

Christian Counseling Ministries of WNY, Inc.

910 Union Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

NEWSLETTER

674-6747

SPRING 2001

Dr. Timothy P. Chambers, Executive Director

SOUL CARE:

The Anatomy of Christian Counseling

By Saul Schwarzberg

In order to explore what takes place under the umbrella of Christian counseling, we must begin with an understanding of what the Word of God says about the nature of man and sin. In Romans 8:5 the apostle Paul tells us: "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires" and he further explains in II Corinthians 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." An argument is raised by some that the purpose of counseling psychology is an attempt to do therapy on the sinful nature, also known as the old nature. In essence, it is purported that psychology is an attempt to resuscitate the old nature by finding ways to cure it. However, this is not so with Christian psychology. The old nature is corrupt and meant to be kept dead. It is the seat of greed, immortality, self-centeredness, hedonism and wrong priorities. But this does not mean that the new creation, also known as the new nature, is the focus of therapy either. The new nature, given to us by God, is in no need of therapy as it is the seat of godliness, morality, moderation and right priorities.

What, then, is the focus of Christian therapy? I Corinthians 15:45, tells us that "The first Adam became a living soul." His soul, newly created by God, lived in a pre-Fall state of innocence with an ability to choose between right and wrong. That "being state" is called the soul. Until he gave into temptation, Adam did not yet have a sinful nature. Once given his irreversible choice, Adam's nature became sinful. Adam and Eve are the progenitors of mankind, having made the sinful choice. Their choice is representative of the choice any of us would have made had we been in their position. Consequently, since Adam, all of us are born with this sinful nature causing our souls to lack the total innocence it once possessed by the two parents of mankind. The Christian, however, through Christ's redemptive work on the cross, also has the new nature, which is set on the things of God rather than on the desires of the old nature.

What constitutes the soul? The soul or the inner being may be best described as the seat of intelligence, emotion, memory, communication and the will. When we are influenced by worldly values or hurtful past memories, unchecked emotions and mistaken patterns of thinking yield to misconceptions of who God is, and therefore, misconceptions on how to live life. It is indeed, the soul, which is the focus of Christian counseling. It is in the Christian soul that choices are made

about listening to God's way or being controlled by attitudes, feelings and behaviors shaped by past hurts and distorted belief systems. Another way of saying this is that the soul chooses between yielding to the old nature or placing the new nature into high gear. By choosing the latter, we believe that God can heal feelings from the past while creating a transformed future.

For example, a woman who was sexually abused as a child may, as an adult, have a difficult time trusting men while at the same time longing for closeness and love through a close relationship or marriage. The incongruity between her need for intimacy and her inability to trust may lead to confusion and bitterness while misunderstanding God's will for her as she finds herself single and lonely. However, it may be that past memories and hurts have shaped her mistrust of others to the point that she undermines relationships in ways of which she is not consciously aware. As such, she may select men that are untrustworthy and, in a cause and effect manner, accomplish a self-fulfilling prophecy that men cannot be trusted, thereby ensuring that she will ultimately end up alone.

In situations like this, a heart mistakenly loses confidence and hope in God and erroneously blames Him and others for her life situation, and in turn, chooses inappropriate behaviors to fulfill personal needs. Through therapy, the sensitive counselor helps the client uncover the distortions and mistaken notions brought about by painful experiences. God is then, more than ever, revealed as her source of healing and hope as she embarks upon developing a relationship, based not on past hurt and fear, but on true hope and promise. Christian counselors are emissaries to the Body of Christ, bringing God's message of forgiveness, love and a true hope in a God that came to give an abundant life stemming from His ever abundant love. It is a message that helps us, as Christians, believe that the loving words in scripture are meant by God to come alive in our lives and hearts. Such a message of hope, as is the mission of Christian counseling, is wrapped in the Counselor's ability to help Christians uncover the unconscious obstacles, i.e., ways of thinking and feeling that hinder them from living the abundant life that awaits them in God's plan for their lives. Ultimately, it is pointing the soul to live God's way, shedding the vestiges of an old nature and confidently wearing the gift of a new nature and a new life.

(Saul Schwarzberg has been a counselor with CCM since 1996 and has recently joined the staff full-time. He works out of the West Seneca, Williamsville and Jamestown offices.)

Website: CCMWNY.ORG

E-mail: ccmwny@buffnet.net

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Spring Seminars

Talking to Your Child About Sex

Tuesday, March 20, 2001 – 7:00-8:30 PM

Child Discipline

Thursday, April 5, 2001 – 7:00-8:30 PM

Both seminars will be presented by Mrs. Sharon Deacon.

Covenant Academy, 345 McConkey Dr.,
Tonawanda For more information you may call:
CCM at 674-6747 or Covenant Academy at 877-
0522.

Everyone welcome!

Breaking Free From Pornography: A View from Both Sides

Saturday, June 2, 2001 – 9:00-11:30 AM

Beach Ridge Free Methodist Church
4145 Beach Ridge Road, N. Tonawanda

In this unique seminar, Dr. Tim Chambers and
Mr. Saul Schwarzberg will present to the men while
Mrs. Cheryl Chambers presents to the women.

For more information you may call:
CCM at 674-6747 or the church office at 692-3385
Everyone with an interest in this topic is welcome.

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