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**The Use of the Concept of the New Identity in Christ
when Counseling Sexual Addiction**

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Introduction

Sexual Addiction may be obtuse terminology to many, but the undercurrent of this condition runs deep throughout Western culture. The nature of sexual addiction carries similar negative responses from society as substance abuse. It could also be said that sexual addiction, unlike other addictive behaviors, carries a burden of proof. Society is less likely to believe that someone can be a sexual addict; on the surface the addict may appear disingenuous. Celebrities claim sexual addiction if exposed by an event, disease or individual. What usually follows is a plan to enter a well known treatment center promising restoration. It seems important to note that the nature of sexual addiction in North America is a dichotomy. In one sense, western culture is engrossed in the prospect of free and unlimited sexuality alongside an unwillingness face the price of unrestraint. The western culture of sexuality stands as midwife to what has become an increase of sexual addiction of various forms.

A. Secret Society

1. The Sex Industry and Its Impact

A broad discussion of the sex industry reveals that sex slavery, pornography, and prostitution have been on the rise. The Bureau of Justice Assistance states in a recent report that between 2008 and 2010, "...82 percent of reported human trafficking incidents in the United States between January 2008 and June 2010 involved

allegations of sex trafficking;”¹ The statistics on the use of pornography are also staggering. The profit from the porn industry alone in 2006 is estimated to be around \$13 billion dollars.² Statistics reveal that 1 in 10 men in the world have purchased a prostitute.³ The social impact of the sex industry remains something that is whispered about, but its impact on families, churches, and communities is undeniable.

Morality in Media, an interfaith organization, sponsored research conducted by Harris Interactive in 2009 which revealed that, “76% of U.S. adults disagree that viewing hardcore adult pornography on the Internet is morally acceptable;” 74% disagree that “viewing hardcore adult pornography on the Internet provides, generally, harmless entertainment;”⁴ Other statistics reveal the following concerning internet porn usage, “71.9 million visits were made to adult sites in August 2005, reaching 42.7 percent of the Internet audience. 63.4 million unique visits were made to adult websites in December of 2005, reaching 37.2% of the Internet audience.” There are many in our society who would publicly affirm moral standards with regards to the use of porn, but privately indulge in this enslaving lifestyle.

Steven Gallagher of Pure Life Ministries shares some statistics on how the church is struggling through these challenges:

The Church has not been immune from this moral disaster either. Surprisingly enough, studies and polls have shown that the percentage of Christian men regularly viewing pornography is the same as that of nonbelievers (about 20%). According to a poll conducted by Christianity Today in 2001, 44% of pastors acknowledged that they had visited a smut site. There is every reason to believe that these percentages have grown substantially since then.⁵

¹ Bureau of Labor and Statistics US Department of Labor. "http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf." *www.bls.gov*. October 5, 2012. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf> (accessed October 26, 2012).

² CY Talk. *CY Talk News Blog*. January 10, 2010. <http://blog.cytalk.com/2010/01/web-porn-revenue/> (accessed November 15, 2012).

³ The Blind Project. *The Blind Project*. April 7, 2010. <http://theblindproject.com/blog/2010/04/the-stats-behind-prostitution/> (accessed November 14, 2012).

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Gallagher, Steven. *A Biblical Guide to Counseling the Sexual Addict*. Dry Ridge: Pure Life Ministries, 2004. 15

2. A Secret Problem

The western cultural phenomenon that is the ‘sex culture’ is made possible by the duality of public outrage and private consumption. To reiterate, on the one hand there is great moral outcry at the presence of predators and porn shops within communities. However, on the other hand, society turns a blind eye at the commercialization and devaluation of sex as only a biological impulse. The business of promiscuous, addictive and dangerous sex cuts through communities of all kinds. A favorite target to blame for promiscuity is pop culture. The music, television, commercials, clothes, and products all create an atmosphere that makes sexual promiscuity and resulting addiction possible. There is no doubt that these industries have contributed to a hyper-sexuality within Western culture. All too often the church has utilized secularism as the fall guy for all that ails society. A common belief is that if we could just remove obscene images, suggestive music, shows and porn magazines, the problem of sexual deviance and addiction could be solved. Although it may be convenient to blame the culture, it is important to recognize that culture is a reflection of values, and values are a reflection of common collective thinking. The problem of addiction and sexuality goes to the core of a person.

The topic of sexual deviance and addiction is rarely discussed in prominent Christian circles and if it is discussed, it is a peripheral topic that’s not afforded the kind of attention the statistics bear out. In fact, in the online journal AllPsych, Roscbeth Ewald remarks, “Sexual addictions are among the least talked about and probably the least understood of all addictions.”⁶ The negligence further pushes the problem deeper into obscurity and secrecy. The reality is that many within Protestant and Evangelical churches are struggling with the secret burden of addiction. The challenge facing the church is how to properly and respectfully shine light on a pervasive problem and assist in the rescue of those in bondage to sin.

⁶ BIBLIOGRAPHY \1 1033 Ewald, Roscbeth. "Sexual Addiction." *AllPsych Online*, 2003: 1-5.

B. The Heart of the Addiction Problem

1. The Nature of Sexual Addiction

Christian clinical therapists Joyce and Clifford Penner have provided a comprehensive description of the sexual addict. They characterize sexual addictions as a struggle against one's will. They delineate concerning sexual addiction, "The emotional factors that distinguish various behaviors as sexual addictions are the obsessive and compulsive qualities that drive the person almost against his or her own will."⁷ They further clarify the difference between a 'compulsion' and an 'addiction.' They explain, "When we speak of compulsion, we are usually referring to a habit or behavior that an individual finds himself engaged in that can be cured and left behind forever. When we speak of an addiction, we are referring to a habit that has a lifelong hold on the individual and will be a lifelong struggle."⁸

Joyce and Clifford Penner also point to the embryonic trigger of sexual addiction. As difficult as it is to grasp, they suggest that addictive sexual behavior can begin at a very young age. They declare, "It is not uncommon for an addiction to begin between ages eight and twelve, if early childhood sexual innocence has been violated or the natural curiosities of preadolescence have been handled inappropriately."⁹ Of course an early childhood event does not predetermine a life of addiction or even promiscuous or deviant behavior. Parenthetically, it is important to distinguish addictive and promiscuous behavior.¹⁰ Richard Blankenship and Mark Laaser wrote an article entitled, *Sexual Addiction and ADHD: Is There a*

⁷ Penner, J.J., & Penner, C.L. (1990). *Counseling for Sexual Disorders* (Vol: 26). (G.R. Collins, Ed.) Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 277

⁹ *Ibid.*, 279

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 275, Joyce Penner, et. al. provides an important distinction between promiscuity and addiction, "Before we are too far into the chapter, we need to clarify what is not a sexual addiction. There is obviously a great range of sexual behavior that is considered normal. For example, having sex every day might be very normal for one couple. However, for certain individuals, it may be an expression of an addiction. So we cannot say that anyone who wants frequent sex is a sexual addict. For one man, visiting a prostitute may be something that he does when he is out of town every year or two, but he feels no great compulsion for it. As reprehensible as this may be, this would not be an addiction. Some men may masturbate on an intermittent schedule as they experience the urge to do so; but this does not comprise an addiction. There are men or women who on occasion will view pornographic material, whether that be in a magazine, movie, video, or topless bar; but they are not hooked on those activities, and hence would not be considered sexual addicts." 275

Connection. In this article, he states that "...97% of sexual addicts have been emotionally abused as children, 72% were physically abused, and 81% were sexually abused..."¹¹ The direct correlation between early abuse and the resulting shame may be the precipitating reason that many find themselves lifelong addicts. The reality of addiction is all they know.

2. Addiction and Shame

The problem of shame and its oppressive nature creates the impetus to self medicate therefore entering the addictive cycle. The shame and associated secrecy can make for a life filled with struggle. The attraction of the chemical release that occurs when the sexual addict engages in his or her ritual provides a momentary disassociation from life and the traumatic shame event.¹² The vicious cycle of addiction combined with the shame associated with crossing boundaries of belief is really one of the core issues that the pastor or Christian practitioner must get to in the treatment process. The underlying shame associated with a precipitating event and damage brought on by the addiction are key pieces that must be addressed so that the addict can return to health. Larry Crabb and Dan Allender link shame to addiction in their book entitled, *Hope When You're Hurting*:

The real killer of the self and the real cause of all addictions is shame. Shame, according to this approach, is the experience of feeling deficient. Shame causes us to see our identity as flawed rather than seeing ourselves as having flaws. Our harsh judgments lead us to see ourselves as ugly, stupid, and fat. The result is a deep hole in the soul.

The shame-based person will often neglect himself and allow others to have control of his life. As pain increases, the victim of shame gravitates to objects, ideas, or persons that medicate the pain. Before long, shame propels the person into addiction.¹³

¹¹ Blankenship, Richard, and Mark Laaser. "Sexual Addiction and ADHD: Is there a Connection." *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 2004: 11:7-20. 8-9

¹² Ibid. 8 Blankenship and Laaser further elaborate on the chemical response that a sexual addict experiences when engaged in their addiction ritual, "The clandestine nature of some forms of sexual acting out can create the adrenaline rush to elevate mood. The release of chemicals during orgasm can calm the brain and bring the mood down into a state of relaxation."

¹³ Crabb, Larry, and Dan Allender. *Hope When You're Hurting*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996. 106-107

C. Sexual Addiction Cycle, Beliefs and System

A keen knowledge of the sexual addiction cycle may be a tremendous tool for pastors and Christian counselors in a quest to present opportunities for liberty and healing for the sex addict.

1. The Sexual Addiction Cycles & Core Beliefs

The foremost authority on sexual addiction is Patrick Carnes. His ground breaking work, *Out of the Shadows* was published in 1983 and is still used as a primary source by secular and Christian therapists. In this work, he provides a description of the cycle of sexual addiction:

Preoccupation—the trance or mood wherein the addicts’ minds are completely engrossed with thoughts of sex. This mental state creates an obsessive search for sexual stimulation.

Ritualization—The addicts’ own special routines that lead up to the sexual behavior. The ritual intensifies the preoccupation, adding arousal and excitement.

Compulsive sexual behavior—the actual sexual act, which is the end goal of the preoccupation and ritualization. Sexual addicts are unable to control or stop the behavior.

Despair—the feeling of utter hopelessness addicts has about their behavior and their powerlessness.¹⁴

Carnes has produced other books designed to assist the addict and therapist in the quest to overcome their addiction. His work highlights key addictive transition points that can be recognized and addressed by a caring and concerned community, pastoral counselor or the addict themselves. The *Despair* leg of the cycle is where many therapist or pastoral counselors may become involved in the process of treating the sex addict. It is in this place that one is most likely to turn to reach for help to get free of the chains of hopelessness associated with shame. Joyce Penner and Clifford Penner borrow from Carnes’ work, *Contrary to Love* and highlight the rationale that shapes the shamed sex addict, “The shame and despair that come from the powerlessness and unmanageability help crystallize the core beliefs about sexual unworthiness that are part of the addicts[’]

¹⁴ Carnes, P. (2001). *Out of Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction*. Center City: Hazelden. 19-20

addictive system.”¹⁵ The battling beliefs that tend to dominant the core thinking of the addicted individual are as follows:

1. I am basically a bad, unworthy person
2. No one would ever love me as I am
3. My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others.
4. Sex is my most important need¹⁶

The addictive practice of voyeurism, exhibitionism, masturbation, anonymous sex, molestation, pornography, child pornography, bondage sex, orgies, prostitution, and the solicitation of prostitution, and bestiality are indicative of shame in some form. Poor self -image is a contributing factor, and in many ways a gateway into an addictive lifestyle. The addiction system itself is fed by this compromised identity.

Carnes fits the addiction cycle and the corresponding core beliefs of the addict under the addiction system. The system’s inner workings and results are detailed below:

The addictive system starts with a belief system containing faulty assumptions, myths, and values that support impaired thinking. The resulting delusional thought processes insulate the addiction cycle from reality. The four-phase addiction cycle (preoccupation, ritualization, sexual compulsiveness, and despair) can repeat itself unhindered and take over the addict’s life. All the other support systems, including relationships, work, finance, and health, become unmanageable.¹⁷

2. Sexual Addiction Levels

Carnes equips those who wish to assist the sex addict in their understanding of this pervasive condition by detailing the addiction cycle, addictive system and a composition of the core belief of the sexual addict. Although the goals of the therapists committed to a Biblical worldview and secular therapists are different both can benefit from Dr. Patrick Carnes’ ground-breaking research. Another area of research that Christian counselors may find helpful is the categorization of sexual addiction into three levels. Regarding the levels of sexual addiction Carnes suggests the following:

CITATION Pen90 \l 1033 (Penner & Penner, 1990) 286
Ibid
CITATION Car01 \l 1033 (Carnes, 2001) 25

A workable structure that helps to identify patterns is to view the addiction as operating on three levels. Level One contains behaviors that are regarded as normal, acceptable, or tolerable. Examples include masturbation, pornography, and prostitution. Level Two, by contrast, extends to those behaviors which are clearly victimizing and for which legal sanctions are enforced. These are generally seen as nuisance offenses, such as exhibitionism or voyeurism. The Level Three behaviors have grave consequences for the victims and legal consequences for the addicts; examples are incest, child molestation, or rape.¹⁸

The examples within each of the three levels are present within communities across society. A Biblical worldview understands that shame is at the heart of each of the three aforementioned levels, but the intensity and degree to which sin is expressed or unbridled is varied and can be unpredictable.

3. A Snapshot of Sexual Addiction Levels

The following vignettes are taken from Carnes' piece and highlight the extent of sexual addiction:

John

John, a husband, grandfather and CEO of a company on the verge of bankruptcy sits at a computer at 2:00 A.M. masturbating as he engages in cybersex. His wife went to bed at 9:30 P.M. but John has stayed up engaging his sexual longings. The dichotomy is that John is not only experiencing the chemical release that the addiction cycle provides, but he is also experiencing the extreme pain associated with the very same unrelenting addiction cycle. On this particular night John enters a voyeur website where people post nude photos of themselves and their spouses. John runs into the unexpected when he comes across a picture of his daughter-in-law, the mother of his two grandchildren. Her breasts were fully exposed and there is a caption under her picture posted by his son James asking, "Tell us that you like what you see, and maybe I can get her do more."

John has a moment of unparalleled clarity and pain. His dilemma is further compounded by his own history of infidelity with several his employees. The pressure of having a reputation as a CEO built on honesty, but dealing with the compulsive and predatory nature of his addiction is proving to be too much to handle. His addiction led to his current financial condition as head of a failing company. The

Ibid., 37

company's financial picture had been hidden from his wife and others—he had become comfortable with deception. His world and the extent of his shame and secrecy are now front and center as he sits at 2:00 A.M. viewing his daughter-in-law's breasts and his son's question.¹⁹

Carrie

Carrie was in her late twenties employed as a music teacher working at four elementary schools. She was known for her creativity and energy. She loved kids and they admired her, she was also well received by her colleagues and parents attended her concerts. Carrie also had aspirations of becoming a singer, but her singing career went as far as the local piano bar circuit. Her disappointment plunged her into a world of one night stands with customers she would meet at these night clubs. An evening would consist of singing, meeting up with a patron to have sex and then off to school to teaching music classes—this became a daily ritual. For a while she continued this lifestyle while maintaining high standards until the addiction progressed. As the addiction progressed her two worlds collided as she faced an unexpected heart-attack at the age of thirty-three.

The short nights and both physical and emotional damage took its toll as she recounts sleeping with hundreds of men. Carnes remarks, “Carrie, like all sexual addicts, lived in two worlds. One was a world of piano bars, musty hotel rooms, and nameless faces. The other had music, laughter, and faces of children and colleagues—whose names she knew. The coexistence of the two worlds continued until Carrie's body refused to live up to the strain.”²⁰

George

Lastly, George is a compulsive rapist whose public persona was that of a trustworthy appliance repairman. He was so trusted that many customers would allow him to fix appliances alone in their homes. George utilized their trust to explore drawers looking to find underwear, bras and panties. He was Roman Catholic and served several terms as parish trustee. George was married with three daughters and the initial family secret was alcoholism. At the age of

Ibid., 77-80

Ibid., 28-29

43 he was arrested for exhibitionism and his secrets were out in the open. George was involved in masturbation, voyeurism, exhibitionism, numerous affairs, and expensive prostitutes. The most prominent issue was his level three sexual addiction which involved the rape of six women at knifepoint and the physical molestation of seven other women. George's raping and molestation were not exclusive, but were part of a host of other sublevel addictions feeding into this secret predatory lifestyle.²¹

These individuals provide a snapshot of a private and public world colliding and the calamity that ensues once they are exposed. There are countless other examples of individuals dealing with compulsive desires. Although the case studies are varied, the issue of secrecy and ongoing shame are key characteristics of sex addiction. The core beliefs which are central to the addictive system are established early on in a child's development and can become extremely difficult to break.²² As was stated previously, addressing the false core beliefs are a critical piece on the road to recovery.

How does the Christian therapist treat a condition recognized for shame and secrecy? A necessary first step may be determining the cause of shame or developing a framework or theology of shame. Crabb and Allender provide assistance with the task as they pinpoint the problem of shame as it relates to addiction. It is important to note that shame is inextricably an identity issue and therefore a new identity or a 'Christ-centered' identity is not simply a therapeutic tool, but a solution to overcome what will be a life long struggle.

D. Christ-Centered Identity

The path to a proper understanding of the concept of shame and addressing this within the context of counseling an addict from a Christian or Biblical framework requires an understanding of shame and its impact on identity. In Genesis 1:27 we have Adam and Eve

Ibid., 61-62

Ibid., 97 Carnes provides four factors in a child's development that ultimately become part of the sexual addiction:

1. self image – how children perceive themselves
2. relationships—how children perceive their relationships with others needs—how children perceive their own needs
3. sexuality—how children perceive their own sexual feelings and needs.

It is important to recognize how self image is a critical factor with regards to sexual addiction and if not addressed the counselor finds that they must address these very important identity issues.

receiving their unique God-given identity. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

1. The Image of God

These were created in the image of God—they bore the *imago Dei*.²³ Kenneth Gardoski provides a comprehensive understanding of the *imago Dei* dealing with how it should be properly defined and understood. He says, “God gave of his divine ‘life-breath’ to man alone. This not only made man a living and breathing creature, but also a thinking, speaking, volitional, moral, and spiritual being. These aspects of God’s own nature which God granted to man at creation constitute the *imago Dei*.”²⁴ Here is the composition of a pre-fall identity. Mankind is in communion with his Creator and his identity is secure, he is the image bearer, he is in unique relationship with God and has been given the responsibility of ruler over creation. In Genesis 1:26-31 there is a picture of the complete wholeness that once characterized man’s existence. The text sums up by stating in v. 31a, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

2. Fallen Identity

The prospect of shame, which rots away at identity, is introduced in the fall of man in Genesis 3 where man stepped outside of God ordained wholeness into the distortion that is life outside of God-initiated relationship and rule.²⁵ In the third chapter, there are several

BIBLIOGRAPHY \l 1033 Gardoski, Kenneth. "The Imago Dei Revisited." *Journal of Ministry and Theology*, 2007: 5-37.

Ibid. 23, For further elaboration Gardoski states, “In this sense God created man after the pattern of God’s own nature, for the Creator God is likewise a living (Gen 1:1), thinking, speaking (v. 3), choosing (v.5a), deliberating, creating (vv. 26–27), evaluating, and morally judging (v. 31a) spiritual being (v. 2). It seems defensible from the opening pages of Scripture to argue that the *imago Dei*, the “likeness of God,” according to which God created man, is the complex of uniquely personal characteristics that God imparted

to man at creation, which adhere to the immaterial aspect of man’s being.⁵⁹ God created man to be a personal, spiritual, God-like being.” 23

CITATION All94 \l 1033 (Allender & Longman III, 1994) p. 192-195. Allender and Longman layout three signpost of shame giving a comprehensive overview of shame as it appears in the Garden and in individual lives. The first signpost, “Shame creates an absorption with self that can make us feel as if we’re downing in quicksand. The self awareness that comes with shame seems to shake brutally our very ground of being. Our identity, the self, seems too ugly to face up to with dire consequences. Therefore, we contemptuously label the ugliness in terms of flawed dignity: I am stupid, fat, undisciplined, always late, never prepared.” Allender, et. al. goes on, “The second signpost of shame is hiding. Adam and Eve flew like hunted birds to the camouflage of the bushes. We fly to the sanctity of our inner world. We escape through the wish of invisibility, the fantasy of shrinking into the wall.” A [Footnote continued on next page ...]

verses that provide a description of the dual penalty of secrecy and shame that is so common in the lives of addicts. There is an attempt to self-medicate or to provide solutions outside of God. Genesis 3:7, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” The transgressors have determined that something is out of order and there is a need, but their solutions are inadequate. Their attempt to realign themselves has fallen short. They added to their misery by utilizing material to repair the spiritual. The secrecy of shame resurfaces as both Adam and Eve, “...hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” (v. 8) The man responds to God’s question, “Where are you?” (v. 9b) by detailing his new condition, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” (v. 10) It is important to note that the *imago Dei* has not been removed, but Adam’s behavior does not resemble someone whose identity is intact. Gardoski details the impact of the fall on the *imago Dei*:

Fallen man now uses the dull and damaged tools of his heart and mind to serve himself, sin, and the devil instead of God. He goes astray from the womb (Ps 58:3). His heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). His mind and conscience are corrupted (Titus 1:15). He is darkened in understanding, excluded from the life of God, ignorant, and hard-hearted (Eph 4:18). He is foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved to lusts and pleasures (Titus 3:3). Yes, the image of God in man remains after the fall, but it is badly marred and in need of restoration and renewal in Christ.²⁶

3. Addiction as Idol Making

Sin and the fall coupled with the ongoing presence of spiritual warfare in the world has produced the ongoing struggle with idolatry that we observe beginning in the garden. The human heart and the problem of idolatry is described by Edward T. Welch and Gary Steven Shogren in their work entitled, *Addictive Behavior*, “The hearts instinctive plotting in this idol construction is amazing (cf. Rom.1). We know that we are called to imitate God. In short, this means that we are to live for God’s glory, not our own. We are to make Him famous, not ourselves. A noble calling to be sure, but we

third signpost of shame is, “...emotional or physical violence directed against the self or against the one who originally witnessed our fall”

Ibid., 28

choose to forsake it or “exchange” our calling and give glory to idols instead.”²⁷

The fallen image bearer clings to created gods in hopes of controlling them but these gods eventually control the person.²⁸ Welch and Shogren also make a distinction concerning idols. They posit, “...some idols hook our bodily passions and desires. This subset of addictions includes drugs (legal and illegal), alcohol, sexual sin, and food. These can alter the mind, provide physical pleasure, relieve physical tension, and soothe physical desires [...] and these payoffs can be difficult to resist.”²⁹ The work done to provide a Biblical worldview of addiction gets to the core of humanity’s collective ‘Achilles’ heel’. John Calvin remarked, “The human heart is a factory of idols...Everyone of us is, from his mother’s womb, an expert in inventing idols.”³⁰ Broken image bearers will construct a god that attempts to cover their shame in hopes of restoring them to wholeness. The lie that a tapestry of fig leaves can hide shame is not only a problem that the sex addict struggles with but it is the problem of the human heart. (Gen. 3:7b)

E. Shame and the Addict’s Heart

Crabb and Allender suggest concerning shame:

Shame is the traumatic exposure of nakedness—for example, when a person does something harmful (has an affair), commits a blunder (forgets a wallet), or is caught in some flaw of appearance (smudged mascara). This exposure occurs when we feel the lance of a gaze (either someone else’s or our own) tearing open the various cultural, relational, or religious coverings we put on. What is revealed, we feel is an inner ugliness.”³¹

The presence of a fallen identity leads mankind into the practice of idolatry which in itself reveals a broken identity. Now with a fallen identity God sets mankind on a path to redemption—a new identity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY \1 1033 Welch, Edward, and Gary Steven Shogren. *Addictive Behavior*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. 39-40

Ibid. 40. To further elaborate on the control of idolatry Welch and Shogren also suggests, “Idols, however, do not cooperate. Rather than mastering our idols, we become enslaved by them and begin to look like them. As idols are deaf, dumb, blind, utterly senseless, and irrational, so “those who make them will be like them, and so will all who put their trust in them’ (Ps. 115:8). Idolaters loose their moorings, they are lost at sea.

Ibid. 41

BIBLIOGRAPHY Haverhill Community Church. “The Root of the Problem.” October 2, 2011. <http://haverhillcc.org/files/RM4TheRootoftheProblem.pdf> (accessed November 15, 2012).

CITATION All94 \1 1033 (Allender & Longman III, 1994) 195

God’s redemptive trajectory heads towards the incarnation—God himself resolving the problem of sin and its affects by providing redemption. God’s instructions concerning idols reveal His heart, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3) In Exodus 15:11, Moses and Israel proclaim God’s unequaled majesty, “Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you--majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?” At the heart of idolatry is a hopeless reach for imperfection.

The issue of idolatry and addiction has been taken up by Christian practitioners as a key component in a treatment program. Idolatry is not just critical to explain the theological framework of addiction, but it reveals the acute and prevalent nature of sin for all mankind; addicted or not. Crabb and Allender instruct concerning idolatry, “Idolatry is not the by-product of forgetting God; it is the means by which we forget Him. I don’t merely misplace God. Instead, I forget God by turning my heart to gods that seem to provide for my soul far better than God.”³²

F. A Biblical Overview of New Identity in Christ

The following two examples are taken from the Old Testament Biblical text and highlight God’s work of giving new identity to those He calls. The affixing of the new identity was coupled with either the covenant blessing or the reaffirmation of God’s blessing. The God-given identity was to be a mark of a uniquely different path for the two patriarchs highlighted below.

1. The Grace of a New Identity

Abraham’s story is analogous of identity transition or the acquisition of a new identity. God called Abram out of his homeland and promised to make of him a great nation. (Gen. 12:1-5) Abram followed God and showed faithfulness as well as a propensity to fail. (Gen. 14:17-24; 12:10-20) God made an unconditional covenant with Abram in Genesis 15 concerning his heir and those who would follow. In Genesis 17 God changed Abram’s name to *Abraham* meaning ‘*father of many nations*’ and his wife Sarai’s name to ‘*Sarah*’, meaning *princess*. Their identity was changed before the

CITATION Cra96 \l 1033 (Crabb and Allender 1996) 96

fulfillment of the promise. Their names and the mark of circumcision would be a constant reminder of God as the Covenant Keeper. Abraham and Sarah reveal God's predisposition to change the course of an individual's life.

We also observe the transitioning of identity in the life of Jacob. The son of Isaac is changed by God and blessed with a new name. In Genesis 35:9-10, we have the Lord appearing to Jacob whose name means, 'deceiver'. God changed his name to 'Israel' meaning, "he struggles with God". Jacob's identity was changed from that of a manipulator to being a repository of the promise. (Gen. 35:11-15) His identity was God-given. Like his grandfather, Jacob received a new name connected to God's promise. The new identity given to these two fallen individuals was grace-initiated by God Himself to fulfill His promise to Abraham and his descendents. Their new identity was meant to be reminders of covenant blessings and ultimate fulfillment.

2. Redeemed from Idolatry

God must shatter the flawed images that distort His image. He alone redeems a soul plastered with the vestiges of idolatry. There is no doubt that the sexual addict is enslaved to the ongoing power of sin. (Rom. 6:20) Who is able to deliver the addict from the perpetual cycle of sin? (Rom. 7:24) Jesus Christ came in the flesh to fulfill the mission of the Father as announced in Luke 4:16-19. The addict's hope is that Jesus Christ would proclaim as He does in Luke 4:18b, "He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners..." Carnes' aforementioned sexual addiction cycle resembles an imprisoned soul; a repeated journey into idolatry with the same empty and damaging results. Christ enters the fallen world as the God-Man—He identifies with His brethren. (Heb. 2:17-18) His identification with His brethren made possible the atoning sacrifice for sin and the subsequent pathway of entrance into the family of God for those who were once aliens and excluded. (Eph. 2:11-22) "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers." (Heb. 2:11) New identity has been established based on the covenant-keeping promise of God.³³

³³ "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promises eternal inheritance now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." (Hebrews 9:15) It is important to note that the new covenant of Hebrews 9 is the same New Covenant promise outlined in Jeremiah 31:31-36; Ezekiel 36:26-27; 1 Corinthians 11:25 [Footnote continued on next page ...]

3. Identity and Transformation Because of Christ

The Apostle Paul describes the dichotomy of Adam and Christ in Romans chapter 5. He invokes the original image bearer Adam as the pathway for sin into humanity. (Romans 5:12) Adam's disobedience and idolatry created a divide between God and Adam and his descendents, but Christ bridged the divide through His death on the cross. (cf. v15) Christ was able to sufficiently bear the image of God, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." (Heb 1:3) The failure of Adam plunged the race into an identity conundrum, but Christ, the perfect representation of God in human form, provides a new identity for those who believe in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17) The redemptive work of Christ and its impact on broken image bearers is seen in Paul's letter more than any other place in the Scriptures. The sinner is able to take on the identity of Christ because Christ took on the sinner's most pressing deficiency. The Apostle says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:21)

4. The Core of Addictive Behavior Addressed with the New Identity

Christ offers the sexually addicted forgiveness and freedom through His death. His victory on the cross and His resurrection does not simply provide a new label for souls looking to forget their past, but there are new possibilities in Christ. The new identity in Christ makes possible the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the fallen, but redeemed image bearers.

The work of Christ makes possible freedom and change. Revisiting the benefits of the new life in Christ, the Apostle Paul describes the dual realities of freedom and ongoing transformation. The benefits of new life in Christ are set in contrast to old covenant condemnation and shame. The Apostle summarizes the blessings in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 when he says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord,

and Hebrews 8:8-13. Israel is still the yet future recipient of the covenant blessings but it is important to note that the church receives the overflow blessings of the new covenant.

who is the Spirit.” In this text the redeemed image bearer finds freedom in the new covenant blessings made possible by the permanent transformative abiding of God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s relationship with the believer not only includes a permanent relationship, but also includes the ongoing Christ-like transformation.

The new identity that Christ gifts to the believer is the process of transitioning from shame-filled idol making to perpetual worship of the one true God. Samuel Southard says, “To know oneself in biblical terms is more than introspection or self-knowledge; it is knowledge of purpose for living and a knowledge of self through the activities and attitudes that fulfill our created purpose.”³⁴

The appropriation of the concept of new identity in Christ as an essential element for growth in the life of a Christian is deeply rooted in the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline Epistles. In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus he writes in a manner that engages the reader’s mind by articulating truth in hopes that it will change their walk. He says to the believer, “

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely, you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:20-24)

In Ephesians 6:11, 13, 16 and 17, Paul uses the Greek prepositional phrase to convey the act of appropriating the invisible apparatus of sanctification and spiritual warfare.³⁵ The sequence of taking off and

BIBLIOGRAPHY \1 1033 Southard, S. (1989). *Theology and Therapy, The Wisdom of God in a Context of Friendship*. Dallas London Sydney Singapore: Word Publishing. 47

Robert C. Roberts writes about Pauline Psychotherapy a chapter in *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and Theory*. There is a section on Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:12-14, “Put on, take off, put away. “Put off (apothesthai) your old nature belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on (endysasthai) the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:22-24 RSV). Endysasthai and apothesthai strongly suggest the donning an doffing of garments. The old anthropos is like an outfit of clothing that, with the birth of the new anthropos, becomes disposable: the old shoes, leggings, shirt, hat and so on, can be taken off, and the new ones put on. This is clearly something that the person or persons in question do, and the Pauline psychotherapist will want to know how this action is performed...The clothing metaphor, along with Paul’s talk about God’s having created the new anthropos, suggests that Pauline therapeutic action is best thought of not as aspiring after an ideal, but as exploiting a perfection already present.” BIBLIOGRAPHY \1 1033 Roberts, Robert C. “Outline of Pauline Psychotherapy.” In *Care for the Soul; Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and* [Footnote continued on next page ...]

putting on are cognitive and spiritual exercises that suggest the ongoing realization of new identity and new actions that follow. The Apostle uses a similar exercise in the book of Colossians when he implores the church at Colossae to consider the reality of the finished work of Christ in their everyday walk. Paul uses similar language and sequence in Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3:1-11.

Here Paul establishes the relationship between the believer and the atoning sacrifice of Christ—His death, burial and resurrection and the believer’s connection to the redemptive event. In Colossians 3:1-4 there is the admonition to reflect on Christ’s death as necessary for current sanctification and also for eschatological hope. He follows in verse 10 with the instruction, “...and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” Paul revisits the imaging process where the once broken image bearer is changing into the likeness of the Creator. He drives the point home in verse 11 where identity is front and center. The transcending reality of a life hidden with Christ in God (cf. 3:3) is that it supersedes ethnicity, religious heritage, and social status as Christ is all, and is in all. (Colossians 3:11)

The sex addict deals with the core issue of shame as they find new identity and learn to put on Christ as one puts on an article of clothing. Although the instructions from Paul may sound simplistic, it is by no means a trivial endeavor. The application of a new identity in Christ addresses the shame sourced in an unresolved past and unmanageable present. New identity in Christ makes possible a change in core belief about one’s self—the new relationship presents a challenge to old relationships that were based on shame, secrecy and idolatry. Paul illustrates the power of a changed identity when he says, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

G. A Brief Look at Some Secular and Christian Counseling Models

1. Recapitulation

Samuel Southard proposes a way of engaging in Christian counseling utilizing an emphasis on attitude and action. His premise is laid out,

The combination of authentic action and loving attitude is a major goal of counseling. In fact, it is the reason for many appointments with a counselor in the first place. People are troubled because they do not understand why they feel one thing and do another, or they report that actions are mechanical and that feelings are dead.”³⁶

He goes on in a chapter entitled, *The Incarnation Divine Attitudes in Human Action* to highlight the Christian doctrine of the incarnation and how knowledge of the unique and empowering reality of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done must be utilized to address individual attitudes and actions.³⁷

Southard uses a model called ‘recapitulation’, which was originally developed by Irenaeus, an early church father. He defines the model by stating, “Recapitulation is the process by which a person identifies the deadness of self—in which attitude and actions are not united—and accepts Christ’s life as the power and model for the union of attitudes and actions within self.”³⁸ There are four stages in the recapitulation model starting with the first stage when the counselor reviews the counselee’s history as, “Adam”, the human in the flesh who failed because of the temptations that are common to all humanity.”³⁹ The second stage in the recapitulation model is, “emotional identification”. Southard says that this is the congruence of Jesus with our deepest feelings, proclaimed in Hebrews 4:14-16

BIBLIOGRAPHY \1 1033 (Southard. 1989) 24

Ibid., 24, Southard elaborates on his understanding of the incarnation as a central component in understanding and treating the individual. He says, “It is impossible to read any passage of Scripture about the Incarnation without a proclamation that attitude and action are combined. This should be enough to make the incarnation central in any form of human counsel because the problem of attitude/action is so troublesome. But of greater importance is the unique way in which Christian faith combines attitude and action in a person—Christ Jesus. His life, death, and Resurrection combine attitude/action by combining divinity with humanity.”

Ibid., 26

Ibid., 28

and 5:7-8.”⁴⁰ Stage three involves the study of the life of Christ as an answer to temptations that we have faced as fallen human beings.⁴¹ In the fourth and final stage in this model, the individual is brought to the point where they, “...accept his [Jesus’] success over temptation as a viable alternative in our lives.” He sums up the final stage;

In Pauline terms, the old Adam, with whom we identify, was tempted and yielded. Jesus as the new Adam was tempted and endured in obedience. Christ has transformed the Adamic failure into a renewed possibility for us to share in the divine life. We are like Christ when we live by his endurance and obedience. Every significant moral or spiritual decision becomes an occasion for the development of communion and obedience with God.⁴²

Hope for the sexually addicted is found in the person and work of Christ. Southard argues for the uniting of attitude and action so that our lives replicate the humanity of Christ and we experience the supernatural power that effects our motivation to produce fruit of the Spirit in our character.⁴³ One who is greater than our heart and the sin that so easily entangles it must be Savior over sin and our desire to reproduce sinful aspirations. It seems that Southard is utilizing the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy model infused with the sequential redemptive work of Christ.

2. Cognitive Behavioral Therapeutic Model

Concerning the Cognitive Behavioral Therapeutic model⁴⁴ Zuehlke, et.al suggests that the process within this model, “...is about

Ibid., 29, “This step in recapitulation is similar to the passion narratives, which do not present Jesus as a Socratic figure who looks upon death philosophically, but as a person with the full range of human emotions, which included grief, love, anger, and anguish—yet without sin.”

Ibid., 30

Ibid., 33

Ibid., 42

Anderson, et. al. give a description of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy which is a widely utilized approach to counseling and one that may be instrumental in assisting the sexual addict integrate new identity in Christ as part of changing their core beliefs. Again, this would fit into a comprehensive approach that includes an ongoing discipling community. The Cognitive Behavioral Therapeutic sequence is listed below:

1. First, the client is helped to see the connection between negative thoughts, the emotions they create, and the behaviors that follow.
2. Then the client is taught to recognize and monitor negative thoughts or distortions of reality. Thoughts or beliefs leading to negative feelings and improper response to life are identified as ineffective or dysfunctional.
3. Next, the client examines the evidence for and against such distorted thinking or perceptions of reality. What does the evidence indicate? Is this thinking true or false, rational or irrational,

[Footnote continued on next page ...]

as close to the description of the concept of Christian repentance as you can get.”⁴⁵ The fruitfulness of using this model is that it allows a counselor to get to the core of the individual’s belief system where identity is formed and managed. If the Christian counselor is intent on being Christ-centered in whatever model they utilize then there should be much more than mere introspection and unveiling, but an invitation to repent.

3. Dynamic Therapy Model

Dan Allender provides a broad overview of three therapeutic models. He first presents the Dynamic Therapy model, which is primarily concerned with three key issues: “(1) unconscious motivation, (2) repressed traumatic/fantasized memories, and (3) the importance of the transference relationship for healing.”⁴⁶ According to Allender, the task of the dynamic therapist is to release repression and give access to the unconscious, thus freeing up choice and increasing creativity.⁴⁷ This model is intent on gaining access to any traumatic events that may have placed the counselee on the path they find themselves.

4. Recovery Movement Model

Next is the Recovery Movement Model which is shaped by group meetings that provide a set time, agenda, community and accountability. Allender mentions, “Through the recovery group, individual therapy, and the literature of the movement, she [a patient used as an example by Allender] learned for the first time about (1) shame and her dysfunctional family, (2) boundaries and taking care of herself, and (3) addiction and “doing the steps.”⁴⁸ In the recovery

biblical or unbiblical? Is the client going to continue to think in this way, to believe what is being thought, and to act accordingly or will the client change? This is decision time.

4. If the client concludes that what has been believed is not true and that his or her perception of reality was not right, then the client must substitute new ways of thinking and responding.
5. Finally, the client is helped to identify and change the inappropriate assumptions that predisposed him or her to distort the experience in the first place. CITATION And00 \l 1033 (Anderson, Zuehlke, & Zuehlke, 2000) 106

Ibid.,106
(Allender and Crabb. 1996) p. 90

Ibid. 91
Ibid. 106

movement, the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous serves as a passageway to recovery dignity, hope and self-confidence.”⁴⁹ This is probably the most popular addiction recovery model.

5. Spiritual Intervention Model

Thirdly, the Spiritual Intervention model emphasizes the presence of evil inhabitants in the heart of an individual even after conversion.⁵⁰ A general overview of this movement suggests: “(1) discerning satanic footholds and strongholds, (2) deliverance through a truth or power encounter with indwelling demonic forces, and (3) binding evil through spiritual discipline.”⁵¹ In this system a foothold or stronghold must be exposed, or the Christian will inevitably be defeated and continue to live in despair. The practitioner must locate the demonic influence and its entry point. Allender further clarifies the position of Spiritual Intervention counseling with regard to sin, “We are responsible for the individual sin, but the real problem is not the sin behavior, but the driving force behind it. The real problem is demonic—not suppression of truth, not a willful pursuit of gods of our own making, and not a refusal to repent.”⁵² The addict is set free through a supernatural deliverance—in the same way that Jesus cast out demons these practitioners set out to war against the kingdom of evil.

Allender provides a critique of the aforementioned models which is not a total dismissal of the models, but a thoughtful perspective using the lens of the Biblical text. With regard to the Dynamic Therapy, he suggests that the model does not lead one to come face to face with God as the conclusion and hope for the presenting sin issue. This model also elevates human dignity rather than delving into the heart and its depravity. God is primarily seen as an ally to support the healing process.⁵³ God and the truth of His word provide healing in brokenness. The counselee must come to a point of dealing with their own propensity to create idols if they are to experience healing and

Ibid. 108

Ibid. 121

Ibid. 121

Ibid. 124

Ibid. 102

restoration. “Healing the soul requires the disruption of or most deeply imbedded lies and illusions.”⁵⁴

His evaluation of the Recovery Movement pivots on its view of shame. The Recovery Movement’s denouncement of all forms of shame creates a problem for the Biblically literate. The presence of shame is not always negative as it can be an indicator that we have put our faith in a god who is not God.⁵⁵ Recovery Movement advocates also holds that addiction is life-long and commitment to a recovery group is essential for the addict to remain sober. Allender seems to challenge the notion that addiction is not the addict’s fault or their shortcoming.⁵⁶ At the heart of Biblical counseling is an understanding that no matter how an individual has been victimized, true freedom from an addiction requires brokenness before God and entrances into Christ-centered community. Allender is sympathetic to the Recovery Movement model with a few adjustments. Regarding the Recovery Movement he says;

In other words, the recovery movement was a legitimate effort to reform the church, but it has become an alternative that has weakened our view of idolatry, systematized sanctification (in the Twelve Steps), and removed some elements of paradox and mystery. The recovery movement has created community on the basis of shared shame in specific addictions rather than on the basis of confessing that each of us is an adulterer and a murderer redeemed by Christ.⁵⁷

The third critique from Allender is of the Spiritual Intervention model. He suggests that this model may dismiss an individual’s past, their story or the influence of the flesh. The deliverance therapists minimize the importance of grappling with the past as raw material that Satan and his forces can use to deceive, lie and accuse.⁵⁸ There is an unhealthy focus on spiritual warfare. Allender sums up the adherence to a Spiritual Intervention model, “Demanding heaven now through some methodology or some person.” There is the temptation under this model to become so vertically minded that deliverance

Ibid. 103

Ibid. 109

The Recovery Movements understanding of addiction holds to three assumptions, 1) everyone is addicted to something, 2) no one ever becomes totally unaddicted, and 3) freedom in (not from) addiction is a lifetime process of “doing steps.” The Recovery Movement defines addiction, “An addiction, according to this view, is not our fault—it is a given existence. Our responsibility is getting into recovery.” (Crabb and Allender, 1996). 114

Ibid., 116

Ibid., 133

therapists lose sight of the power and importance of the horizontal (or non spiritual) element shaping life for good or evil.⁵⁹ A healthy balance considers the person’s history as well as the spiritual dynamic at work—both require the Savior’s intervention.

6. Using Models Wisely

He sums up his assessment and critique of these three models by stating, “The soul is healed not merely through more insight (dynamic therapy), deeper conviction and shame-free encouragement (recovery therapy), or in greater deliverance from evil (spiritual intervention). The soul is healed as we grow in faith, hope and love through prophetic truth, priestly community, and a kingly movement into the war of love.”⁶⁰ The Christian counselor is not restricted by one model, but he or she must determine that any therapeutic goal leads to an encounter with God and His challenge to their propensity to create idols in hopes that the momentary anesthetic (sexual addiction) will nudge them past traumatic and unresolved shame.

The three models provide the pastoral counselor or practitioner with ways of getting to the core of the sexual addict’s heart where real restoration can occur. The emphasis on getting to the past trauma of the soul, the integration of fellowship and accountability as necessary for spiritual growth and then the knowledge of spiritual warfare is important for any practitioner at whatever level of education, experience or exposure. If the conveyance of the new identity in Christ is an essential component in the appropriation of freedom from addiction then whatever tool is utilized, it is imperative that the core beliefs of the sex addict is challenged. Southard’s recapitulation model may be fruitful for addressing the attitude and actions of the addict. The four phases of recapitulation are grounded in the person and work of Christ and may be an important addition to whatever model one chooses to help the sex addict in their quest for freedom.

Ibid., 133
Cf.

H. A Way Forward: Integrating Psychology and Biblical Counseling

1. Psychology and the Church

The topic of psychology and its use within church or within evangelical circles is a controversial one to say the least. A helpful book referenced previously is *Christ Centered Therapy, The Practical Integration of Theology and Psychology*. In this text, Terry and Julie Zuehlke along with Neil Anderson have addressed the burning question of integration—should the committed Christian counselor utilize the Bible alone when dealing with a topic like sexual addiction or should they utilize psychology which they define and clarify,

In a narrow sense, psychology is simply the study of the human mind and how it functions. A broader definition includes related matters such as emotions, identity, personality, and relationships. Because humans are complex beings, it is vital for members of the helping professions to understand not only how the brain functions (neurology) but also how the mind works (psychology).⁶¹

The field of Christian counseling has received a great deal of attention over the years and with that attention there are great resources available to pastors who find themselves in contact with individuals looking for help with addictions. The prospect of helping the sex addict is an additional challenge to the Christian counselors who themselves may be unconvinced that sexual addiction is a real diagnosis. The uninformed practitioner may dismiss this kind of addict as merely an individual living in sin. They may also neglect the reality that treatment includes more than Bible study. Zuehlke, et al provides a broad framework of Christian counselors which may be of benefit to those who are looking to jump into therapeutic outreach for those struggling with sexual addiction. The four categories and a brief description are as follows:

1. **Bible –Only Counselors.** These Christian counselors see the integration of psychological principles as unwise at best, and these principles are not used when religious concerns are addressed in the therapy hour.
2. **Closed Counselors.** This therapist is a Christian in private or personal life but believes that open expression of and attention to spiritual issues should not occur in a psychotherapy session.

Ibid., 11

3. *Closest Counselors*. Counselors who adopt this approach may have integrated their expressions of faith with psychological principles but for various reasons do not openly demonstrate this fact in the therapy session.
4. *Conjoint Counselors*. Therapists in this category are most likely to accomplish the multidimensional goals for counseling in a Christian setting; they utilize explicit expression of the spiritual aspects of life in a treatment plan, along with psychological assessment and treatment techniques. These therapists take a balanced approach to counseling.⁶²

2. A Helpful Approach for Reaching the Sexually Addicted

The *Conjoint Counselor* seems especially suited to handle the complexities of sexual addiction. Adherents to this approach incorporate the physical, psychological, and spiritual as they address mental health from a Christian worldview.⁶³ Zuehlke et al. state that this approach combines the ministries of counseling and discipleship providing the most advantageous environment to get to the heart of the counselee and deal with mankind's propensity to create idols.

The pastor's or therapists' understanding of the addiction cycle, the addict's rationale and the overall addiction system are vitally important when it comes to a treatment plan for the sex addict. As previously stated, Christian therapy involves more than the memorization of Scripture verses that remind the addict of who they are in Christ. The complexity of the problem requires a host of resources. The practitioner that integrates the best that psychology offers within a Christ-centered framework will provide their client with the most comprehensive therapy available. The conjoint counseling approach doesn't undermine the truth of Jesus Christ and the gospel. The use of the scientific understanding of human physiology allows the practitioner to comprehensively treat addiction—bringing the best to address the complexity of addiction. Being able to minister to the sexually addicted using both the truth of the gospel and the observations of science is of infinite value to free the sex addict from his chains.

Ibid.,71
Ibid.,81

I. Help for the Sexually Addicted: Treatment Centers

1. Bethesda Workshop

There are many Christian treatment centers set up to treat the sexually addicted. The following centers are scattered, but have taken a *Conjoint Counseling* approach to treat the sexually addicted. One example is Bethesda Workshop is located in Nashville, Tennessee and is a treatment center which has taken an eclectic approach to reaching and helping the sexually addicted with recovery. There is a ‘Statement of Faith’ on their website which details their Biblical worldview. A snapshot of their statement of faith gives a summation of their grace-based approach—it states;

Bethesda Workshops is a distinctly Christian program. We believe that Jesus is Lord, the son of the Living God, and that He died for the sins of the world. We believe in Christ’s virgin birth and His bodily resurrection. We affirm the Bible as the inspired Word of God provided for our instruction, example and encouragement. We believe individuals are saved by grace through faith and that baptism is the outward sign of one’s acceptance of the free, undeserved gift of salvation. No sin is so deadly as to separate us from the love of God, and forgiveness is offered to all who accept Christ as their personal savior. We believe Christians are called into personal relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that they live out their relationship in daily transformation into closer likeness of Christ.⁶⁴

Their statement of faith is foundational to their work and models the Biblical worldview that’s necessary to meet the sexually addicted where they are and to lead them to a place of healing in Jesus Christ. They incorporate several treatment models into their overall plan. Many of the models are well known and some have recently received more exposure; Bowenian Model⁶⁵, Cognitive-behavioral therapy model (Twelve Steps), and bibliotherapy.⁶⁶

BIBLIOGRAPHY \l 1033 Bethesda Workshops. *Bethesda Workshop*. 2010. <http://www.bethesdaworkshops.org/professionals/position-papers/> (accessed November 15, 2012).

Psych Page. *Psych Page*. 2011. <http://www.psychpage.com/learning/library/counseling/bowen.html> (accessed November 15, 2012). A brief synopsis of Dr. Bowen’s theory on family therapy: “The pioneers of family therapy recognized that current social and cultural forces shape our values about ourselves and our families, our thoughts about what is “normal” and “healthy,” and our expectations about how the world works. However, Bowen was the first to realize that the history of our family creates a template which shapes the values, thoughts, and experiences of each generation, as well as how that generation passes down these things to the next generation...Bowen’s theory focuses on the balance of two forces. The first is *togetherness* and the second is *individuality*. Too much togetherness creates *fusion* and prevents individuality, or developing one’s own sense of self. Too much individuality results [Footnote continued on next page ...]

To sum up the treatment model, Bethesda uses a trauma-based model—they explain, “...we believe trauma (in its broadest sense) is the root compulsive sexual and relationship behavior. Simply stopping the problematic behavior isn’t enough without healing the woundedness that drives it.”⁶⁷ Bethesda Workshop offers workshops, Twelve Step groups, counseling for the Co-Addict⁶⁸ as well as referral and an aftercare program. Bethesda Workshop provides a comprehensive approach which should be administered alongside an effort to integrate individuals into a community context like a local church or other community designed to assist in the growth and recovery of the individual.

2. Pure Life Ministries

There are a number of treatment facilities that provide a live-in recovery program for the sexually addicted. Pure Life Ministries located in Dry Ridge, Kentucky offers a 6 to 12 month program for men who are dealing with sexual addiction.⁶⁹ The program provides intense accountability and treatment by trained Biblical counselors. This particular ministry falls under the *Bible Only Counselor* and utilizes Biblical principles to lead men and women towards freedom over various forms of sexual addiction. Pure Life Ministries states its purpose below;

In fulfilling our call, Pure Life Ministries is founded upon the authority of the Word of God as the supreme and all-sufficient Truth for overcoming sin. We unashamedly preach a message of repentance unto salvation. Everything we do—whether in our counseling programs, our speaking ministry, the distribution of our books and resources—all these things are based on the Word of God, with

in a distant and estranged family. Bowen introduced eight interlocking concepts to explain family development and functioning, each of which is described below.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY | 1033 Fitzgerald, Jane. Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders. 2012. <http://www.minddisorders.com/A-Br/Bibliotherapy.html> (accessed November 15, 2012). Dr. Fitzgerald defines bibliotherapy, "bibliotherapy is an adjunct to psychological treatment that incorporates appropriate books or other written materials, usually intended to be read outside of psychotherapy sessions, into the treatment regimen."

CITATION Bet10 | 1033 (Bethesda Workshops, 2010)

Ibid., Bethesda Workshop defines the “Co-Addict” as, “A “co-addict” is simply one who is (or has been) in a significant relationship with an addict – in this case, a sexual addict. “Co-addict” describes a type of relationship in the same way that “aunt and niece” describes a certain connection.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY | 1033 Pure Life Ministries. *Pure Life Ministries*. 2012. <http://www.purelifeministries.org/about/about-us> (accessed November 15, 2012).

the goal of leading others to victory over sexual sin through a deeper life in God.⁷⁰

In addition to a ‘live-in’ program, Pure Life Ministries also sponsors an ‘at-home’ program which is designed to assist those struggling with sexual addiction as they move toward healing. One of the most prominent features of this ministry is their weekend seminars aimed at addressing the epidemic of sexual promiscuity affecting the church. Pure Life Ministries provides what appears to be an intensive discipleship/accountability ministry to the sexually addicted using the power of relationships, workshops, spiritual disciplines as well as technology to start the healing process. This particular ministry has a far reach as the Founder and President; Steve Gallagher has been writing and preaching about the topic for some time now.

3. Harvest USA

This ministry was originally established to reach the homosexual community in Philadelphia in 1983 and today finds itself reaching the full spectrum of individuals struggling with sexual sin. These are individuals dealing with sexual sin as well as addiction of various kinds and levels of intensity. This organization’s doctrinal statement captures the essence of their outreach. The unique aspect of this particular entity is that it partners with the local church for the purpose of training staff and to equip members to reach this very large target group. Harvest USA affirms the following, “We believe the Church is the primary instrument God has chosen to use in ministering the reconciliation and wholeness Christ won at the cross. At the same time, believing that the Lord takes up all kinds of instruments into His hand for the perfecting of His people, we are thankful for genuine help for people struggling with sexual sin from whatever quarter it comes.”⁷¹ The training of the church is pivotal—a ministry like Harvest USA may be a pathway for some to get into therapy. The work and emphasis of an organization of this kind should not be underestimated—they are targeting the core issues encroaching on communities, churches and families.

Ibid.
BIBLIOGRAPHY | 1033 Harvest USA. *Harvest USA*.
http://www.harvestusa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=363&Itemid=42 (accessed November 15, 2012).

4. L.I.F.E. Ministries International

Lastly, Sue Moore of L.I.F.E Recovery International provides a recovery model which puts an emphasis on the power of relationships. The recognition of the effectiveness of relationship is seen mostly in the use of the Twelve Steps Recovery Movement. Sexual Addiction usually finds its impetus within the broken boundaries of harmful relationships lead to this life long struggle of addiction. She makes an extended statement that is important to reference because it crystallizes the proper perspective on the process of recovery from addictive behavior. She says;

God often heals cancer and other physical ailments instantaneously because doing so does not compromise the overall health of our physical body. In the case of addiction, however, an instantaneous healing would compromise our overall emotional and mental health. Such an experience would teach us that our deepest emotional conflicts (that are at the core of our addictive condition) can be healed in isolation and this is not possible. This would be a lesson that is counter-productive to God's design for us, as He has created us for intimacy—with Himself, with His Son Jesus and with each other. We were wounded in relationship; therefore God has chosen to bring healing through relationship.⁷²

Moore's statement brings the significance of community and relationship front and center. The effectiveness of a loving church family in the overall treatment plan for the sexually addicted Christian is a critical piece. She has developed the LTRM (L.I.F.E. Time Recovery Model). This model as advertised seeks to provide proven addiction recovery using information gathered from a biblical and clinical framework. There is an emphasis on the intensive program rolled out the first year of recovery. This model incorporates journaling, group support, counseling, support group sponsor and a myriad of other tools used to assist the addict in what will probably be a lifelong victorious struggle.⁷³ This particular ministry seems to be one of the most comprehensive treatment programs out there. These programs are just a sampling of what is available to those who are dealing with shame and bondage to the addiction cycle and system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY | 1033 Moore, Sue. "Freedomeveryday.org." *L.I.F.E. Ministries International*. 2001-2012. <http://www.freedomeveryday.org/downloads/LTRM.pdf> (accessed November 15, 2012).

Ibid., 8-9

They are Christ-centered and quality programs—there are resources available for those who feel hopeless.

Conclusion

The church has a responsibility as ambassadors of a new covenant to extend grace to a community hiding in the shadows of slavery to idolatry. Christians have an opportunity to not only engage a believer in their efforts to get free from addiction but the church also has a responsibility to reach an unbelieving marginalized group. The missional call of Christ is to go and reach outside of our comfort zone over time. (Acts 1:8) Ministries like Harvest USA are actively engaging the outside of the comfortable bubble of pretentiousness that has shaped the Evangelical church in the West. The people of God have so much to offer the community of individuals struggling with the bondage of addiction—specifically those dealing with sexual addiction of various kinds.

The reality is that preachers and pastors are struggling with addiction to pornography and masturbation. Women are struggling with pornography and illicit liaisons with men and women alike. Men within the church are experimenting with homosexuality and many have been hiding an alternate lifestyle for years. Affairs of various kinds have enveloped clergy and laity in every type of worship center throughout the world—denominational distinction does not prevent scandal. The violation of a child's innocence occurs under the guise of a Christian home every day. The problem of an addictive lifestyle is pervasive and widespread, but rarely does preaching deal with addiction of the sort that has been explored in this article.

The prostitute comes to Jesus at the Pharisee's home in Luke 7:36-50. The woman He met lavished Jesus with her best—she took of her most prized possession and freely gave to Jesus. She worshipped at the feet of Jesus although she was familiar with the idolatry of her soul. She exchanged the idol of her life of sexuality for a life defined by grace and forgiveness. The Pharisee in Luke's gospel asked Jesus if He knew what kind of woman this was and Jesus responded with a parable of forgiven debt and how a person who has committed great atrocities who finds forgiveness loves like the woman who has just washed Jesus' feet with her tears and her hair. She came out of the shadows of her past to repent and to experience a new kind of relationship based on real intimacy and love. This Jesus

is available to the sexual addict whose identity is shaped by their shame. For many their shame was created by circumstances outside of the scope of their ability to defend against and then there is shame of their acquired through life within an addictive system. Jesus is able to resurrect and remake them to look more like Him. The process is not easy but God's track record is unprecedented and unequalled.

Is the church prepared for the prostitute, predator, voyeur, porn addict? The gospel of Jesus Christ is able to break the chains of bondage one person at a time and bring them into right and good relationship with others. God is able to take the desecrated temple and make it holy again. (1 Corinthians 6:8) Our identity is redeemed by Christ so that we enjoy life knowing that we are complete in Him. "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." (Colossians 1:9-10) The responsibility of the church is to hold onto these truths and to inform others that Jesus is indeed Lord of all and that His offer is to make us whole—to redeem our fallen identity replacing it with His name. Paul's words in Galatians 6:1 seems to point the church to a collective drive to apply the redemptive power of the gospel to those who are broken and in need of restoration. He says, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." This is good news and our friends and brethren who are enslaved need to hear about the restoration that's freely given through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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