the living and true God (1 Thes 1:10).

"Pray with your family for the missionaries, teaching your children about missions, and about praying"



What's News from THE Youth Group?

Graduations are just over a month away. Students will be moving up to new grades... some will be leaving for college. But that is just the beginning of our summer. As finals are taken, projects become due and make up work gets frantically done, some minds will be looking ahead to what is coming next. For some of us that means a trip to San Quintin on a missions trip and another opportunity to serve the Lord with Pablo and his church as their body continues to grow. As this trip draws near, you will notice that fund-raising for the trip has begun. If you would like to be a part of the "Sending Team" then please visit the table in the courtyard any given Sunday and find out how you can participate in the Silent Auction or maybe buy a tank of gas or maybe a meal for those going. Or you can simply make a donation to the "Gleaning Bucket." This last one, the "Gleaning Bucket" is a wonderful way for even children to feel like they are a part of this missions work as they can donate even just a few coins to the bucket and know that they have helped with the Lord's work.

But that's not all. Several of our high school students will once again be heading down to Koinonia to serve as counselors for Kids Camp and/or Jr High Camp late in July. This year we will probably have well over 20 students participating in this ministry which has become a wonderful service opportunity for so many of our students. Of course many of our own junior high students will be attending camp there, along with any 4th-6th
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Women of Grace

MINISTRY NEWS

Ladies Tea

May 6, 2006

1:00-3:00 pm at Grace Bible Church

Bring your teacup and saucer for an afternoon of food, fellowship and information

about women's ministry at Grace Bible Church.

Contact C.G. Senft at 925-323-0639 if you have questions.

Game & Gab Nights

Fridays, July 21 and October 27

7:00 – 11:00 p.m.

Come enjoy a night out with the girls either playing board games or catching up

on what's going on in each other's lives.

Bring your favorite game and a snack to share.

Watch future publications for the locations.

Fall Conference

Friday night and Saturday, September 29-30

Grace Bible Church

Join us as we listen to author Elizabeth Inrig expound on the dynamics of ministering effectively to women and

the establishment of women's ministries in the church.

Mark your calendars now and consider bringing a friend with you.

Annual Ornament Exchange

Sunday afternoon, December 3, 2006

5:00-7:30 p.m.

Location to be announced.

2007 Winter Retreat

Friday night to Sunday, March 16-18, 2007

Please plan to come. Cost will be approximately \$135.

2007 Fall Conference

Friday night and Saturday, November 2-3, 2007

Author Elyse Fitzpatrick has graciously accepted our invitation to return and share the weekend with us.

Please note the date change as our usual calendar slot was moved to accommodate Elyse's schedule.

Birthdays to Celebrate

MAY

Mamselle Fox ~ 1
 Chris O'Rourke ~ 1
 Bonnie Copland ~ 6
 Amber Kamp ~ 7
 Diane Schachterle ~ 9
 Kristine Kiiskinen ~ 11
 Ethan Knight ~ 13
 Emily Smith ~ 17
 Sarah Doering ~ 17
 Ker Heinz ~ 18
 Pam Foglia ~ 19
 Mike Jones ~ 19
 Marilyn Dodenhoff ~ 19
 Taylor Smith ~ 19
 Taylor Axe ~ 20
 Matt Kearns ~ 21
 Tony Sanelli ~ 17
 Morton Thomas ~ 22
 Jim Carroll ~ 22
 Mark Redmond ~ 23
 Cricket Nissen ~ 25
 David Meier ~ 25
 Mike Becker ~ 25
 Jeff Lancaster ~ 25
 Laura Schachterle ~ 30
 Denise Schachterle ~ 30
 Dorothy Castel ~ 31

JUNE

Andy Fossett ~ 1
 Kathi Wihlon ~ 2
 Rebekah Dodenhoff ~ 5
 Louisa Sharp ~ 7
 Michael Vick ~ 8
 Marylee Oliver ~ 8
 Janece Shellooe ~ 10
 Robin Fossett ~ 10
 Caleb Smith ~ 12
 C.G. Senft ~ 15
 Jared Senft ~ 15
 Nathanael Shea ~ 17
 Usha Menon ~ 17
 Dale Sigmundson ~ 24
 Jennifer Kearns ~ 26
 Ines Johnson ~ 26
 Bob Lytle ~ 27
 Ken Zentner ~ 27
 Margaret Genendlis ~ 28
 Sarah Moussa ~ 29



News *and Events*

Welcome New Members

Please welcome our newest members
 to Grace Bible Church!

Sue Arnett
 Rick Axe
 Jim Betts
 Kathy Boren
 Jim and Debbie Carroll
 Jim and Dorothy Castel
 John Castro
 Robbie and Sumiko Clark
 Marilyn Clark
 Chris Dellebake
 Gary and Jan Falk
 Tim Hammack
 Robb Hedges
 Carolyn and John Hoye
 Fay Johnson
 Don Masters
 David and Jessica Meier
 Don and Heather Smith
 Alex Starchenka
 Vince and Connie Vega
 Michael and Karen Vick
 Rick and Kathi Wihlon
 Del and Connie Wyatt.

All-Church Retreat

May 19-21

Registration continues for the All-Church Retreat. Our speaker will be Carey Hardy, Executive Pastor for Grace Community Church, and he will be teaching a series on "Living for the Kingdom" themes from 1 Corinthians.

Please do not let cost be a factor in whether or not you can attend. This is the one event the elders believe is important enough for the church

to partially fund. While there is a suggested amount per person, please pay what you can. As we have done in the past an offering will be taken at the retreat to help pay for our time at Koinonia. Sign-ups will continue until May 14th.

Office Closed

The Church office will be closed on Monday, May 29th, for Memorial Day Weekend.

All-Church Camping Trip

The summer months are rapidly approaching and that means the All-Church Camping Trip is not too far away. From August 17-21, we are planning a camping trip to the Polluck Pines area for those who are interested. This is on a first-come first-serve basis. If you have questions, please contact Barbara Sanabria at 284-3476.

Regular Prayer Times

Sunday Morning:

8:15 - 8:45 am; Room 203

Fridays:

7:00 am; Men's Prayer; Fellowship Hall