

Priests and Pastors Must be Banned from Counselling

The bottom line

"A therapist or counsellor who has clients who have committed crimes MAY see them as criminals who should be punished. If so there will be no rapport or empathy and the treatment will be unsuccessful and maybe do more harm than no treatment. A judging therapist or counsellor has little or no chance of helping the client improve how they feel and become more adjusted individuals." What about "A therapist or counsellor who has clients who have committed crimes against God (sins) WILL see them as sinners who should be punished. If so there will be no rapport or empathy and the treatment will be unsuccessful and maybe do more harm than no treatment. A judging therapist or counsellor has little or no chance of helping the client improve how they feel and become more adjusted individuals."

God by definition is that being which ultimately matters so judging those who "sin" against him takes priority over people. I don't believe people of faith should be given unhindered access to being counsellors. Even if the judgement is not mentioned, a discerning person knows that it should be there. That defeats the purpose of the therapy.

Helping a client see what terrible thing will happen if he or she carries on doing something illegal or harmful is not likely to help significantly. That is not an opinion - it is the reality. Often they will feel there is no point in them trying to help themselves. They may even take bigger risks. Christianity nowadays stresses that sin is self-destructive. Telling people they are always sinners then is just getting them to replace sin x with sin y or they will end up thinking there is no point in trying to stop sin x.

Analysis

The idea of an all-loving creator implies that all good comes from him so all gratitude should be meant for him alone. If a pastor loves God or waters down the duties to love God he is not a good counsellor if he sets himself up in that role.

A person does terrible things to you or to somebody close to you. Trying to understand does not mean you are necessarily trying to condone them or condoning them. But if God comes first or God alone matters then the only thing that matters is understanding why the person has not connected enough with God to be good. That is in total opposition to psychology as a science.

People will not go to a professional with a problem if it involves God. They might go to an unqualified pastor or priest who has no right to playing the therapist role. The drunk in the local bar would be as well-qualified. The doctrine that God alone is to be loved and is to be loved above all things clearly indicates that people should be set up to feel angry against themselves if they perceive that God has let them down.

It is not enough to say that taking drugs is bad and show an addict why they are bad. The only thing that helps is helping the addict to work out why she or he needs the drugs. What need do you want to take care of by taking drugs? If God embodies morality then it is more important for the addict to believe it is a sin and has bad consequences than to care about why they do it. If you are a born sinner there is no point in caring why one takes drugs.

Priests and clergy being given the freedom to act like therapists and counsellors when they have no formal qualifications to do so is scandalous. The damage done can be irreparable. The relationship between priest and vulnerable person is one of the former manipulating the latter. The person needs an improvement in emotional health. When people talk about spiritual health, they really mean emotional health. Religion needs to talk about spiritual health in order to masquerade as a form of therapy and to give the false impression that religion is needed. The person should see through this and any good done will evaporate. And especially when they realise the true Christian claims that he cannot value other people unless God tells him!

Priests and clergy acting like therapists and trying to substitute for them needs to be legally prohibited - unless they have proper qualifications. Its a violation of secularism.

Priests, religious and ministers of Christianity attract some people who really need a counsellor and who talk to them instead. Others will also have a real counsellor. Many are hurt by non-professionals who care more about religion than the person needing help. Sick people have been told they have a nerve coming to God's priest when they never went to mass.

The few clergy or religious who do have counselling qualifications, have succeeded in getting the right to refuse to help say transgender people or those who are migrating from a marriage on grounds which the Church sees as insufficient. There are other people bleeding from every pore who can find themselves turned away. To turn a person away is to say, "If all counsellors were like us none would help you and not should help. Tough!" Tennessee permits such behaviour but only if the counsellor or therapist is licenced.

Christian relationship counsellors cannot counsel gay couples who wish to sort out their relationship if they believe homosexuality is a sin. The counselling would not help anyway. In fact the only time a Christian could counsel gay couples when he is geared towards seeing the couples split. The Christian counsellors say that they have no problem with other counsellors counselling gay couples. That contradicts their claim that assisting homosexuality is objectively wrong. When you steal without realising it, what you did was objectively wrong. They contradict their claim that assisting homosexuality would be subjectively wrong because the apostle wrote in the Bible that God's law can be seen through commonsense and this commonsense homosexuality is obviously unnatural and therefore evil (Romans 1).

Children have experienced tremendous tragedy. Instead of a counsellor, the priest was brought to give stupid blessings that don't work and to give false hope and to engage in giving useless and out of touch advice.

People need to realise that any rapport they feel with strong religionists is false for the doctrines of the religion are sometimes vindictive and often harmful.

Jesus said that even looking at somebody with desire was as bad as adultery. By implication, having sex with your wife out of desire and not because you want to express absolute self-sacrifice is sinful as well. John Paul II worked out his theology of the body from Jesus' teaching. Unless sex is very holy and saintly and totally sacrificial it is a sin even in marriage!

The Christian faith cannot be consistent with itself and allow counselling which is so crucial in problems of a sexual nature and in sexual relationships. The counsellor would not be needed if people should simply fight and repress sexual desire and sexual thoughts outside of marriage and to a point even within it.

The Christian is supposed to have a relationship with God who provides guidance and in whom one is supposed to find one's strength. This plainly puts the blame for being depressed or annoyed on the victim. Counsellors would be trying to take the place of God and it would be a sin. The Bible by implication condemns counselling. The First Epistle of John says that if you are in communion with God and his spirit you do not need a guide for you have them to explain the word of God to you (2:26-27). Counsellors could not be as talented as God. The best counsellors are not Christians even if they say they are and the correctly clarified Church definitely and clearly forbids going to them for help for it wants it to be compatible with orthodox Christianity.

No true Christian can agree to another person going to a secular counsellor. The consistent Christian will work against secular counsellors and demand their disqualification.

As strange as it is, priests and pastors are allowed a listening and counselling role without qualifications.

This needs to be banned legally for the following reasons.

#They have no training and no recognised qualifications in the area.

#The state recognising purely religious qualifications contradicts the separation that must exist between state and

religion.

#Their victims are assisted and encouraged to think that their healing from past hurt is down to the power of God's magic. But if they won their own healing they need to see and know that. It empowers them and its only fair. If I know I have healed myself by changing my attitude, I will never have to fear that God will take the healing from me. That's a possibility if God is behind it. I am better off believing I healed myself.

#Counsellors telling people who suffered sexual child abuse to go and talk to members of the clergy - especially the Catholic Church priesthood - is a gross violation of trust. It is urging people to go to a religious system that may be engaged in covering up child sex abuse or of being soft on it. And Christian teaching on sex is twisted and harmful. That alone is a reason for vulnerable and impressionable people to keep away.

If the Christian who undergoes therapy improves, she should be unwilling to accept that there is a perfectly logical explanation for any change without the need to recourse to imaginary gods. It's a case of, "It is not my self-discovery that helped but God." If you don't think your aspirin really took away your headache though the headache did go away, then why hold that it matters if you take the aspirin or not? Also, you will be no help to those who suffered as you did. If you cannot prove how you got well you cannot help others.

#The true Christian cannot tell a person, "Forgive others so that you will set yourself free from hate." Then it is done for yourself and not the people who hurt you. It is not forgiving them at all. It is merely casting out the negative emotions. It is surely possible to cast out the bad feelings without forgiving the person. You may still like to see them hurt but this will not bring you misery. The person is being manipulated by the Christian counsellor. And you have to forgive or be trying to. That is essential if counselling is to help at all.

#Vulnerable people may be damaged by the session. Bereavement is not complete until you find some happiness in the thought that the person does not exist any more and cannot be injured any more or brought back to be hurt etc. God and religion just harm people by saying and acting different.

#Vulnerable people may use religion as a crutch. That is not to be encouraged. One day the crutch will break. Religious counselling is supportive of the crutch and therefore dangerous.

#True counselling gives people self-empowerment skills. Religious counselling has to put the focus on God. No genuine believer can claim the right to tell a suffering person that God will heal them. It might not be his will. Its not that he wants to but that evil has ruined his creation and things go wrong. In fact the counsellor will have to settle for telling the person that God will help only if it is the right thing to do under the circumstances.

#And how is being told that you suffer from original sin - ie come into being with the intention of defying God and his blessings - and that your loved ones will rot in the torments of Hell for all eternity unless they believe and repent supposed to help you? How a person would feel comfortable opening their hearts to someone who supports a faith that teaches such vicious things and without enough evidence to justify such huge claims is a mystery.

The Church says you have to want to see sin suffer and be punished but not the sinner. This makes no sense. The reason why hate is so powerful in our society is that it and its roots are not recognised and exposed. One root is the pretending that you can hate the sinner and love her sin. You do not get off lightly, thanks to the law, even if you have philosophical reasons for believing your promoting of hatred is morally acceptable. Religion shouldn't get off either. The believers wouldn't turn themselves in for the filthy and sneaky way they promote hatred. And they approve of other kinds of inciters to hatred going to jail or being heavily fined. They are maligned because they are non-religious.

What objections are there to the fact that if priests and pastors are going to counsel they must do it in a secular and scientific fashion and have secular qualifications?

One objection is that religion is better for people than anything else. This notion insinuates that it is only religious counsellors that are the real counselling professionals.

Studies seem to indicate that religious people are happier than the non-religious. That might be down to the fact

that religious people tend to supportive communities. Religious people being happier does not mean that religion as such makes them happier. Its the community spirit that does that.

The studies are based on very subjective information.

They do not ask the religious or non-religious person to rate her or his happiness on a scale of 1 to 10.

It could be that a minority of religious people suffer so much because of their faith, say the terror of everlasting Hell, that it outweighs the happiness. The fear of Hell or the sense of Catholic guilt can draw a person into a depression.

Taken as a whole, the unbelievers could be happier.

Many of the people who are unbelievers do not enjoy their unbelief because they have not learned enough about self-help and because their unbelief is riddled with doubt. They may simply take it for granted that there is no God but the fear of being wrong will be with them when they are conscious of not having thought it through properly.

Some Christian therapists have people feeling better by reading the "nice" parts of the Bible. But they are left worse off when they realise how vicious the nasty parts are. Religion tends to despise modern knowledge and cherry-pick from it. That is an approach that is not going to help a long-term solution.

Jesus himself advocated a simplistic answer for the problem of human suffering. And many Christians do the same. They want to feel they are good people and they don't care if they are really good or not. Thus they insult the victim of sick child abuse

They can blame the devil or your inclination to sin for how you are unable to forgive your father who viciously raped you decades ago. They think you should be over it now. The believer has to face that question. The atheist does not. Which philosophy then is capable of genuine respect for others?

The therapist is essentially trying to help people help themselves believe and feel the following.

Only I can change the world I have created.

There is no danger in change.

To get what I really want, I must change.

I have the power to change.

There is no mention of God in it. God is therefore a hindrance.

There is a danger when you help people with depression or get them to help themselves.

Many people who suffer so badly that they have no willingness to even end their lives seem to feel that even death will not end the pain. If they were desperate to get rid of the pain they would kill themselves. They see no point in death or killing yourself.

Many of them who get help from medication or anything else can start to see a little that there seems to be a point. That is why the suicide rate is startling for people who are taking the first steps to recovery. They get the inner strength to act and they act by killing themselves. Faith in God can contribute to that. And as the clergy inspire faith in God they are to blame for the risk. If God is nonsense or does not care, this risk is wholly deplorable and inexcusable.

The atheist Sam Harris warns in his book Waking Up that the practices he recommends for improving inner peace could be inappropriate for many schizophrenics. For example, he recommends long silent retreats and that could be bad for a schizophrenia sufferer. But he is to be admired for at least recognising the danger of many spiritual

and "spiritual" practices.

No religious or occult practitioner cares enough to even think about the damage they can do. They do not even care about the destruction they leave in their wake and continue to put people in danger.

Priests and ministers must not be given an automatic right to deal with troubled people. What if they say the wrong thing? What if the religion is creating the problem it tries to help? Catholicism terrorises its victims about sin and offers them relief in the confessional. That is manipulation not helping. Priests and clergy need to be made answerable to the law if they hurt the vulnerable people who come to them.

WE DON'T DO GOD, THE MARGINALIZATION OF PUBLIC FAITH, George Carey, Andrew Carey, Monarch, Oxford, 2012