

Workshop Session 4

Integrating a Biblical Counselling Approach in the Local Church



Steve Midgley

Four workshops

- 1. Foundation:** Identifying a biblical counselling approach
- 2. Structure:** Supporting pastoral care
- 3. Vision:** Casting and maintaining vision
- 4. Managing:** Misunderstandings, suspicions and barriers

Concerns: discussion

What concerns do you think might be raised in your church about the development of a biblical counselling approach?

Concern that a biblical counselling approach is...

- Not what a church is really designed for
- Leading churches to over-reach pastorally
- Going to undermine preaching
- Going to discourage people from getting proper help
- Only going to encourage introspection
- Bound to distract from evangelism

Not what a church is really designed for

or Encourages churches to try and do too much

- Sanctification at the heart
- *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:15-16)*

Not what a church is really designed for

or Encourages churches to try and do too much

- Sanctification at the heart
- Meeting people in their suffering
- *You have not strengthened the weak or healed those who are ill or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. (Ezekiel 34:4)*

Not what a church is really designed for

or Encourages churches to try and do too much

- Sanctification at the heart
- Meeting people in their suffering
- Challenging the psychological / spiritual divide
- *Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:13)*
- *For in him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)*

Going to undermine preaching

- Not competitive but complementary
- Keller: comment on preachers
- Interpersonal ministry *lands* expository ministry
- Interpersonal ministry *improves* expository ministry

Only going to encourage introspection

- So many problems arise from a lack of self-awareness
- *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. You **blind** guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. (Matthew 23:23-24)*
- *He also told them this parable: 'Can the **blind** lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? (Luke 6:39)*

Only going to encourage introspection

- Opening to Calvin's Institutes

- *Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other.*
- *Every person, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God, but is also led as by the hand to find him*

Bound to distract from evangelism

- Helps find common ground more
- Speaking to desires and motivations

Bound to distract from evangelism

- The attraction of a wise, relationally rich, mutually caring community
- *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.* (John 13:34)
- *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.* (1 John 4:12)

Going to discourage people from getting proper help

- Challenging concern
- The danger of over-reach
- Knowing limits
- Limited availability of those trained and experienced with skill to walk alongside those with more complex struggles

Going to discourage people from getting proper help

- Provide guidance on additional help
- Developing 'support' networks
- Low threshold to 'widen the circle'

Discussion

- Given all we have looked at, what changes / initiatives / structures would you like to see introduced in your church?
- What practical steps could you take toward that?
- Do you anticipate specific pushback? If so, what apologetic would be most needed in your church?

Questions & comments

