

CONCERNING A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO COUNSELING

Affirmations and Denials (Topic No. 19)

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Article I

We affirm that the Bible is the only basis of true knowledge about God, human existence, relationships between God and man, and relationships between people.¹

We deny that man, his psyche, or his relationships with other people, may be understood apart from the authoritative knowledge contained in the Bible.²

1. Gen. 1:1; Deu. 29:29; Psa. 19:7-11,14; Prov. 1:7; Isa. 8:20; Col. 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:16
2. Same as 1.

Article II

We affirm that the Bible, by precept and example, is sufficient to provide a systematic approach to counseling, and provides a sufficient basis for understanding all personal and situational problems.¹

We deny that the Bible is inadequate to provide either wisdom for the counselor, or comfort, reproof, correction, and training in right actions and thoughts, to the counselee.²

1. Deu. 29:29; Psa. 19:7-11,14; 119:98-100; Col. 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:16
2. Same as 1. Also Psa. 119:9,11

Article III

We affirm that the biblical approach to counseling is fundamentally distinct from other counseling methods, and is superior to any other method.¹

We deny that all counseling methods produce the same results, or that there is any method superior to biblical instruction and counseling.²

1. Psa. 119:98-100; Isa. 8:20
2. Prov. 14:12

Article IV

We affirm that all human beings are created by God¹ and are morally accountable to Him for their choices,² for the things they believe,³ and for how they live.⁴

We deny a non-moral universe, and the concept of non-moral human beings. We deny that human beings are guiltless in their choices, and that they are the unwitting products of environment.

1. Gen. 1:1, 27
2. Hosea 6:7; Rom. 3:23; 5:12
3. Isa. 59:7; Jer. 4:14; Mat. 5:28; Rom 1:5, 18-25; 16:26; 2 Cor. 10:5; Col. 2:8; Rev. 21:8

4. Isa. 1:28; 55:7; Rom. 1:28-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8

Article V

We affirm that each person is required to love God supremely,¹ and his neighbor as himself,² and that psychological problems and immoral actions stem from failure to fulfill this requirement of love.³

We deny that psychological problems or immoral actions are the result of evolutionary immaturity, psychological preconditioning, or environment alone.

1. Deu. 6:5
2. Lev. 19:18
3. Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:19-26

Article VI

We affirm that problems labeled “psychological,” “behavioral,” “adjustment,” “mental,” “relational,” and “emotional” are “spiritual” problems.

We deny that “psychological,” “behavioral,” “adjustment,” “mental,” “relational,” and “emotional” problems fall under a category outside the realm of spiritual problems.

Article VII

We affirm that sin hinders, or severs relationship toward God,¹ and toward our fellow human beings.² Sin is defined as failure to live up to God’s moral requirements which are summed up in the two Great Commandments.³

We deny that human beings can live successfully and fruitfully when sin impairs relationships with God and others.⁴

1. Gen. 2:17 with 3:1-24; Psa. 51:4,11; Mat. 27:46 with 2 Cor. 5:21
2. Gen. 6:11; Eze. 16:21; Gal. 5:19-21
3. Mat. 22:36-40; 1 John 3:4
4. Psa. 1:1-6; 9:5-6; 11:6; 37:18-20; Zech. 5:4

Article VIII

We affirm that the image of God in man is a reflection of God’s own nature deposited and imprinted on human personhood,¹ making each human life significant,² and that this image of God in man is the basis of, and reason for the Ten Commandments and all social morals.

We deny that human life is on a par or near-par with animal life,³ or that social morals ought to be derived from group consensus or social pragmatism.⁴

1. Gen. 1:27
2. Gen. 9:6
3. Gen. 1:27; Heb. 2:6-8
4. Ex. 23:2; Deu. 13:1-18

Article IX

We affirm that the Bible defines the ideal for human functioning in terms such as: to be renewed in the image of God,¹ to walk as Jesus walked,² to have the mind of Christ,³ to live by faith,⁴ to obey the law of God,⁵ to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit,⁶ to glorify God,⁷ to be wise,⁸ to be holy as God is holy.⁹

We deny that any other standard or goal is worthy of human dignity, or true to the nature of man or his needs.¹⁰

1. Philip. 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2
2. Eph. 4:1-6, 17-24; 5:2; Col. 1:10; 2:6; Philip. 3:13-19; 1 John 2:6
3. 1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 10:5
4. Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 10:36-39
5. Mat. 5:19; 2 Cor. 6:14; Heb. 8:10; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 John 3:4
6. Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:22-26
7. 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 4:16
8. Eph. 5:15; 1 Cor. 10:15; James 3:13
9. Eph. 1:4; 5:27; 1 Pet. 1:15
10. Gen. 1:27; Psa. 106:20; Rom. 1:22-23

Article X

We affirm that what the Bible calls sin is what is fundamentally and pervasively wrong with people,¹ and that counseling should be approached with this presupposition foremost in the mind of the counselor who should seek to bring the counselee into this same understanding.²

We deny that Christian counseling should rest on the presupposition that man's fundamental flaw is sociological, environmental, or psychological, or that such a presupposition is ultimately helpful to the counselee.

1. Isa. 1:4-6; 55:7; Rom. 3:10-18, 23
2. Psa. 1:1-6; 119:98-100; Isa. 8:20

Article XI

We affirm that all humans are capable of infinite self-deception.¹

We deny that any human is capable of infallibly knowing his own heart.²

1. Jer. 17:9; Mat. 15:14; Eph. 4:17-19,22; Titus 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:25-26
2. Same as 1.

Article XII

We affirm that the good news of redemption through Jesus Christ, as set forth in the Bible, is the solution for what troubles all people, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.¹

We deny that any other solution or therapy, whether psychological, psychotherapeutic, medical, philosophical, quasi-religious, or religious, actually addresses the real problem or cures souls.²

1. Acts 10:38; 26:18; Cor. 6:11
2. Isa. 8:20; Jer. 6:14; 8:11

Article XIII

We affirm that Christian counseling deals not only with personal sin, but also with suffering, being sinned against, enemies, temptations and trials, hardships, evil companions, lies from the cultural surround, etc., that is with the whole of human experience.^{1, A}

We deny that Christian counseling is limited to needs engendered by personal sins.²

1. Psa. 19:7-11,14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17
2. Same as 1.

Article XIV

We affirm that the goal of Christian counseling is to aid in the process of biblical conversion and sanctification,¹ which process progressively restores human beings to the image in which man was originally created, and ultimately into the image of Christ.²

We deny that self-actualization, individuation, self-fulfillment, the meeting of supposed psychological needs, etc., describe the goal of Christian counseling.

1. Mat. 28:20; Acts 26:18; Eph. 4:20-32; 1 Thess. 4:3-8
2. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 5:1-2; Heb. 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:14-17,23

Article XV

We affirm that in order for persons to be renewed in their thinking, choosing, emotions, and relationships, they must learn to progressively put off old ways of thinking and acting, and be renewed in the spirit of their mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.¹

We deny that any process which attempts to lead a person to improve, modify, or reconstruct life without biblically-based identification with Jesus Christ has a place in Christian counseling.²

1. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:20-5:2; 2 Pet. 3:17-18
2. Isa. 8:20; Mat. 28:20; Col. 2:8, 18-19

Article XVI

We affirm that the church is commissioned by God to the task of maturing believers into the image of Christ,¹ and therefore counseling is an important restorative function of the church.²

We deny that any person or entity has the right to demand that counseling be reserved for the mental health professional to the exclusion of the Church.

1. See XIV 1 & 2; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Col. 1:28-29; Heb. 5:12-14
2. Isa. 11:2 with John 20:22 and 2 Cor 5:20; Eph. 4:11-16

^A Jesus Christ dealt with the whole person, with all his needs, felt and real. Christian counseling deals with the whole of the inner man, the soul of man.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Scriptures contain the framework of ultimate meaning and values for every sphere of life.¹

We deny that the Bible is inadequate to provide the ultimate meaning and values for every sphere of life.

1. Gen. 1:1; Psa. 119:98-100; Prov. 1:7; 8:1-36; Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Article XVIII

We affirm that some counselees may need medical treatment or other practical helps (educational, vocational, financial) as supplements to biblical counseling in the overall process of progressive sanctification.

We deny that alleviating medical or social problems alone is the answer to anyone's spiritual problems, and we deny that biblical counseling should be neglected in cases where medical or social actions are also needed.

Article XIX

We affirm that secular counseling disciplines that do not begin with Biblical principles are fundamentally and presuppositionally distorted.¹

We deny that there is any counseling method not beginning with biblical principles that is anything less than fundamentally flawed in its ability to arrive at real and lasting solutions for the counselee.²

1. Gen. 1:1, 27; Prov. 1:7; Isa. 8:20
2. This has been established in the preceding Affirmations & Denials.

Article XX

We affirm that some observations and practices of secular psychologists (and other non-Christians) may be helpful in Christian counseling when reinterpreted and reconfigured in light of biblical presuppositions.

We deny that any theory or technique which does not flow from biblical presuppositions is faithful to the realities of human nature or human needs.

1. This has been established in the preceding Affirmations & Denials.

Article XXI

We affirm that Bible based counseling is a significant opportunity to lead people to the forgiveness of sins through knowledge of, and relationship with Christ.¹

We deny that the Christian counselor should refrain from challenging people to receive Christ and his ways.²

1. Mat. 28:20
2. Same as 1.

Article XXII

We affirm that some Christians are called to serve in institutions and ministries, both Christian and non-Christian, which serve people's counseling needs, in order both to help needy individuals, and to influence professions and institutions with the biblical worldview.¹

We deny that either this profession or its institutions should be avoided by Christians, or that Christians serving in this profession or its institutions should suppress their biblical worldview in order to conform to the secular viewpoint of this profession or its institutions.²

1. Mat. 5:13
2. Mat. 5:15-16; Philip. 2:15-16