

July 2013

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## Recommended Citation

Murray, R., Suriano, K., & Madden, J. (2013). Catholic School Counseling: From Guidance to Pastoral Care. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 7 (1). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol7/iss1/4>

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# CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNSELING: FROM GUIDANCE TO PASTORAL CARE

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*Those ministering to youth increasingly find themselves having to address numerous issues and complexities, which extend beyond the scope of the school setting. Catholic school students are not immune to these issues, and to address the needs of their students, Catholic school counselors must embrace aspects of the social sciences that affirm and elevate the message of the Gospel. The intent of this article is to present a Christian perspective of guidance counseling and to highlight those orientations and therapies that uphold Christian values.*

## THE HISTORY OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE

School guidance began in the early 1900s, when the role of the school counselor was to prepare students for entrance into the work force. However, the school counselor's role grew to include academic advisement and the implementation of broader counseling services. Although cautious about accepting guidance programs from the onset, Catholic schools have emerged to incorporate this broader perspective.

## GUIDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY TO 1930

Measures of intelligence and achievement laid the groundwork for the school guidance movement. Thorndike constructed standardized, objective achievement tests, which were of particular assistance in vocational guidance (Humphreys, Traxler, & North, 1967). Binet and Simon developed a test of intelligence, which they administered to individual children in school (Humphreys et al., 1967).

In 1908, the Vocational Guidance Association of Brooklyn was established (Lee & Pallone, 1966). By 1910, approximately 35 cities began to implement school guidance programs, and the first National Conference on Vocational Guidance, representing nearly 45 cities, was held (Lee & Pallone, 1966). In 1913, the first professional guidance organization, The National

Vocational Guidance Association, was established at The Third National Conference (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Guidance programs at this time were primarily concerned with occupational counseling, based on student input and discussion of their interests. Students also were assessed for their abilities, using the tests developed by Binet and Simon (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

The 1920s were a time of significant change in the theory and practice of vocational guidance. The school guidance paradigm expanded to include an interest in the quality of student life. One notable development during the late 1920s was the cumulative record. Humphreys and Traxler (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994) considered this to be a landmark because, prior to this, there was no way of knowing how students progressed throughout their school career. The utilization of aptitude tests also made a significant impact (Humphreys et al., 1967). Additionally, during this decade, English psychologist Spearman demonstrated how a student's score varied according to the different sections of the test (Humphreys et al., 1967).

While the middle of the 1920s witnessed the use of intelligence and achievement tests, the development of personality inventories also increased (Humphreys et al., 1967).

With support from organizations and foundations such as the Commonwealth Fund, the school guidance movement of the 1920s gained momentum. However, the momentum soon came to an abrupt halt at the end of the decade, with The Great Depression. School budgets decreased, and school guidance felt the severity of the blow (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

## **GUIDANCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY TO 1930**

During the first decade of the 20th century, Catholic clergy generally thought of vocational education as unnecessary and as taking away from a solid education. However, a minority of teaching priests argued that vocational education served a valid purpose (Lee & Pallone, 1966). One such advocate was Dom Thomas Vernor Moore, a prominent Catholic educator with a background in psychology, who proposed that certain aspects of psychology be incorporated into a Catholic education. Still, most Catholic educators believed that strict discipline was the most effective guidance approach (Lee & Pallone, 1966) and actively opposed his ideas. Further, most Catholics also opposed standardized tests (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Despite this, two Catholic educators, Father John A. O'Brien of the University of Notre Dame and Father Leo F. Kuntz (1939), favored objective tests; however, their views were in the minority and were either ignored or denounced (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Still, a minority of Catholic schools spoke out in favor of guidance. By the 1920s, the Jesuits had introduced part-time pupil advisors who served as counselors. The Church's position, however, was that hiring a separate counselor was redundant (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

In the 1920s, skepticism was the predominant Catholic view toward guidance. Standardized tests were considered suspect, especially if the tests had a psychological basis, because they interfered with the work of God. However, the Catholic Church's response shifted to a willingness to adopt a "wait and see" attitude on the impact of guidance in the public school. By 1928, the Diocese of Pittsburgh made a bold move by appointing a priest who had been trained in guidance as the director of the office of guidance services (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

## **GUIDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM 1930 TO 1965**

As guidance techniques began to mature, the 1930s saw the introduction of depth psychology tests. Super began his pioneering work on career developmental patterns. His theory hinted at vocational interest and choice as part of the personality. Unfortunately, Super's ideas did not have a noticeable impact on school guidance at that time (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

During the early 1940s, Rogers, who developed client-centered therapy, was an important figure in counseling. His nondirective approach became widespread in school counseling after World War II (Lee & Pallone, 1966). The onset of war retarded the development of public high school guidance; however, the growth of guidance services continued after the war and aptitude test measurement procedures were fine-tuned through the appraisal of military men (Humphreys et al., 1967).

The emphasis on the overall needs of the students, including a range of personal, academic, and vocational issues, developed after 1950. This may have been due to the increasing variety of counseling theories originating within the psychological community (Lee & Pallone, 1966). The phenomenological-self theory, developed and elaborated upon by Rogers, Syngg, and Combs, led to an awareness by guidance counselors that problems and needs are reflections both of one's inner self and one's evaluation of one's inner self. Also during this time, an emphasis was placed on developmental guidance and an understanding of the stages of a child's maturation, as noted by Havighurst (1953).

In 1959, *The Conant Report on the American Public High School* placed a great deal of emphasis on improvement of guidance services (Lee & Pallone, 1966). The number of school counselors began to increase, with a particular emphasis placed on their role in the formation of curricula. There was also emphasis on the identification of gifted and talented students and their placement into colleges and universities (Aubrey, 1979).

As the 1960s unfolded, many state departments of education and local school districts began to place guidance under the pupil personnel umbrella. In addition, textbooks written in the 1960s on the organization and administration of guidance adopted the pupil personnel services model as the way to organize

guidance in schools. Delivered within the broader framework of pupil personnel services, guidance was to become a subset of its services. In addition, because of the clinical model of guidance and the focus on personal adjustment, the counseling service emerged as the central service of guidance.

## **GUIDANCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FROM 1930 TO 1965**

Catholic schools were making strides in counseling. In 1930, several forward thinking Catholic educators formed a Life Guidance Conference. They requested affiliation with the National Catholic Educational Association, but the NCEA refused (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Eventually, this committee evolved into the Catholic Vocational-Counsel Conference (CVCC), which lasted for only 4 years. Although it was short lived, it was a momentous movement in Catholic guidance and served to establish guidance in Catholic schools (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

Unfortunately, progress in the area of guidance happened only in select Catholic school systems, notably in Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Boston, and St. Louis. "Only one quarter of all schools studied had a full-time guidance counselor" (Lee & Pallone, 1966, p. 22). Although few, some Catholic educators recognized that guidance was an essential part of the school program. Among them were Fathers E. J. Goebel and M. S. Sheehy of The Catholic University of America, F. X. O'Connell, Sister M. Madeleva, C.S.C., former president of St. Mary's College, and Francis M. Crowley, Director of the National Catholic Welfare Conference Bureau of Education. Further, Monsignor Goebel observed that far too many Catholic schools not only believed that guidance was a separate part of the school, but also that it was to be short-lived. The emphasis on school discipline as the primary guidance device was still apparent.

Practically none of the Catholic schools had any formal, organized programs for guidance. Only half had or used a student's cumulative records (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Even by the end of the 1940s, Catholic schools persisted in their belief that with their discretion, guidance would encompass direction and advisement within the realms of religion (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Thus, the development of guidance within the Catholic educational system was slow when compared to public schools (Lee, 1965). A comprehensive survey conducted by Father P. L. Stack of The Catholic University of America demonstrated the deficiencies in Catholic guidance education.

By 1965, the National Catholic Educational Association appointed an official guidance consultant; however, there was still no guidance section set up by the following year by the Department of Education or the National Catholic Welfare Conference that compared to the U.S. Department of Education (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

As the population of students increased, new schools were built and some progress was made. An increasing number of Catholic educators advocated

for additional specialization within the various areas of education, including guidance. Several well-meaning published criticisms emerged calling for improvements in the area of guidance within a Catholic education. Examples include an article by J. T. Ellis in 1955, the McCluskey speech in 1960, the *Catholic World* article of 1962 by Lee, and the Sister Formation Movement of 1954 (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

Most of the Catholic literature on guidance continued to focus on vocational and religious aspects, including the recruitment of students to religious orders. Catholic theorists were making some shifts toward a focus on the overall development of the person. Yet, there was still an emphasis on strict discipline as their guidance function, even though corporal punishment and restrictions on social life had lessened, especially in larger universities (Lee & Pallone, 1966). Despite these setbacks, an increasing number of Catholic educators were becoming involved in psychology and influenced the development of guidance within the religious schools. Non-directive methods were introduced, although the focus remained on character building and directive advising. Catholic universities also began to offer programs for guidance as a career, which were well attended by both the secular and religious populations (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

At the elementary and secondary levels, however, Catholic schools were not receiving the benefits enjoyed at the university level. Full-time guidance counselors in Catholic secondary schools were scant; of those, few had adequate training (Lee, 1965).

The 1960s brought change and an increased number of proponents within the National Commission on Excellence in Catholic Education, as evidenced by their 1968 report. The report noted that Catholic guidance had the same purpose as public school guidance, but also advocated other values. The evolution of Catholic schools also allowed for the accommodation of cultural changes and addressed the needs of different cultures and genders (Coleman, 1971; Noyes, 1993). Catholic organizations also established a more professionally oriented basis for Catholic guidance personnel. In 1951, Father Joseph Matthews, Director of Guidance at Cardinal Hays High School, formed the Catholic High School Guidance Council of the Archdiocese of New York (Stancato, 1969). In addition, 10 similar organizations had originated by 1958 and the National Conference of Catholic Guidance Councils formed to coordinate their efforts (Lee & Pallone, 1966). In 1955, 23 attendees of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) formed the Catholic Counselors in APGA (Stancato, 1969). The National Catholic Guidance Conference, in 1962, unified these organizations and set forth a national meeting held annually on Palm Saturday and Sunday (Lee & Pallone, 1966). As a result of the increase in Catholic organizations, related publications emerged and, in 1950, the American Catholic Psychological Association published a bimonthly newsletter. It then began to publish the minutes of their meetings a

few years later and in 1963 began a semiannual publication, *Catholic Psychological Journal*. Other Catholic publications began to emerge, such as the *Catholic Counselor*, *News Digest*, and the *National Catholic Guidance Conference Journal*. Development in the Catholic guidance movement at this time also included the use of group guidance materials in high schools, including published materials by religious educators. An example of this includes the *Group Guidance for Boys*, edited by Brother Joseph Panzer in 1958 and used in a series of workshops for high school students (Lee & Pallone, 1966).

## **CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL GUIDANCE: A PASTORAL MODEL**

The 1960s heralded the Church's openness to the modern world as the edicts of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) renewed and expanded the ideals of Christian thinking, which enabled the Church and her schools to engage in a more proactive role in the development of her students. Catholic school guidance counselors were called to a more pastoral role in the care and development of their students holding together religious, ethical, and psychological perspectives. In this pastoral model, counselors must be aware of their students' educational needs, which include religious training, how students construct their world, and how they can have a positive impact that reflects both religious values and academic standards. Counselors using a pastoral model direct students to learn from their own experiences, advocate for the incorporation of Christian values into their everyday lives, and guide them so they can "see their life in God's light" (Faber & Van der Schoot, 1965, p. 115).

### **EDUCATION AND VATICAN II**

The documents of Vatican II demand that Catholic schools emphasize the intellectual values of students and aim for the highest development of the human mind. In addition, "the Church remains true to itself by insisting that this must be done in the framework of the moral formation of man and in the fullness of his spiritual, supernatural destiny" (Carter, 1966, p. 635). As academic educators, Catholic schools provide students with the basic skills needed to process information so that they can search for the truth. As citizenship educators, they teach students how to be good members of their Church, their schools, their communities, and society. As vocational educators, counselors prepare students to find a vocation that gives meaning to their life. Finally, as religious and moral educators, they address the current issues that affect students today, giving them the moral foundation on which to base those decisions.

The *Declaration on Christian Education* (Vatican Council II, 1966a) also stated that school "ripens the capacity for right judgment, provides an intro-

duction into the cultural heritage won by past generations, promotes a sense of values, and readies for professional life” (par. 5). “This holy Synod likewise affirms that children...have the right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice, and to know and love God more adequately” (Vatican Council II, 1966a, par. 1). The pastoral model of guidance counseling assists students with making the transition from concept to action, from the development of a love of God to the development of a love for their neighbor. Catholic school counselors incorporate Christian thought and action by educating students about the threefold ministry of faith (*kerygma*), community (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*) that should be the framework for any Catholic school guidance program.

### **THE THREEFOLD MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

In 1972, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops declared in *To Teach as Jesus Did*, “of the educational programs available to the Catholic community, Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the threefold purpose of Christian education among children and young people” (p. 28).

### **SCHOOL GUIDANCE AS PREACHING: THE MINISTRY OF *KERYGMA***

The goal of the Catholic school is the development of the whole person and his or her contribution to the betterment of society.

It remains each man’s duty to preserve a view of the whole human person, a view in which the values of intellect, will, conscience and fraternity are pre-eminent. These values are all rooted in God the Creator and have been wonderfully restored and elevated in Christ. (Vatican Council II, 1966b, par. 61)

Therefore, pastoral counselors must take into consideration the social, emotional, religious, moral, and developmental stages that influence each student. They must sculpt information in such a way that allows the student to hear and understand the concepts. Additionally, they must integrate Christ’s teachings with their ability to comprehend what is being presented within their developmental stage.

There are numerous theories of cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development. These developmental theories can be implemented in conjunction with one another, and each has implications for the counseling setting. “With the help of advances in psychology and in the art and science of teaching, children and young people should be assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral and intellectual endowments” (Vatican Council II, 1966a, par. 1).



## COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

### PIAGET

Piaget developed a series of structured, hierarchical stages that defined how a child learns. His constructionist approach states that children construct certain beliefs about reality based upon how they fit within their existing beliefs. These beliefs or *schemas* develop through two processes: assimilation and accommodation. “If new information conflicts with a child’s schema, she can either modify her beliefs (a process called accommodation) or fit the information to her present beliefs (a process called assimilation)” (Craig, 1992, p. 260).

Piaget believed the process of knowing begins at birth and continues through four stages of intellectual development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. The first stage, sensorimotor, begins at birth and continues to age 2 (Evans, 1973). During this period, a child’s intelligence is composed of sensory and action beliefs (Craig, 1992).

The second stage, preoperational, spans the ages of 2 to 7. Children continue to explore their world, while increasing their use of language and problem solving skills (Craig, 1992). Included in this stage are the transitional and preconceptual stages in which children begin to transition from being limited to their environment to being able to conceptualize things that are not immediately present. At this time, however, children continue to have a self-centered view about the world because as Brown stated, “they are unable to separate clearly the realm of personal existence and power from everything else” (as cited in Craig, 1992, p. 261).

Children ages 7 to 11 transition from preoperational thought to concrete operational thought. This allows them to focus on perceptual evidence rather than logical reasoning. Thinking becomes more flexible and complex. “This emerging ability to leap mentally beyond the immediate situation or state lays the foundation for systematic reasoning in the concrete operational stage and, later, in the formal operational stage” (Craig, 1992, p. 325).

The formal operational stage involves processing information in a speculative, abstract, and free manner. Children are able to contemplate the possibilities of situations, while comparing reality with what may or may not be. “Formal operational thought requires the ability to formulate, test, and evaluate hypotheses. It involves not only manipulation of known, verifiable elements but also manipulation of those things that are contrary to fact” (Craig, 1992, p. 402).

Piaget’s cognitive stages are necessary for the occurrence of moral stages. However, mature cognitive reasoning does not necessarily imply mature moral reasoning; a person may be able to reason at a given cognitive stage but reason at lower moral stages. The moral stages are different from, and require something more than, the application of logical operations to moral content.

Therefore, moral reasoning requires the application of logical operations. School counselors need to understand that the congruence between mature cognitive reasoning and mature moral reasoning will facilitate students' development (Craig, 1992).

## **KOHLBERG AND MAYER**

Kohlberg, revised, refined, and extended Piaget's theory of development and focused on children's moral judgments, rather than actions. Kohlberg and Mayer believe that the developmental approach should "promote the development of the students' capacities in the areas of cognitive, social, moral and emotional functioning" (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 19).

Kohlberg found that an effective approach to moral education is to focus on the stages of moral development. He explained that, when individuals arrive at these stages and encounter information that no longer fits with their worldview, they must accommodate this information. The stages are crucial, as they consider the way individuals organize their comprehension of virtues, rules, and norms and merge these concepts into a moral choice (Power et al., 1989).

Kohlberg developed a method that enables people to reach higher levels of moral development. This method entails presenting a moral dilemma and requiring students to determine a course of action and to justify it (Nucci, 2001). He introduced a specific situation for consideration, one that asks individuals to choose between the value of obeying the law and the value of human life. Students are instructed to disregard external moral authority and to use their own moral reasoning to come to their own conclusion. Teachers and counselors can use these discussions to explore values. Kohlberg believed the process of working through these dilemmas enables students to develop higher levels of moral reasoning (Griffith & Duesterhaus, 2000).

## **SOCIO-MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

Guidance counselors in a pastoral model have the "responsibility to become educators and in that role to work with teachers and administrators in constructing and implementing organizational and curricular policies which give priority to socio-moral education in a religious context" (Power, 1985, p. 409). Counselors can facilitate this development by engaging in discussions that will help students to think critically, make decisions based on informed moral judgement, and transfer their knowledge to the outside world.

In the past, obedience, once the foundation of moral judgment, was the major component in school management. As such, students were not taught how to think critically about their behavior and, prior to the Second Vatican Council, "one did not decide what was good or bad; one could just ask a priest

and accept his ruling” (McLaughlin, O’Keefe, & O’Keefe, 1996, p. 272). *The Declaration on Christian Education* affirmed, “children and young people have a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice” (Vatican Council II, 1966a, par. 1). This proclamation contains the obligation to teach moral development, values, and ethics. Moreover, the teaching process also should include educating adults, as a lifelong process, to help them “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

## FAITH DEVELOPMENT

### FOWLER AND KEGAN

A religion, as a cumulative tradition, is made up of the expressions of faith of people in the past. It can include scriptures and theology, symbol and myth, ethical teachings and prayers, architecture and music, art and patterns of teaching and preaching. (Fowler, 1991, p. 21)

This preaching is especially important in Catholic schools. Faith developmental theory, established by Fowler, stresses the importance of experiential learning. In this regard, *The Pastoral Constitution* states, “modern man is on the road to a more thorough development of his own personality and to a growing discovery and vindication of his own rights” (Vatican Council II, 1966b, par. 41).

The main principle of faith development is to cultivate a person’s character through experience. The theory focuses on human potential while incorporating environmental influences and responsibility for beliefs, actions, and values. Such development is a part of becoming oneself and, according to Metz, a “subject before God” (as cited in Fowler, 1991, p. 29).

Kegan (1982) believed that, when children learn how to reason at their cognitive operational stage, they are able to create a solution at the next stage of development. This is associated with faith development because a child’s thinking is challenged to become more faith-filled, reflective, and philosophic. Reasoning skills are crucial in forming character and building on one’s religious background, enabling children to make correct decisions throughout their lives.

In applying Christian values in conjunction with such theories, pastoral counselors can guide students in their search for meaning and their integration of religious beliefs with action. By presenting students with opportunities to reflect upon how to make moral decisions within the framework of the threefold ministry, guidance counselors in a pastoral model can lead them to the next stage in their religious maturation. By affording students the opportunity to practice and participate in their faith, they can bond with each member of the community. By investing themselves in the construction of their community, students gain

hands-on experience of what it takes to be a member of the Church. With the knowledge and experience of their elders to guide them, they can lead future generations to become fully actualized adults in faith, hope, and love.

## **CONSULTATION IN SCHOOL GUIDANCE: THE MINISTRY OF *KOINONIA***

Guidance counselors in a pastoral model help to build a community that harbors good works and moral development. According to Power (1985), "It is within the context of a vibrant community that pastoral counselors, working with teachers and administrators, can provide a moral and religious education which does not divorce academic learning from lived experience" (p. 407). In doing so, counselors are indeed building *koinonia* (community).

The friendships and associations that are formed and nurtured in school have a profound effect on a student's interactions with the outside world. In the words of Pope Pius XI, a Catholic student must "think, judge, and act constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illuminated by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ" (as cited in Simonitsch, 1953, p. 18). When students are in an environment that preaches and enacts Christian values, they have the opportunity to experience these values for themselves.

Consulting with community members is a form of community building and "community is founded on the good news that we are each beloved (*agapetos*) by God (Mt 3:17) and as such our community rejoices in the embrace of God" (Howell, 1989, p. 30). Consultation was previously seen as a one-on-one process only, with the consultant as a "content expert" (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 598) and includes seven characteristics:

- (a) to provide information, advise or help; (b) to provide an outside gestalt;
- (c) to provide a theory of process and organizational functioning; (d) to rely on the use of multiple models; (e) to require a strong conceptual process; (f) to create a foundation for understanding interrelationships; and (g) to show how generic knowledge is transmitted from the consultant to the consultee system. (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 598)

The concept of consultation has changed over the years, yet it has remained "triadic, work-related, issue-focused, voluntary and nonjudgmental" (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 598). The triadic configuration means "the consultant often works with the consultee who, in turn, serves a client or client system" (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 598). It is important that the counselor and the consultees "stand together as potential channels of the grace of God for each other, to find meaning in the midst of despair and awkward circumstances" (Palomino, 1995, p. 171).

Kurpius describes the four modes of consultation as provision, prescription, collaboration, and mediation, each of which is necessary for integrating the home, school, Church, and peers to aid in formation of the student's character. In the provision mode, "the consultee identifies a specific need and contracts with the expert consultant for the direct provision of services" (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 599). The prescription mode "is most like the doctor-patient relationship. This consultant collects information (usually from the consultee), makes an expert diagnosis, and gives directions...to the consultee" (p. 599). In the collaboration mode, "the consultant works as a partner with the consultee in defining, designing and implementing a planned change process" (p. 599). In the mediation mode, "the consultant identifies a need for planning and change, gathers data from the system and initiates an informational meeting, shares relevant observations and data as a means of focusing the consulting effort" (Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993, p. 599).

## THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

According to Kurpius, Fuqua, and Rozecki (1993), the consulting process has 10 stages: pre-entry, entry, gathering information, defining the problem, determination of the problem solution, stating objectives, implementation of the plan, evaluation, and termination. In pre-entry, counselors evaluate their expertise and decide whether they can be of assistance. The second stage, entry, is the "defining and establishing of the consultation relationship, its roles, ground rules and contracts, including statement of the presenting problem" (Kurpius, 1978, p. 337). In the third stage, gathering information, the counselor learns more about the problem, puts together a history of interventions that were already used, lists what individuals were involved, and determines what the individual seeking consultation hopes to gain from the process.

Defining the problem is the next stage, and this happens when counselors begin "utilizing the assessment of information in order to determine the goals for change" (Kurpius, 1978, p. 337). Determination of the problem solution follows, as counselors analyze the "information in search of the best solution to the problem as presently stated" (p. 338). As counselors state outcomes, they state objectives—what can be "accomplished and measured within a stated period of time and within specified conditions" (p. 338). Counselors then implement the plan of the intervention, which follows "the guidelines clarified in the preceding steps" (p. 338). "The monitoring of the ongoing activities (process evaluation) culminating with the measuring of the final outcomes (outcome evaluation)" (p. 338) is the evaluation stage, followed by termination. Termination occurs when the objectives are reached and no further application is required. When consulting, the pastoral counselor "should make use of biblical foundations to help individuals focus on transcendent values that would help them discover alternatives that God wants to reveal to them" (Palomino, 1995, p. 170).

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

The counselor's relationship with teachers and administrators is essential for creating rapport and a desire to work toward shared goals. Counselors work closely with teachers to devise mutually agreed upon goals, which creates an environment in which teachers feel confident in their ability to brainstorm and actively work toward realistic solutions and interventions. A comfortable environment may also be established by the pastoral counselors' attitude of rejoicing and optimistic spirit. "The spirit of rejoicing reminds both the client and the counselor that they are not alone in this healing process" (Babcock, 2000, p. 80).

When working with administrators and principals, "the counselor must establish a relationship similar to that established when working with parents or teachers" (Muro & Kottman, 1995, p. 286). The consulting process is a collaborative relationship, in which counselors and administrators "work as a team to understand, analyze, and resolve problems" (Muro & Kottman, 1995, p. 286).

## WORKING WITH PARENTS

Parent consultation in a school environment has four goals:

(1) helping parents understand the part that they play in influencing their child's behavior, (2) helping parents learn procedures for improving parent-child relationships, (3) enabling parents to get feedback on their ideas and methods of training children, and (4) helping parents to recognize that their problems in child rearing are not unique, but are geared in common with other parents, providing them the benefit of group thinking and mutual encouragement. (Muro & Kottman, 1995, p. 296)

## COUNSELING IN SCHOOL GUIDANCE: THE MINISTRY OF *DIAKONIA*

The ministry of *diakonia* means service, and school counseling is a service profession that reaches out to students, teachers, and parents. Schmidt (1996) claimed that school counselors serve three populations; namely, students, teachers, and parents. The types of services that the counselor provides are "individual and group counseling, consulting, testing and assessment, group instruction and referrals" (Schmidt, 1996, p. 29). Just as Jesus had pronounced that He is with us, so too are counselors in a pastoral model, as they give service to those in need.

School counselors reach out to troubled or difficult students as well as help teachers manage students with special needs. Thus, school counselors must possess a variety of counseling skills to reach out and assist various types of students, as well as devote themselves to equipping teachers with some counseling skills. As stated in the *Declaration on Christian Education*,

So it is that while the Catholic school fittingly adjusts itself to the circumstances of advancing times, it is educating its students to promote effectively the welfare of the earthly city, and preparing them to serve the advancement of the reign of God. (Vatican Council 1966a, par. 8)

## APPROACHES TO COUNSELING

Although theories are abundant in the counseling field, not all of them conform to a Catholic school setting. The prevailing theories of counseling must be used appropriately and “be made not only of the theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology” (Vatican Council II, 1966b, par. 62). As stated by Sharp (2000), “whatever method the pastoral counselor chooses, he or she always relies on the theological foundation” (p. 114).

One approach that may be used in pastoral counseling is the nondirective, client-centered therapy developed by Rogers. In this approach, the counselor is nonjudgmental and focuses on the individual, not the problem. “More emphasis should be given [to] the emotional, feeling aspects of the situation rather than the intellectual” (Cunningham & Peters, 1973, p. 28). This approach, however, tends to “reduce religious issues into secular ones” (Power, 1990, p. 81) and, as such, pastoral counselors also need to draw upon a theological foundation.

Another approach is cognitive-behavioral therapy, which focuses on changing thoughts and, therefore, behaviors. Discovering one’s thought patterns, beliefs, and habits enables one to change them. For pastoral counselors, “the inference is that changing our thinking through God’s Word, gaining the ‘mind of Christ,’ will result in transformed behavior” (Dodds, 1995, p. 8).

In addition, rational emotive therapy (RET) and Christianity are compatible on several levels, most notably because the main premise of RET is that emotions and behaviors are a result of one’s thinking. Pecheur (1978) stated,

“For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7), “the counsels of the wicked are deceit” (Proverbs 12:5), “for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5)...Since Scripture teaches that what we think reflects either our old nature or our new nature, it behooves us to become aware in what type of self-talk we are actually engaging. (p. 248)

When using any of these approaches, the goal is to be “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (Dire, 1984, p. 33). However, among the various approaches, solution-focused counseling is the most relevant for the pastoral guidance model.

## SOLUTION-FOCUSED INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

The most appropriate way to assist students in their moral development is solution-focused school counseling, a form of short-term or brief counseling. Solution-focused counseling provides the student the "opportunity to learn, feel, think, experience, and change in ways that he or she thinks is desirable," according to Blackham (as cited in Gibson, Mitchell & Basile, 1993, p. 86). During counseling, the pastoral counselor must accentuate the presence of God. His presence is believed to be active through "wise counsel, prayer, the reading of Scripture, the offering of the Eucharist, baptism, and other religious and psychological resources" (Sharp, 2000, p. 104). Using these resources, the pastoral counselor acts as an incarnate agent for God's grace and mercy.

Using the solution-focused model, the pastoral counselor also focuses on helping to form the "ideal" student in the image of God. In the initial phase of counseling, the counselor creates an environment that is safe and uses the strengths of the student. "By focusing on the potential of the counselee and seeking to join God in what God is doing in the life of the counselee, a distinctive course of conversation takes place, goals are set, and outcomes are realized" (Sharp, 2000, p. 156). It is also critical for counselors to focus on a student's potential. As Babcock (2000) states, "counselors focus on the god-person across from them and not a machine to be fixed; these counselors come along side clients, to accompany clients so they will not have to walk alone" (pp. 80-81). In the initial session, the counselor begins to assess the student and helps the student to identify goals. The counselor evaluates the circumstances that have led the student to counseling. Questions such as "What's the reason you have come to see me?" allow the student to develop behavioral goals (Sklare, 1997).

During the middle phase, the student is asked what is better or different since the last time he or she met with the counselor. The counselor must pay attention to any signs of improvement that will allow the student to feel better about himself or herself. "Through persistent questioning focused on specific segments of time, the counselor [is] able to elicit instances of success that [have] been unrecognized" (Sklare, 1997, p. 90). Finally, the counselor must reinforce the student to elicit appropriate behavior and follow through with goals.

The final phase is the most crucial in ensuring that the work done stays with the student. This stage includes "follow up, evaluation, and termination" (Gibson et al., 1993, p. 92). Together, the counselor and student determine whether goals were met and if the plan is effective for promoting new skills. The counselor must ascertain whether additional counseling is needed and clarify that the student is welcome to see the counselor at any time. Although "termination should never be abrupt and unanticipated by the client" (Gibson et al., 1993, p. 93), if the student is in need of further help, he or she would be referred to mental health agencies.



## SOLUTION-FOCUSED GROUP COUNSELING

Another important component of a comprehensive guidance program is solution-focused group counseling. The focus of the group is on the times when a member of the group's problem is *not* a problem. "The beauty of such groups emerges when members observe how others are able to discover such problem-free times, motivating them to try and find such discoveries within themselves" (Metcalf, 1998, p. 7). Thus, group interactions become useful in promoting discussions of problem-free times and, eventually, the students become more action oriented.

Solution-focused groups also help students with their social and communication skills. The social interactions also help students to realize that they are not alone with their problem. The students within the group have often dealt with similar types of issues and may be able to offer insight and a new perspective. In this setting, the counselor is a role model who facilitates students in learning how to appropriately interact with each other and communicate properly.

During the first group session, the school counselor initiates introductions, discusses how long the sessions will be, when they will meet, and the number of times they will meet. Rules such as maintaining confidentiality and speaking one at a time in the group should also be discussed at this point (Gibson et al., 1993). The counselor might also want to review the purpose of the group by making the distinction that the sessions are solution-focused rather than problem-focused. Students are then asked what their behavior would be if their problems were gone. This question allows members to establish goals.

The subsequent sessions focus on what has improved for the students since the last meeting and what each student has noticed about other members. Goals set by the individuals in the group will be discussed openly to find out how each person is doing and to encourage that person to continue working on his or her goals. Members can also discuss new goals or any necessary adjustments to goals. At the end of each session, the counselor should document his or her observations. These notes are a way for the counselor to "stay solution focused when thinking about the client afterwards and designing a strategy for working with the client during the next group session" (Metcalf, 1998, p. 64).

The termination stage is the period in which members apply to their personal lives the feedback they have received and the knowledge they have gained about themselves (Gibson et al., 1993). It is important to the process that the group members remind one another of their strengths and continue to encourage one another to work on their weaknesses. Additionally, any final reactions or feelings would be most appropriately expressed at this time.

## LIMITATIONS OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED COUNSELING

Solution-focused school counseling is brief in nature and may not be successful in every situation or circumstance (Sharp, 2000). One of the main limitations is the counselor's perspective. As noted by Kollar, "a counselor with limited perspective may label a counselee as uncooperative (attending or blaming), resistant or controlling" (as cited in Sharp, 2000, p. 219). "A counselee who refuses to see himself or herself as anything other than a hopeless victim will eventually be frustrated in a solution-oriented counseling environment" (Sharp, 2000, p. 219). In each case, the counselor or student might terminate the relationship. It is essential that school counselors use their professional judgment and intuition to assess the situation, the surrounding circumstance, and most importantly, the student's perspective when applying this approach. Despite these limitations, such therapy is relevant within the Catholic school setting because it offers alternatives to all problem-focused approaches, whether they originate from secular counseling models or the Bible (Sharp, 2000).

## CONCLUSION

Catholic school students are not immune to the challenges of today's complex and troubled society. The spirit of openness established by Vatican II has called Catholic schools and their guidance counselors to invite administrators, faculty, staff, and students to new ways of living and decision making, ways that are informed by academic, religious, and psychosocial training. In so doing Catholic guidance programs are challenging ministers of pastoral care to share in the Church's threefold ministry of preaching, community, and service. "Bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) is a responsibility entrusted to every member of the family of faith, but is specifically charged to the minister as the 'shepherd of the flock,'" (Oglesby, 1980, p. 14).

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