

CCEF NOW

A stylized illustration of a globe with human figures and a cross. The globe is depicted with green and blue brushstrokes, showing the continents. A white cross is integrated into the letter 'C' of 'CCEF'. Numerous white human silhouettes are shown walking along the top edge of the globe. The entire scene is set against a dark blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

Restoring Christ to Counseling & Counseling to the Church

2015

Where Do You Start?

David Powlison

WAYS YOU CAN HELP
Ed Welch

**PASTORAL WISDOM AND
THE MANDATE TO REPORT**
Julie Lowe

**BIBLICAL COUNSELLING
IN THE UK**
Steve Midgley

MEET THE COUNSELOR
Wendy Budnick

Welcome

I am in my 35th year of ministry here at CCEF and my second year as our director. I am thankful every single day for the privilege of having made my ministry home at CCEF.

We have served thousands of students, counselees, pastors, and everyday believers around the globe. This is made possible because faithful donors support our work.

On any given day 5,000 people visit our website looking for help personally or for a way to help someone else. We want our resources to be true to the Word of our God and relevant to our daily lives. This requires a significant investment of time from our faculty and staff.

On any given day hundreds of students around the world are learning to think biblically and practically about a broad range of life's struggles— anxiety and trust, depression and hope, bitterness and forgiveness, conflict and peacemaking, addictive sins and freedom, the hurt caused by others and how to find courage and refuge. Scripture comes to life when it connects to a significant struggle and to a difficult life situation.

On any given day men, women, and children come through our doors to meet with a counselor. They are looking for reality and for sanity in the face of hard things. Our faculty and other counselors are committed to practice biblical counseling, because the love of Christ is for living, not just for theory.

On any given day our staff meets to pray first thing in the morning for half an hour to express our dependence on the Lord for our work.

If you are like me, God has used CCEF to have some significant impact on your life. I hope that your faith has grown, that your relationships have deepened, that your ability to help others has been seasoned and enriched in some way.

We are dependent upon God's people for \$850,000 this year. That comes to about \$2,300 on any given day. If CCEF's work has touched your life, please consider giving toward one day of ministry. The fingerprints of your gift can be found in everything we do—every class we teach, everything we write, and every single person we have the honor to help.

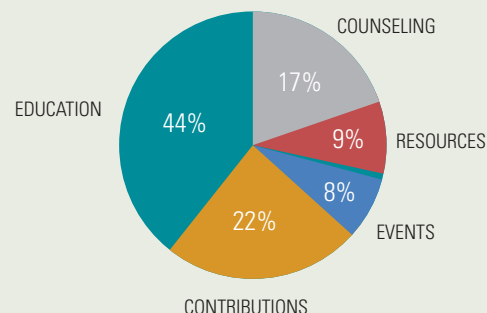
I believe that this is a ministry worthy of your consideration.

Warmly,



Dr. David Powlison
Executive Director

CCEF Revenue Sources



We need \$850,000 in donations this year.
Thank you for considering our need.

PUBLISHER

Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation

EDITORIAL OFFICE

1803 East Willow Grove Avenue
Glenside, PA 19038
1-800-318-2186
customerservice@ccef.org

PERMISSIONS

CCEF encourages the use of the articles in this magazine for ministry purposes. *CCEF Now* grants permission for up to 100 copies of any articles to be made provided the copies are made free of charge and distributed with the following statement: "This article is published in *CCEF Now*, a publication of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Rebecca Eaton
Bruce Eaton
Lauren Whitman

DESIGN

Tom Temple, Tandem Creative

www.ccef.org

CCEF NOW

CONTENTS

2 Where Do You Start?
David Powlison

9 Ways You Can Help
Ed Welch

14 Biblical Counselling
in the UK
Steve Midgley

4 Ministry Connections
Stories from
Three Pastors

12 Pastoral Wisdom and
the Mandate to Report
Julie Smith Lowe

16 Meet the Counselor
Wendy Budnick

CONTRIBUTORS



David Powlison, M.Div., Ph.D.

is the executive director at CCEF and has served at the ministry for 35 years. He is the senior editor for the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* and has written extensively on pastoral care and counseling. In his article *Where Do You Start?* he raises provoking questions for church leaders to consider as they evaluate their church's readiness to start a counseling ministry. *"If every person in your church is equipped to biblically face and fight against basic struggles, then one-anothering—a prequel to counseling—will organically happen."*



Ed Welch, M.Div., Ph.D.

is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF. Ed has written numerous books and articles on depression, fear, and addictions. In his article *Ways You Can Help Those with Psychiatric Problems*, Ed asks believers to humbly and confidently move toward people with difficult psychiatric problems. *"Our God seems to delight in using helpers whose most prominent qualifications consist of love and the wisdom that comes from knowing Jesus. With this in mind, we aim for a growing competence, but we expect that God will use us long before we feel comfortable with our level of expertise."*



Julie Smith Lowe, L.P.C., M.A.

is a faculty member and counselor at CCEF who specializes in counseling children. Julie has devoted her life to educating others on the importance of protecting the vulnerable. She counsels victims of abuse and consults with churches. In her article *Pastoral Wisdom and the Mandate to Report*, Julie addresses this important issue. *"Reporting abuse is not simply a legal mandate, it is a moral and biblical one as well. The laws are meant to protect the innocent and reveal the guilty, to define what abuse is and what it is not."*



Steve Midgley, M.A.

is the director of Biblical Counselling UK. Steve teaches courses in biblical counselling at Oak Hill College in London, England. He is the director of the certificate in biblical counselling offered by Biblical Counselling UK in association with Oak Hill and CCEF. He is the senior minister of Christ Church, Cambridge and was a practicing psychiatrist before he began his pastorate. *"Suppose you wanted to get biblical counselling going in a country where the church doesn't have any tradition of working in that sort of way... Where would you turn?"*



Wendy Budnick, M.A.

began counseling at CCEF in 2001. Wendy works with women and teens struggling with a variety of issues such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-injury. We recently sat down with her to speak about the topic of self-injury. *"When a person comes to counseling to deal with the problem of self-injury, I build relationship by providing a safe and trusting context, a place where people can have a voice and know they will be heard."*

JOIN US.
SHARE.
DISCUSS.



facebook.com/ccef.org | @ccef



Where Do You Start?

David
Powlison

Churches often contact CCEF asking how to establish a counseling ministry. Frequently they want a manual or step-by-step guide. But a wise answer to the “how to” question calls for a number of orienting conversations that precede the implementation of any program for offering counseling. “Ten Questions to Help You Establish Biblical Counseling Ministries in Your Church” is a talk I give for pastors and other ministry leaders. The ten questions are designed to help churches gain a better understanding of themselves and their context. When the answers are clear, then a counseling ministry can emerge that fits organically with who you are and who needs help.

Here are three of the ten questions that church leaders can ask themselves and discuss together before beginning a formal counseling ministry.

Do you live out the lifelong dynamics of the Christian life?

This question is crucial. Wise counseling embodies the candor and flexible wisdom that arise out of *personal experience* of ongoing need for God’s mercies. You cannot give away what you do not know firsthand. Theoretical answers are not helpful. A pat answer, quick fix, or panacea is not helpful. If we aren’t living the rhythms of the Christian life, our answers will skim over the need. Your opportunities

to counsel—to meaningfully impact, help, and hearten another person—will be wasted.

But when you are living out a daily, dependent relationship with the living God, then you become a person who combines patience and clarity. You gain instinctive compassion for others. You understand where people get stuck—because you know where you get stuck. This helps you to be patient. And yet you know what is right and true. You are experiencing God’s help,

and so you clearly, confidently, and directly point others to the God who is faithful. Clear thinking and a kind heart don’t usually go together—but when wisdom lives in you, you become capable of both.

Before starting a counseling ministry, do some self-evaluation. Do you, church leader, live what Scripture teaches? Are you and your people living the honesty of the psalms and the practicality of the proverbs? Is your need for help from outside yourself a daily reality?

Do you really love, identify with, and hang in there with struggling people?

Biblical ministry is not, “The perfectly healthy minister to the sick.” It is not, “People who have it all together minister to people who struggle with problems.” We are all in this together.

This second question is a sober one. Before you initiate any action plan to meet counseling needs, remember that those “counseling needs” are *people*. A troubled person is a person to love, not a problem to fix. And people often change slowly, struggle deeply, and are troublesome to others. Do you actually love strugglers? Do you identify with them? Can you say, “I am more like that person than different”? Can you say, “We are in this together”? There is a reason that God places “Love is patient” first in his queue. He is patient. Christ really loves, identifies with, and hangs in there with people amid their troubles.

Sanctification is not a personal self-improvement project. One essential ingredient in Christian love is realizing “I don’t arrive until we all arrive.” It is *we* who arrive *together*. That is Ephesians 4, and 1 John 3:1–3, and 1 Corinthians 12–13. Personal growth equips you to tie yourself to the challenges and struggles—some of them lifelong—of other people. Your growth is not an end to itself. Your growth is to build Christ’s whole church, not just help you get it together. Any step of genuine growth for you makes you identify more fully with others.

What problem areas do you want church members to be growing in personally?

The prequel to counseling is equipping every person in your church to face, fight and flourish within the basic problems common to us all. Then wise one-anothering begins to happen organically. Choose three or four key issues and equip everyone through a sermon series, or a Sunday school series, or in small groups. Get people talking about real issues. Get them praying for each other in

One essential ingredient in Christian love is realizing “I don’t arrive until we all arrive.” It is we who arrive together.

meaningful ways.

In our current time and place, here are the three areas that I’d choose. But consider where God has you and what issues are most relevant for your particular people.

- Equip people to deal with their own anxieties, stresses, preoccupation, worry, and sense of feeling overwhelmed. Worry is a universal human problem. Scripture speaks about anxiety in rich ways. “Do not be afraid” is the most frequent command in the Bible. If everyone in your church becomes aware of their temptations to be anxious, and is finding the grace of God in the struggle, then you have an important base for counseling in your church. People can start to give away to others the comfort they are receiving for themselves.
- Equip people to address anger, grumbling, bitterness, self-righteousness, complaining, judgmentalism, and conflict. If every person learns to identify these sin-struggles in themselves, then they awaken to the needs of others. Everything that you learn about yourself and how the mercies of God meet you becomes counsel that you can communicate helpfully to others.
- Equip people to identify escapism, pleasure-seeking, and addictions. Our

culture offers us ten thousand ways to check out of reality! Opportunities to tune out and disconnect are as close as the cell phone in your pocket. But God’s people can become aware of their escapist tendencies, and can learn to stay connected to a broken world with a God who is on scene. They will be able to help others face hardships and resist the allure of escape. God is our refuge and immediate help in the midst of hardship—the divine alternative to all the other places people turn.


Each of these issues touches couples, singles, parents, and children. These are not culturally bound. Our struggles and temptations are more alike than different. An elderly man facing a health crisis is tempted to worry in ways similar to the high school senior waiting for the answer to her college application. Our circumstances can be vastly different, but the human heart tends to respond to hard things by anxiety, irritation, and pleasure-seeking. It is in those places we learn to cry out for mercy to the living God who hears and is near.

* * * * *

As you think about where to go from here, start with these three questions. They can reshape your conversations, your preaching, your teaching, your praying, and your planning.

“Biblical counseling” is first and always a lifestyle of wisdom and love, though there is a place to formalize your care for strugglers into a counseling ministry. You will discover how best to do that as you lay a careful foundation of asking good questions, thinking hard, talking honestly, and praying pointedly.

An expanded version of this article will appear in the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* volume 29:1 scheduled to be released in 2015.



WE often hear from international pastors and leaders who want direction to start biblical counseling ministries and networks in their countries. Many live in post-Christian societies where resources are scant. These leaders see believers who struggle and are searching for lasting help, and they reach out so that they can be better equipped to help. They seek resources because they want to offer wise, loving, and timely pastoral care that is biblically sound.

MINISTRY CONNECTIONS

In the following pages we will share stories from three international leaders who serve in biblical counseling networks and training ministries. Each one has integrated biblical counseling into their model of pastoral care. They are all passionate about growing in wisdom and skill, which is what first brought them to us. The first story comes from a professor at a faithful seminary in Quebec. He shares about the training of a new generation of pastors in biblical counseling. The second story is about a network recently founded in Germany, and one pastor's perspective on the emerging interest in biblical counseling in both Germany and Switzerland. The third is a story of a pastor serving at a church in inner-city Liverpool. He accidentally stumbled upon biblical counseling and is now part of a rapidly expanding movement in the UK.

In these stories you will hear a common theme of how a CCEF education played a role in equipping these pastors. It is an honor to serve these leaders and to see how our work of watering already growing seeds makes its way into places that our organization could never go. We are local. We are limited. So we diligently focus on the important work God has given us—the development of training programs and resources for pastors and leaders who have access to the people and places we don't. This is how we will see biblical counseling restored to the global church. And this is how we will help support movements around the world.

As you read, we hope you will catch a vision for how our training could be helpful to you in any ministry setting. Training is the heart of what we do and how we seek to accomplish our mission. But more than that, we want you to be encouraged by what some faithful servants are doing to build God's Kingdom around the world, and how through the generosity of our donors we are able to serve leaders from all over the world.

CONNECT

We want to hear from you. If you have a story to share, email us at testimonies@ccef.org

A Growing Movement in a Surprising Place

There is currently a growing evangelical movement in Québec that has a special emphasis on biblical counseling. Québec is an unlikely place for this—less than 1% of its population is evangelical. This makes Québec a mission field with one of the largest unreached people groups in North America.

Matthieu Caron is a leader in this movement. He is the pastor at Shawinigan-Sud Baptist Church in Québec. He is also a professor at Séminaire Baptiste Évangélique du Québec Seminary (SEMBEQ).

We first met Matthieu as a student when he began taking online courses through CCEF. It has been our delight to see how he has grown from a biblical counseling student to a biblical counseling professor. Read and see how his journey began and what God is doing in his region of the world.

I was first introduced to CCEF fifteen years ago by John Piper at a conference. At the time there were no biblical counselors in Québec. In fact biblical counseling was unheard of in this area of the world. No seminary taught it. As a result, the approach pastors took to help people was either simplistic or integrationist.

Today there is a growing and enthusiastic interest for biblical counseling. This rising interest has found a home at SEMBEQ Seminary, where biblical counseling is now offered to pastoral students. I am responsible for this small—but growing—program. Every student at the bachelor level is currently required to take Dynamics of Biblical Change in order to complete his or her degree. This class was the first course to be translated into French, thanks to an important partnership between CCEF and SEMBEQ that was underwritten by a generous donor.



Biblical counseling has also begun to move beyond the seminary and into churches. Believers here are hungry for gospel-rich resources. They want the power of the gospel to transform their hearts in the midst of their trials and suffering. To meet these needs, more and more resources are being translated into French. SEMBEQ has partnered with Éditions Cruciforme to translate and publish books.

In the beginning of this journey, I didn’t know what to expect or how I would get help. I am grateful to CCEF. They have been with me—and all of us at SEMBEQ—since the beginning. We are truly indebted to them.



CCEF’s Supporting Church & Ministry Program

We have designed the Supporting Church & Ministry Program as a way to show our appreciation to partners. This program offers both training and counseling discounts to your organization.

	LEVEL 1 \$600-\$1,199/yr	LEVEL 2 \$1,200-\$2,399/yr	LEVEL 3 \$2,400/yr or more
COUNSELING	\$10 off counseling	\$10 off counseling	\$10 off counseling
School of Biblical Counseling	X	50% off one course	100% off one course
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	1 Free registration	2 Free registrations	3 Free registrations
The Journal of Biblical Counseling	Free digital subscription	Free digital & print subscription	Free digital & print subscription



Reflections from Germany & Switzerland

Thomas Wohler serves on the Board of Netzwerk Biblische Seelsorge. He is the senior pastor of a reformed church in Uster, Switzerland where he has been serving for fifteen years. He belongs to a small group of pastors who have shared a common interest in biblical counseling for many years. One of those pastors recommended Thomas take his study leave at CCEF. In 2012, Thomas traveled to Glenside and did just that.

Thomas recently shared the impact of biblical counseling in his life and how biblical counseling is growing in Switzerland.

Personally I have been encouraged anew by the fact that the Bible not only speaks to us generally as human beings, but also contains everything we need as we wrestle with sin and hardship in our lives. I am fascinated by how the Bible can be applied in relevant, helpful, and beneficial ways to counseling problems. Too often people here think the Bible does not apply to their modern day struggles.

Furthermore I have experienced the beneficial challenge of reflecting on my own life—my marriage, my work, and my relationship to my children. Biblical counseling has helped me realize, much clearer than before, that I am a miserable sinner who lives only by the superior grace of Jesus Christ.

In my ministry as a pastor, biblical coun-

seling has encouraged and motivated me to continue to faithfully preach the gospel—to hold on to the truth that God's Word is still living and active and can change hearts at any time. And I have been challenged to bring words of hope and life in meaningful ways to people in their moments of need. This ministry of the word—both private and public—is an important aspect of any pastor's ministry.

Right now in Switzerland our society seems to be turning away from Christian values more and more. This societal change is rubbing off on the churches as well—though at a slower pace. It is a hard road to be faithful in the face of such adversity. Yet God is building his kingdom in our region of the world. And he is using biblical counseling to ac-

complish this. A network for biblical counseling has been established. We see a growing interest in biblical counseling. CCEF books are being translated and finding their way into the hands of believers. I regularly meet new pastors who become aware of the biblical counseling approach. God is on the move.

Therefore my hope and prayer for Switzerland is that God will grant us a new awakening and that biblical Christianity may experience a revival. Please pray for us.



Netzwerk Biblische Seelsorge

CCEF is excited about what God is doing in Europe. And we are delighted to partner with Netzwerk Biblische Seelsorge. Here is how they describe their mission:

*Our purpose is **counseling**: one-on-one consultation and support based on the Gospel and faith in Jesus Christ.*

*Our purpose is **biblical** counseling, because we are convinced that God Himself is the best and only true counselor. We are convinced that the Bible presents the basis of Christ-based counseling and is itself the authoritative and fundamental tool for counseling. God speaks to us about our lives through His Word the Bible.*

This network was founded in order to promote biblical counseling in **Germany** and **Switzerland**. One of their primary goals is to provide a platform for mutual support and resources for further study. You can find more information about this network by visiting their website:

<http://biblischeseelsorge.org/en>

"You can trace the blessings from CCEF to the world."

Michael Martens, Board Member, NBS

Steve Casey is the pastor of Speke Baptist Church in Liverpool, England. Early on in ministry he was looking for training to help him lead people into a deeper relationship with Christ. It was then that he stumbled upon CCEF's course, Dynamics of Biblical Change. In 2008 he began taking our online classes. Last year he joined us in Glenside for a pastoral internship with our senior faculty. Here Steve shares the ways he has grown in his understanding and practice of pastoral care.

Early on in ministry I found that I was preaching a gospel that said, “Jesus is incredibly gracious, he will forgive your sins, he is worthy as Lord of all our adoration, now get on and do it.” Generally speaking, my sermons left people feeling rather hopeless—the Christian life was just too hard to live. I was struggling to articulate hope in Christ. And I didn’t see people responding spiritually.

God used several experiences to reveal that my approach to pastoral care was lacking. One telling experience was when I met with a friend who wanted help. He shared about all the difficulties in his day-to-day life. He just “couldn’t get on with it anymore.” He wasn’t happy, he didn’t know how he was going to pay all his bills, and his kids wouldn’t listen to anything he said, to the point that his home felt like a war-zone. And I thought to myself, “I’m a pastor and this is my territory. I’m supposed to have something intelligent to say.” So I racked my brains and tried to come up with my very best words of pastoral care. And basically I said, “What you really need is for me to give you some good communication techniques. And then you need to come around to my house with your family and watch how I set boundaries with my children. And when we’ve finished with that I will sit down with you and you can watch how I write up a budget.” In response to my plan, he physically sunk into his chair.

At the time, I knew why he sank into his chair, but I couldn’t quite put it into words. I walked away from that conversation saying to myself, “What did I just do? Have I



Ways I've Grown in Pastoral Care

just said to my friend that the best hope for him would be to learn some new skills, pull up his socks, and become a bit more like me? I am supposed to be leading people to trust in and follow Jesus, but what just happened here?”

My ministry was profoundly impacted after taking Dynamics of Biblical Change. What I encountered in that class was a strong framework of grace and an awareness of living in the reality of the finished work of Jesus. This impacted many aspects of my ministry.

It impacted my sermons. I moved from a focus on dissecting worldviews and critiquing presuppositions to realizing that there were people in the room who needed hope. I had thought that the way to help was to teach people to read their Bible, pray every day, and understand why their faith was credible. I came to realize that people have strong allegiances to things other than God, they have deep hurts, and they have Christ who comes to meet them in the midst of those things. I was preaching more grace and people were responding.

The class also led me to totally rethink my church’s approach to ministry. Five years ago we were predominantly program based. We still have programs, but now we are more focused on giving people resources that help them to have deeper relationships with others

within the church community. For example, when we have our mid-week groups we always start with, “Tell me what the Lord has been doing in your life this week.” This may seem obvious, but this practice cultivates interpersonal connections and creates the expectation that the Lord is always doing something fresh in his grace and his mercy.

Additionally, we have re-modeled our fellowship groups so that the elders meet regularly to pray and think about the progress of the groups, and each elder is responsible to care for one of the groups. This approach reflects the reality that one person is not responsible for the discipleship of the whole church. Similarly, to become a member in our church you must meet with a “membership buddy” to talk about what you are learning in our membership class and to pray through it together. This reinforces the importance of personal discipleship, as well as the importance of developing relationships in the church.

In these ways and more, my CCEF training has helped me to think creatively about what wise ministry can look like where I serve. I encourage other pastors to consider taking one of their classes to see how God might transform their ministry.

Help support a day of ministry at CCEF. The fingerprints of each gift are found in everything we do—every class we teach, everything we write, and every single person we have the honor to help.

Any given day

ON ANY GIVEN DAY

5,000 people visit our website looking for help, or for a way to help someone else. It requires a significant investment from our faculty and staff for our resources to be relevant and true.

ON ANY GIVEN DAY

students around the world are learning to think biblically and practically about a broad range of issues, including depression, fear, addictions, and abuse. Scripture speaks life into every possible struggle.

ON ANY GIVEN DAY

men, women, and children come through our doors looking for reality and sanity in the face of hard circumstances. The love of Christ is for living, not just for theory, so our faculty and other counselors are committed to do biblical counseling.

We need to raise \$850,000 this year—about \$2,300 on any given day. Would you consider supporting a day of ministry as a one-time gift or as a monthly gift of \$195?

Ways You Can HELP Those with Psychiatric Disorders

Ed
Welch

People with difficult psychiatric problems are in every church, and we hope their numbers will increase. We *hope* this happens because it would mean that our churches are both inviting and helpful. The challenge is that neither “inviting” nor “helpful” happens naturally when those needing help have problems that are especially hard to understand. So, we work to get better at it.

What follows are three principles from my article *Ten Ways Ordinary People Can Help Those with Psychiatric Problems*. These principles are meant to encourage ordinary people to become inviting helpers, even though they have little experience with psychiatric diagnoses. Our God seems to delight in using helpers whose most prominent qualifications consist of love and the wisdom that comes from knowing Jesus (1 Corinthians 2). With this in mind, we aim for a growing competence, but we expect that God will use us long before we feel comfortable with our level of expertise. We aim for a path that combines two characteristics.

- Humility. The kind of humility that knows, “There are so many things I do not understand.”
- Confidence. The kind of confidence that believes that the tools we have in Jesus Christ—prayer, Scripture, love and compassion—are immensely powerful.

With this in mind, let’s consider ways that ordinary people can come alongside and help someone who struggles with a psychiatric problem. None of these principles are new. But sometimes we think special knowledge is needed when simple acts of love are the way to begin.



Move toward and pray

This seems *simple*: move toward and pray with any person who is struggling. But we are people who tend to move toward those who are *like* us, and, typically, those who fit psychiatric diagnoses are, at first glance, a little different. So, we must resist this human tendency and pursue unity by moving toward the marginalized.

Implicit in moving toward and praying for someone is that we want to understand the person. Here again, what seems simple might be quite difficult. But we can know someone accurately without knowing the person fully. The goal is not to offer expert counsel; we are offering love. So, instead of worrying about understanding the details of “bi-polar” or “delusions,” start with the more general diagnosis of hardships. This person is experiencing hardships and troubles, and this is something we all understand. Here is the common thread through everything in psychiatry. Something is hard. Life is difficult and complicated. “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33), and trouble alerts the body of Christ that help is needed.

What do we say as we move toward someone who is experiencing hardships? Many of us are willing to move toward others, but once there, conversations get awkward. We might ask poor questions or too many questions. We might say too much or too little. Or we might experience the dread of having absolutely nothing to say. Our goal is compassionate and wise love. But that multiplies possibilities rather than simplifies them. Wise love can be expressed in thousands of ways, so let me offer one particular way to help: *know the person well enough to be able to offer thoughtful prayers.*

There is a difference between trying to keep a conversation going and trying to know someone well enough to pray intelligently. Imagine what happens when your goal is to pray. You avoid a conversational dead end. You want to know more. You ask questions when details aren’t clear. You listen more attentively to what is being said. After hearing more of the story, you will have a handful of ways to pray.

Not only will you learn how you can

specifically pray, you will also have direction for your next conversation. Wise love will both pray and follow up. The person will be on your heart and, no doubt, you will have thoughts you want to share and questions to ask. You will want to know what happened so you can give thanks for answered prayer. Or you will find out that you need to continue to pray, and hear ways of adjusting your prayer so that it corresponds to the relevant promises of God and other prayers of Scripture. If you want to go one more step, you can pray with the person in the moment. Jesus has moved toward us; we move toward others. This is simple to understand but takes spiritual power to do.

There is a difference
between trying to
keep a conversation
going and trying
to know someone
well enough to pray
intelligently.

Move toward the person as a community

Include others as you care for the struggling person. When the body of Christ is functioning properly, *one* person does not move toward another. We move toward another person as a *community*. This is especially important when we are moving toward someone whose trouble is complicated. The trouble is going to be different than your own experience. It will seem foreign, and when you move into a foreign culture it can take you years to understand it, unless other people are there to help you. Perhaps a friend of yours has experience with this struggle and has an idea of how to help. If not, the two of you can work

together to seek out help.

I know of a church that has been successful at having people move toward those who have trouble. They decided that when someone asks for help they will aim for communal help. For example, if a person has troubles that are especially difficult to understand and is in a small group, a friend from the small group will go with the person to see a pastor and whoever else the pastor thinks can help. This way the pastor, the friend, and the small group will all learn together how to help.

Throughout this process, the community is looking for both the unique features of the person’s troubles *and* the troubles we all have in common. When we emphasize only the unique features of the trouble, then the person becomes identified as a diagnosis rather than as a fellow member. When we emphasize only our common humanity, then we might miss the troubling experiences that are more significant and not common to us all.

Here is an example of a situation where a person was identified as a “diagnosis” and the community did not include him.

A woman has been living with a husband with schizophrenia whose delusions wax and wane. His unpredictability has been very hard for her and she is tired. There are times when his delusions are so prominent that she does not even recognize who he is. When she talks about this, you will never see her cry because she has received much grace to love him. Yet she inevitably cries when she talks about how it’s as if the seas part when her husband comes to church. People turn away. Nobody speaks with him. Some have tried but have been perplexed by his stories of FBI agents and murder.

This community’s withdrawal has isolated two strugglers. But hear the difference it makes when a community intentionally moves toward a struggler.

A woman was deeply depressed and struggling with anorexia. But one day you could see that she was different. She was simply more alive and responsive. When a friend commented on the change and asked what had happened, she immediately had an answer.

“I was in church on Sunday and a family invited me home.” She then described something that was much more than mere hospitality. For that afternoon and evening she became part of that family. She was included in their home, and somehow that became an analogy for her to understand that this is what God does with his people. He draws us to him. He keeps us near him. He includes us.

Inclusion is central in the mind of God. Some of the most comforting words in Scripture are said to Israelites who relentlessly pursued idols. But the Lord brought them back.

Then the LORD said, “Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” (Hosea 1:9–10)

Because God continues to include us, even when we fight against him, we can do the same.

Move toward the family

The family members of those with psychiatric hardships provide most of the care and ministry for their loved one. It is the moms and dads, the wives, husbands, and children who carry most of the burden. They do this and rarely complain. As a result, we neglect to consider their struggles and needs. Typically a psychiatric diagnosis means there

is trouble for the family. So we must move toward the family as well. Some psychiatric problems, such as schizophrenia and mania, are not only life-dominating but can also leave the affected person temporarily unable to even engage in conversation. At those times, wise love will be focused almost exclusively on the family. We could say things like this:

“How are you, ...*really*? You have been on my heart. I know your life right now is more complicated and hard than I can imagine. I want you to tell me ways I can pray for you. I want you to tell me how I can help you.”

These are fine questions, and we should ask them. But family members might be reluctant to say anything. Who wants to say, “Yes, things are hard. I live with a complete stranger, and sometimes I wish that he were gone”? No one easily acknowledges how hard it can be to love troubled family members. And they do not want to talk about the bizarre behaviors of someone they love for fear that their public comments will bring shame on them. So assume that family and friends will gloss over the painful details. Stay committed to pursuing them anyway. Pursue and pursue again.

Then, as with families that are going through any kind of hardship, look for ways to help rather than waiting for them to call and ask for it. Look for ways to give them rest from the relentless demands and stresses of everyday life. Help as you try to further

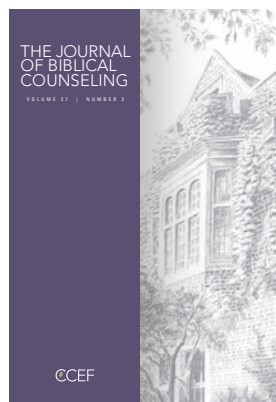
understand the person with the psychiatric diagnosis, so that you can be growing in compassion and wise love.

Ordinary people can help

Perhaps these ways to help leave you feeling overwhelmed. Certainly moving toward others who are not like you will bring challenges and will stretch you in new ways. Nevertheless, God calls us to help other people who we do not fully understand. He also equips us to do it.

Remember, wise and helpful love emerges from a combination of confidence and humility. We can be confident that we have everything we need for life and godliness in the knowledge of Jesus. Without this confidence, we would never take the first step toward another person. Yet this confidence is coupled with humility that sometimes feels needy and overwhelmed. These are not bad feelings to have if they lead us to cry out to the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5). So go humbly to your Father and ask for help. Ask for help from the larger community as you set out to carefully and purposefully know and love another human being. Together, God and his people will equip you with many ways to be inviting and loving to a struggling person.

An expanded version of this article appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* volume 28:2.



The Journal of Biblical Counseling

CCEF's *Journal of Biblical Counseling* provides a forum for biblical counseling's development and application. We publish articles that faithfully bring the God of truth, mercy, and power to the issues that face pastoral ministries of counseling and discipleship.

3 DIGITAL ISSUES \$12 PER YEAR

3 PRINT ISSUES \$27 PER YEAR

ccef.org/jbc



Pastoral Wisdom and the Mandate to Report

Julie Smith Lowe

I am a mother of five and a counselor. I interact with children all the time. Sadly, many of the children I meet with at CCEF experience tough and heart-breaking life circumstances, and some have suffered abuse and mistreatment. Through my work, God has given me a passion to help protect the vulnerable. I am committed to growing in wisdom on this issue and to see the larger Christian community become knowledgeable, competent, and biblically wise when it comes to handling allegations of abuse.

When instances of abuse first become known by a community of people there are intense reactions and a range of emotional responses—from outrage and a demand for justice, to fear, shame, disbelief and distrust. All of these emotions are understandable, but we must work hard not to respond

based on intense emotion or personal bias. Instead, we are to act wisely, justly and deliberately. One of the primary ways we can do this is to report the suspected abuse to the authorities. Reporting abuse is not simply a legal mandate—it is a moral and biblical one. Laws are meant to protect the innocent, reveal the guilty, and to define what abuse is and what it is not. In order to live under legal authority, we must realize it is not appropriate for anyone, except the proper agencies, to investigate or dismiss an allegation.

To our shame though, many in the Christian community have been known to not report abuse. Why is that?

Why some don't report

Every state has mandated reporting laws that outline what must be done when

you believe abuse has occurred in your community. Despite these clear mandates, I find that churches and other organizations are sometimes afraid to report abuse when it is brought to their attention. They look for ways to avoid complying with the law for a number of reasons—fear of legal consequences, repercussions within the organization, or harsh reactions from the public may be a few. Looking at all these negative outcomes, some begin to evaluate for themselves whether reporting abuse is “worth the risk,” and some go on to justify not reporting because it “will only make things worse.” But Scripture challenges these fears.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists

the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13: 1-2 NKJV)

Sometimes an organization believes they can provide a better outcome than the state would provide. It is easy for church leaders to convince themselves that they will be more thoughtful, careful, and certainly more biblically-sound in their evaluation and response to a report of abuse. In addition to breaking the law, such a decision is unwise. It is not a church or organization's job to investigate and "figure out the truth," and they are inadequately prepared to do so. Churches do not possess the deftness, judiciousness, and discretion to interview well. Investigators know what signs to look for and which techniques will wisely and carefully draw out the victim. They are knowledgeable and skilled individuals who are professionally trained to handle these situations. Churches and other ministries are not prepared to do this type of work and should not attempt it.

What churches can do, however, is wisely respond. Here are two crucial components that make up a wise response:

- **Report the suspected abuse to the proper authorities.**
- **Provide ongoing pastoral care to all involved.**

Consider this complex scenario.

A teenager at a church molests a child at a small group gathering. The families of both children are members of the church. These two families are deeply impacted by the actions and sin of one person. The church is required and mandated to report. The church is also biblically called to minister and walk alongside all those involved.

Unfortunately, I have seen this situation mishandled. Perhaps the family of the teenager is shunned and pushed out of the church. Or maybe the pastor reaches out to the offender but fails to minister to and protect the child (and family) who was victimized. Another tragic response might be that the pastor reports the alleged crime to the local authorities, but then withdraws from shepherding those involved. In any

of these instances, all parties are left hurt, fractured, and unsure of who to turn to for support and direction.

Mandated reporting and pastoral care are not at odds with one another.

So how should you handle this scenario? How do you report suspected abuse and wisely walk alongside those who have been impacted? There is much biblical wisdom needed to discern what that looks like. Wisdom is evaluating the situation at hand and what ministry looks like in any given scenario. Here are just a few considerations:

- Report the suspected abuse and inform the church's designated person. This is often a children's ministry leader or a pastor.
- Provide pastoral care and counseling for the child who has been abused. Seek help from a trained biblical counselor.
- Help parents process their own reactions while they seek to minister well to their child and any siblings.
- Walk alongside the offending teen and the teenager's family. Consider who can and should walk with the teen.
- Consider what information is given to the church.
- Evaluate what procedures your church has or may need for this type of situation.
- Engage with the multitude of reactions from the congregation. Be prepared for a spectrum of fears and opinions.
- Equip people who know to respond well to the involved parties.
- Pray for wisdom. Seek God together as a staff.

I am sure you can feel the weight of this responsibility and can imagine the difficulty of navigating it all. As trying as it will be, consider the impact of not responding at all—leaving the families reeling, hurting, and left to figure it out on their own—navigating a legal system and attempting to worship together as if nothing ever happened.

The need for ongoing pastoral care

Mandated reporting and pastoral care are not at odds with one another. When an accusation is reported to the authorities, pastoral care doesn't stop there, it has just begun! A ministry should have a continuing role in the situation. A church or organization can't "wash their hands" of the matter. There will be a need for care and follow-up as the investigation unfolds, and for some time afterwards.

Pastoral care will walk alongside the abused with care and compassion. For families, it is a gift to have people in the church who understand the devastating effects of what has happened. For an adult or child to feel valued, cared for, and defended against any type of abuse should be the norm from a congregation.

Care also requires engaging with trained professionals and the legal system. It is a commitment to persevere regardless of the amount of time and difficulty you encounter. Good pastoral leadership can provide guidance, support, nurture and hope. People need to see and experience the comfort of a loving God at a time when some will think he has somehow left them in their suffering.

The legal mandate to report abuse—whether it is on behalf of children, the elderly, the disabled, or anyone abused by an authority—is a call we as believers have to protect the vulnerable. Mandated reporting is pastoral care. It allows the authorities to do the hard work of investigation. It complies with the laws of the land. It means walking alongside those who have been impacted with a sage affection.

Biblical Counselling in the

Steve Midgley

Suppose you wanted to get biblical counselling going in a country where the church doesn't have any tradition of working in that sort of way. Suppose you wanted to generate enthusiasm for a biblical counselling approach but realised how little you knew about driving that sort of initiative forward. Where would you turn? What would be the ideal way of getting help?

How about a three month visit to CCEF to be generously hosted by their faculty and allowed to sit in on just about anything you wanted and ask pretty much any question you liked. Sounds ideal, doesn't it? Only that just couldn't happen...could it?

Except that it did. For three months in 2014, CCEF opened their doors on exactly that basis to me and one other UK pastor, Steve Casey, from inner-city Liverpool. It was an extraordinary opportunity.

THE BACKSTORY

Four years ago I flew to the states for a CCEF conference. I didn't know anyone else who was going and had no idea what to expect. What I did know was that I had a growing interest and admiration for the

work of CCEF and wanted to take a first-hand look. At the end of the first general session, as I sat in a crowd of 1600 people, I happened to spot "UK" written on a name badge. I set off in pursuit of the badge wearer and her husband. This moment was the unlikely start of what would eventually become Biblical Counselling UK. Of course we didn't know that then.

The person wearing the badge was Sydnie Jordan. Like me, her interest in CCEF was nurtured through the online distance education programme. I was a pastor in Cambridge, and Sydnie was a church worker in central London. Over the next four days we shared our experiences and dreamed about what it might look like for UK churches to catch a vision for a biblical counselling approach to ministry. Here is a window into what we dreamed about:

- What if we could host our own conference and have CCEF faculty speak?
- What if we could get CCEF classes into one of our seminaries?
- And, above all, how can our churches have more of a vision for personal ministry that was skilled in fostering personal growth?

And then we went home without any real idea of what to do next.

BIBLICAL COUNSELLING UK TAKES OFF

God, however, had rather clear ideas about what should happen next. Interest was already growing in the UK. People were reading books by CCEF authors that had appeared on our bookstalls. Pastors were addressing the motivations of the heart in sermons. There was a growing appetite for the sort of discipleship and ministry that focused on the attitudes and affections of the heart.

Then, out of nowhere, an opportunity arose for me to teach pastoral counselling at Oak Hill College in London, one of the UK's foremost evangelical Bible colleges. Over four years the teaching opportunities increased and the college welcomed a growing emphasis on biblical counselling. Slowly, those of us sharing a passion for biblical counselling were making deeper connections.

Then a small group of five met and hatched a mad plan to host a conference. We knew nothing much about arranging conferences, but realised that for the finances to work it would have to be large. We began exploring possibilities and made



our first contact with CCEF staff who were kind enough to listen. God provided again through generous financial backers and a conference administrator ready to give his time to the project. All of which led, in 2013, to 1700 people turning up to our first national conference with CCEF. Our impression of a growing interest was confirmed. That was less than two years ago. A lot has happened since.

In 2014 we launched a two-year certificate course at Oak Hill College. This programme

uses six of the CCEF distance classes in conjunction with live seminars that add a skills element to the training. Right now, these seminars are being taught in four locations across the UK. In two years we hope to have over 100 people working their way through the training. So when someone phones to ask for help in their part of the country, by God's grace we may not need to say: "Sorry, but we don't know anyone who takes a biblical counselling approach in that area." We can begin to say, "Yes, there might just be someone to help."

WHAT'S NEXT

So what did our three-month visit provide and what have Steve Casey and I taken back across the pond? One obvious answer is that we returned with many new and rich friendships. (You Americans do make it easy to get to know you quickly! It almost overcame my British sense of reserve!) We are hugely grateful for the hospitality we received and for the way so many of CCEF's staff made such generous sacrifices to make it possible for us to be there. We will also take back many rich lessons for the development of biblical counselling in the UK.

There are, of course, some things that need adapting to a different culture. Some stereotypes are true—Brits really are more

private and reserved than our US friends—but we don't want to be afraid of challenging those cultural patterns. God does, after all, call us to be counter-cultural. Above all, we see that Christian ministry has at its core the growth and discipleship of unique and precious people who are deeply loved by the Lord. As Christ's church we need to get better at loving people rather than doing programmes. Biblical counselling helps us do that.

We also went home knowing there is much more to learn. And I've noticed how that is also true at CCEF. Their willingness to admit weaknesses and their eagerness to discover their own blind spots has been striking. That has meant they are willing to keep learning and listening, even to the tentative observations of two British pastors. We in the UK have so much to learn and, as a pastor, a key issue for me is to find out how the excellent work of biblical counselling can best find its way back into its natural home in the very heart of church life.

I am so grateful for the chance to listen, to learn, to get involved in counselling and to see the work of CCEF first hand. I know Steve Casey feels the same. It has been a great gift and I am excited to see what God will do next as he moves biblical counselling forward in the UK.

School of Biblical Counseling

Join students from all over the world to explore topics such as these:

- How do we change through the person of Christ?
- How do we walk alongside others who are seeking to find hope and help in the gospel?
- What does it look like to help others in the context of the local church?
- How do we apply all of Scripture to life?

"My interest in biblical counseling was nurtured through CCEF's online distance education program."
Steve Midgely, Director, BCUK

ccef.org/courses

What is self-injury and what does it mean? How do you move toward and help a person who is engaging in self-injury? We recently sat down with Wendy Budnick, a contract counselor at CCEF, to discuss this important topic and hear how she approaches strugglers with tenderness and care.



MEET THE COUNSELOR

Wendy Budnick

What do you find most rewarding about counseling?

The most rewarding aspect of counseling is having the opportunity to do relationship with people in an intentional way—walking alongside them, seeing what God is doing in their lives, and getting to be a part of the work that he is doing. It is a privilege and honor to walk with someone, to be trusted, and to be allowed into vulnerable places. I hope and pray that the relationship I have with my counselees is a dim reflection of the Lord's love for them. More than anything, I want the foundation of my counsel to be God's grace and the umbrella to be God's love.

What do you find most challenging about counseling?

My answer to that question changes over time. Right now I am most challenged when I walk with suffering people who are wrestling with hopelessness and anger toward God. I am in a season of ministry where this is prominent. It is heartbreaking, and offering all the "right" answers doesn't help. This

leads me to pray and to study God's Word for insight and help.

This past year I spent time in the book of Job. All of us tend to respond to suffering by seeking vindication or answers. But when we consider Job's story, we are challenged to trust in the wisdom and presence of God. Job did not get the vindication he sought. He received a very present help—God himself. Seeing Job's relationship with God helps me to prioritize pointing sufferers to the God who is personally near and who is not callous to or unmoved by their pain.

You have gained experience and case wisdom in the area of self-injury—particularly with those who cut themselves. Can you first share what self-injury is and then tell us about your counseling approach with this issue?

Self-injury is when you intentionally harm yourself. This harm can be in the form of burning, cutting, banging your head, picking at your skin, or choking yourself. Often, a person may practice more than one way

of self-harm.

When a person comes to counseling to deal with the problem of self-injury, I start in the same way I would with anyone. I build a relationship by providing a safe and trusting context, a place where people can have a voice and know they will be heard.

Self-injury is a sign of an underlying struggle. So I want to explore what might be contributing to the person's desire to self-injure. For some, it can be a way to say, "I want to feel something." For others it can be a way to say, "I don't want to feel anything." So we work together to identify and put words to what feels so unmanageable. I have seen self-injury become a language for dealing with one or more of the following issues.

- A loss of control: emotionally, relationally or circumstantially.
- A standard of perfectionism: a person lives with a feeling of not measuring up to a standard. He or she feels either an internal or external pressure to succeed, or fears failure.
- Guilt and shame: the person feels that he

or she deserves punishment, and self-injury is a way to do penance and make atonement. Perhaps the person has been abused and uses self-injury as a means to “cleanse” him or herself.

- Difficult emotions: self-injury is a way to numb, express, avoid, or manage difficult emotions, like anger. Perhaps the person is angry at someone and self-injury is a way to punish this person. Or maybe anger is unacceptable, so self-injury expresses those emotions in a way that feels more acceptable.
- Fear of man: a fear of rejection, or being exposed, or closeness with others. Perhaps the person feels unloved and alone.
- A loss of voice in relationships: this person may live in an invalidating environment and self-injury is a way to be “heard.” Or perhaps the person has no actual words to put to an awful experience, like abuse, and self-injury is the only way to express the pain.
- A history of trauma: self-injury is a way to deal with the devastating effects of the trauma to the person’s body and soul.

So we work together to identify contributing factors like these, and I help provide understanding along the way. Then we think through what it looks like to face the underlying problem differently. To do this, the person must come to biblically understand the act itself and how it impacts relationships with God and others. A conviction must develop that self-injury is not the way to deal with what is going on. We explore what it looks like and sounds like to bring our pain, our hurts, our fears and our confusion to the Lord who hears and who helps.

We also collaborate to locate practical options to resist the urge to self-injure and to be prepared for when the urge comes. For example, we learn how to seek help from God and trusted friends. I encourage my counselee to make a call, text, meet a friend, or pause and pray before giving in to the desire. This will slow a person down so that self-injury becomes less automatic and inevitable. Journaling is another way for strugglers to gain insight into how, when, and why self-injury seems like the only option. Journaling provides the struggler with an opportunity

to identify triggers and express fears and emotions with words. All these ways help a person gain insight into how, when, and why the self-injury pattern plays out for them.

A goal later on in the process is to establish

Love always steps up.
Love takes action.
One initial way friends
and family can take
action is by educating
themselves on the issue
of self-injury.

an accountability relationship between the person struggling with self-harm and a trusted person. To some extent, the counselor can keep the person accountable, but counselors aren’t always available. So in the long run it is better if the accountability partner is involved in everyday life.

What are the signs that someone is involved in self-injury?

It can be hard to spot signs. People who self-injure tend to hide the behavior so there aren’t many outward signs. Look for other indicators, such as depression, anxiety, irritability, social and relational withdrawal, or defensiveness. If a teen covers up quickly when you come into the room, then that would be a reason to ask a few questions. Other clues are when a girl or woman starts to wear a lot of bracelets, or a person starts wearing long sleeves or pants when it is not seasonally appropriate. Be aware of these signs and don’t be afraid to initiate a conversation that inquires with a loving tone. As you talk, give overt reassurances that you care and are concerned for the person.

What counsel do you give to those who

want to walk alongside a person who self-injures but are not sure how to help?

Love always steps up. Love takes action. One initial way friends and family can take action is by educating themselves on the issue of self-injury.

In terms of interacting and walking with another person, I encourage families and friends to be gentle, to be patient, to be good listeners, to be willing to be present with the struggler, to ask questions (but not insist on answers), and to be honest about concerns. On the flip side, I also advise family and friends to not panic, shame or condemn the person, and not to make “should” or “shouldn’t” statements.

Understandably, self-injury is a very scary thing for loved ones—especially for parents. They fear for the physical safety and wellbeing of their child. Of course they want the behaviors to stop immediately. But part of helping a child is to know that lasting change takes time. So I advise parents in the following ways: Seek help for your child and yourself. This might be a long road and you and your child need wise, dependable resources. Also, do all that you can to build relationship and trust with your child. Prayerfully choose your words when you speak. Avoid talking about your child with many people, particularly at church where your child also has relationships. Be open to hearing hard things from your child.

For others who want to help, I similarly advocate an approach that is respectful and kind. Concerned loved ones should ask for permission from the person to enter into the struggle. If allowed in, he or she must be a trustworthy and safe person to share struggles with. If a friend or family member is serving as an accountability partner, then I caution against becoming a kind of policeman. A policeman looks for wrongs and enforces rules. But accountability is gracious and merciful, even as it asks the hard questions. Accountability is about the whole person, the whole relationship—not just the outward behavior.



1803 East Willow Grove Avenue
Glenside, PA 19038
www.ccef.org

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 714
GLENSIDE, PA

SIDE *by* SIDE

WALKING WITH OTHERS IN WISDOM AND LOVE

THE NATIONAL

CCEF15

CONFERENCE

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

OCTOBER 16-18, 2015

CCEF Faculty with guest speaker

STEVE MIDGLEY

(Chair, Biblical Counseling, UK)

ccef.org/events