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A CASE STUDY IN EQUIPPING PRELITERATE QUICHUA  
PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS IN SOUTHERN  
ECUADOR FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Christopher Michael Sills  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

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To Carol,  
my love and partner  
in life and ministry.

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## PREFACE

This project represents the hard work, contribution, investment, and accomplishment of many. First and foremost, God has been so good to grant the vision and opportunity for pursuing this degree and completing this project. By his grace, he has opened doors and sustained me throughout my studies in this professional context.

I had not previously considered pursuing any degree after graduating with my MDiv, but after seeing the great need for biblical counseling in my ministry context I began to consider it. Later, at the urging of my wife and several good friends, including former missionary teammates, I entered the program. My studies throughout this entire degree program have shaped so much of what my understanding of and approach to ministry is today.

I am indebted to the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In particular, I wish to acknowledge my professors Robert Jones, Jeremy Pierre, Stuart Scott, and John Street. Their teaching opened my eyes to better understand biblical counseling and stand amazed at the spiritual wealth that God's Word makes available to his people. I was challenged and stretched and am all the better for it.

I would be remiss if I did not mention John Klaassen, my supervising professor, who has been so helpful to me in this process. His experience and keen eye have helped me to avoid errors and correct mistakes. Moreover, he always offered encouragement to me along the way. I am certain that this project's success is owed in large part to his influence.

I want to offer a word of thanks as well to the men who formed the expert panel and who contributed from their wealth of knowledge and experience to make this

project as successful as possible. These men know the Quichua people and so their expertise was priceless. Thank you, Al Rodriguez, James Winfrey, James Kerr, Lance Ferguson, Joselito Orellana, and Pedro Yaoripoma.

I am so grateful for the patience and encouragement that I received from my wife and children throughout this entire doctoral program. My bride Carol has constantly been by my side as we have sought to minister to and counsel others from God's Word. No one challenges me to continue to pursue holiness, understand and apply Scripture, and live out my faith as much as she. She is truly God's greatest blessing in my life.

Together, Carol and I seek to shepherd the hearts of the children God has so graciously given to us. The more time God allows me to parent Abraham, Anna Elizabeth, Mary Elle, Naomi Katherine, Thomas, and Ruth Abigail, the more I realize that biblical counseling is a form of intense discipleship that should begin in the home.

My prayer is that God would bless the people of Ecuador to know the immense pleasure it is to be able to counsel others from his Word, affording them true hope and surety in Christ, both now and eternally.

Christopher Sills

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2022

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I work as a missionary among the Highland Quichua (HQ) people group of Southern Ecuador.<sup>1</sup> I lived among them as the son of missionaries. Now, as an adult, I am ministering in the same cultural context. These experiences allow me unique insight into the various strengths and weaknesses of this people group, thereby informing the details of this project and its ultimate focus. Specifically, the design of this project was to further help this people group implement appropriate, culturally relevant biblical counseling practices.

#### **Context**

The Quichua people of the Andes mountain range of Ecuador, South America, first had exposure to Protestant Evangelicalism in the early 1900s. At that time, Catholicism was the only permitted organized religion, though animism was and remains the dominant, unofficial, unorganized religion in Ecuador.<sup>2</sup> It was not until fifty years or so later that the first HQ people became believers and were baptized.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1950s, following the infamous deaths of Jim Elliot, Peter Fleming, Ed McCully, Roger

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<sup>1</sup> The Quichua indigenous group in Ecuador primarily speak Quichua among themselves, in their homes and communities. However, due to their need to interact with others outside their indigenous group, they have had to learn Spanish. I also speak Spanish as a second language and do not speak Quichua fluently. Therefore, the implementation of this project was done in Spanish without any translation to Quichua.

<sup>2</sup> Gailyn Van Rheenen defines animism as “the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs and that human beings must discover what forces are influencing them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power.” For more, see Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

<sup>3</sup> M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichuas: Ministry in Animistic Oral Contexts* (n.p., 2012).

Youderian, and Nate Saint, a wave of missionary efforts took place in Ecuador, many choosing to work among the *mestizos* and Lowland Quichua. Few were working among the HQ people group. However, in the 1970s, there was an awakening among the HQ and evangelicalism spread quickly.

The Protestant church continued to see growth among all contacted people groups in Ecuador amid great persecution from the Catholics. In the late 1990s, church growth plateaued as persecution lessened and evangelicals were tolerated, even accepted. In the last twenty years, Ecuador's missionary presence has dwindled significantly as mission agencies turn their attention to the 10/40 Window, greatly impacting the HQ Christian community, among others.

The biblical counseling movement is relatively new even in first-world Christian circles, having started in the 1970s. It is unsurprising, then, that the concept of biblical counseling is still foreign among the HQ. While the movement seems to be slowly spreading throughout the *mestizo* population, the Quichua have yet to be impacted by it, due in large part to the mutually volitional, cultural segregation that exists between these two groups.

A great strength among HQ Christians of Southern Ecuador is that they enjoy a number of churches whose pastors have the complete confidence of their congregations and who, therefore, greatly influence the activities of the church. For example, Quichua pastors and church leaders are, in the main, passionate about evangelism. Therefore, they positively affect the church body's desire to participate in evangelism as well.

Quichua pastors and leaders also value fellowship among believers. The Quichua people, indigenous to Ecuador, are highly relational. This people group prioritizes and values relationships, and many opportunities exist for the members of indigenous churches to gather together in community. By regular fellowship, the unity of the Quichua Christians allows the members to hold fast to each other in brotherly love. Because unity and fellowship are so prized, church members will often overlook personal

offenses in order to maintain peace.<sup>4</sup>

The Quichua people are developing a great desire to increase their knowledge of the Bible, theology, and doctrine. In fact, many who never received appropriate discipleship or basic teaching are hungry for more of the Word of God. Reaching and Teaching International Ministries (RTIM) is currently seeking to address this need by establishing Bible training centers throughout many countries, Ecuador included. Many Quichua pastors and leaders come from many hours' distance for a week of teaching several times a year. Their commitment to becoming better leaders is a testimony to God's work among them.

Unfortunately, missionaries of decades past were unable to provide in-depth discipleship to all new believers during the spiritual awakening among the Quichua.<sup>5</sup> No doubt, this apparent neglect stemmed from a desire to focus on conversions over discipleship, both equally good and necessary goals. Current missionaries note that many believers who came to faith twenty years ago pay little attention to personal spiritual growth, leading to many lifestyles inconsistent with biblical principles. These missionaries commonly attribute these inconsistencies to a lack of discipleship. Another consequence of this lack of discipleship is that pastors were left with little or no Bible knowledge or theological foundations, which they need to fulfill their role in the church. Pastors in Ecuador are unaware, then, of their role as shepherds to counsel their church members from God's Word in public or private settings.

Additionally, lay church members do not understand the concept of ministering to one another. Essentially, Christians are taught to counsel one another; however, this aspect of Christian community is missing among many believers in the Quichua

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<sup>4</sup> In his dissertation on the HQ, David Sills refers to this system of necessary, close-knit relationships among them as *compadrazgo*. For more, see M. David Sills, "Highland Quichuas: Discovering a Culturally Appropriate Pastoral Training Model" (PhD diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 2001), 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> The emphasis is "in-depth," a term which should include reproducibility and conformity with the historically oral nature of this people group. More about this issue is mentioned in chapter 3.

community. Because they are indirect communicators, appropriate biblical resolution of and reconciliation in interpersonal conflict is rare. Hence, the body is hindered from spiritual growth because the brothers are unwilling to address sin issues biblically. This difficulty could be resolved by a better understanding of ministering the Word to one another.

Last and foremost, a common belief among pastors is that their primary role in the church is preaching. Therefore, a more fitting title for these men is “preacher” rather than “pastor.” Because this is a commonly held belief, pastors do not teach or equip their church members to minister to one another, which is the root of that weakness within the church. These pastors will often lead activities where they are expected to preach or speak but will not spend time shepherding or counseling their congregation through sinfulness and suffering. Consequently, the lay church members often suffer without hope, which God’s Word provides. In part, this reality can be attributed to a legalistic spirit among believers throughout the evangelical church in Ecuador. This legalism has roots in the Catholic dogma of good works, which many pastors and leaders held before their conversion. Piety and holiness in their eyes, then, have more to do with obeying their cultural Christian rules than broken, contrite hearts and spirits before the Lord (Ps 51:17). Many pastors and leaders with legalistic attitudes cannot understand how biblical counseling operates because the desire to solve dilemmas quickly by providing a list of rules, their own law, is so strong.<sup>6</sup>

### **Rationale**

In order to declare with certainty that church members who do not minister to one another are risking disobedience to Scripture, it is important to understand the basis for that claim. First Thessalonians 5:11-14 describes how brothers and sisters in Christ

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<sup>6</sup> This information stems from the author’s personal, recent experience with the HQ pastors in Southern Ecuador.

should engage one another. Paul directs his comments to lay church members, to those who are not exercising oversight over the flock. This fact is evidenced in verse twelve, where Paul refers to “those who labor among you and are over you.”<sup>7</sup> In this passage, he gives his readers several verbs to explain how they must interact: encourage, be at peace, admonish, encourage, help, and be patient. These verbs, in command form, emphasize the need for believers to minister to (or counsel) other believers. Therefore, if a church wishes to fulfill Scriptural obligations, its membership must seek to counsel one another.

Likewise, when one considers the role of pastor, one must study the source from which the requirements of that office come—the Bible. Pastors cannot shepherd their flock well if they do not follow biblical instruction. Moreover, church members risk disobedience to the previously mentioned Scriptural principles when their pastors do not teach them or lead by example. Three biblical examples will illustrate this point. First, in Acts 20:18-35, Paul gives his last personal address to the elders of the church of Ephesus. In this address, Paul reiterates his history with them, specifically as it serves as an example for them to follow (verse 35). Paul challenges the elders to care for, or take heed to, the flock (verse 28). Second, in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14, Paul declares that the overseers’ job is to admonish their church members. Third, in 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter directs elders to shepherd their flock in three ways: exercising oversight, eagerly, and being examples. In other words, the pastor must proactively and enthusiastically model what he desires the church to practice. One must conclude, then, that pastors who do not counsel their people or lead their congregation to counsel one another are not executing their task biblically.<sup>8</sup>

The first step to rectify this misunderstanding or misapplication of the office of

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<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV<sup>®</sup> (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version<sup>®</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> As biblical counselor Paul Tautges says, “biblical counseling is an intensely focused and personal aspect of the discipleship process,” thereby making the two nearly synonymous. For more see Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015), 25-26.

pastor required an analysis of what pastors and church leaders knew about biblical counseling, and how many among them, if any, were actively engaged in it. In the course of this project, assessments were taken to ascertain the number of the pastors who currently participate in biblical counseling, as well as their knowledge of it. Upon thoroughly assessing their level of knowledge and involvement, missionaries could be able to better teach them the importance of biblical counseling and how to put it into practice.

Second, teaching a carefully crafted curriculum was necessary to respond to the deficits in knowledge and practice among the pastors and church leaders. The third step was to make another assessment after those action steps are implemented, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Because Quichua pastors exercise such influence over their congregations, it is logical for missionaries (or others with knowledge and experience) to begin teaching them biblical counseling. Upon establishing a foundation of understanding among the pastors, the fourth step was to encourage the pastors to disseminate the information and practices throughout their congregations, hopefully resulting in an application of the biblical counseling principles where believers will minister the Word to one another.

In order to further assist the pastors and church leaders to incorporate biblical counseling practices within their churches, the fifth step included creating a ministry plan with specific, concrete steps. Unconventional ideas and changes are not easy for this people group to understand or accept; therefore, a practical, step-by-step approach will be necessary. Missionary oversight will be required as they begin to implement the plan, ensuring that they adhere to the specified steps.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train pastors and church leaders among the preliterate culture of the HQ people group of Southern Ecuador to implement biblical counseling in their current ministry contexts.

## **Goals**

The following five goals demonstrate the process by which the purpose of this project was achieved. The first goal addressed current knowledge and practices. The second goal included developing a curriculum to teach. The third goal referred to increasing the knowledge of the participants. The fourth goal addressed how to encourage the participants to integrate biblical counseling practices. The fifth goal involved developing a ministry plan. These goals were numerated as such:

1. The first goal was to assess the current levels of knowledge and practices of biblical counseling among Quichua pastors and church leaders.
2. The second goal was to develop a curriculum to teach Quichua pastors and church leaders biblical counseling and its methodology.
3. The third goal was to increase participants' knowledge of biblical counseling.
4. The fourth goal was to encourage participants to integrate biblical counseling into their church ministries.
5. The fifth goal was to develop a contextualized long-term ministry plan to enable participants to integrate biblical counseling into their ministry.

## **Research Methodology**

Five goals were used to measure the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current levels of knowledge and practices of biblical counseling among Quichua pastors and church leaders. This goal was measured by administering an interview of up to thirty pastors and church leaders enrolled in RTIM's Bible Institute in Ingapirca, Ecuador.<sup>9</sup> The participants voluntarily submitted to an individual interview, lasting up to twenty-minutes. The interview consisted of a combination of Likert scale responses and open-ended questions. This goal was considered successfully met when up to thirty pastors or church leaders completed the interview and the information had been

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<sup>9</sup> See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current counseling practices among these students. To analyze the results, themes and movements found throughout the interviews were noted.

The second goal was to develop a curriculum to teach Quichua pastors and church leaders biblical counseling and its methodology.<sup>10</sup> This curriculum was designed for six half-day seminars, essentially comprised of six sessions. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three former missionaries to the Quichua people group of Ecuador, two current missionaries in Ecuador, and one national Quichua pastor in Ecuador.<sup>11</sup> This panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. The expert panel evaluated the adaptability of the curriculum literature for the intended preliterate audience, which would inform Goal 3. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level. If the ninety percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to increase participants' knowledge of biblical counseling. This desired increase of knowledge refers to both what biblical counseling is and why and how it should be implemented. In order to increase knowledge, six half-day seminars were given, at which time the curriculum from Goal 2 was taught. This goal was measured by comparing the results from the same interview form previously administered, as described in Goal 1, to the level of change in knowledge related to biblical counseling after the training. This goal was considered successfully met when the post interview demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference in the pre and post-training interview results.

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<sup>10</sup> See appendixes 6-11.

<sup>11</sup> The panel will be considered expert because of the personal experience teaching and interacting with the HQ people.

The fourth goal was to encourage participants to integrate biblical counseling into their church ministries. This goal was measured by administering a post-seminar interview.<sup>12</sup> This interview duplicated the questions from the interview form of Goal 1 and included a few additional open-ended questions designed to gauge an increase in motivation and enthusiasm among Quichua pastors and church leaders for implementing biblical counseling into church ministry. This goal was considered successfully met when seventy percent of the seminar participants expressed a positive motivation to integrate biblical counseling into their church ministries.

The fifth goal was to develop a contextualized long-term ministry plan to enable participants to integrate biblical counseling into their ministry. An expert panel was formed of RTIM missionaries and expatriate pastors in Ecuador familiar with the people group in question who agree with RTIM's statement of faith and the definition of biblical counseling used in this project.<sup>13</sup> This goal was measured by the expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the functionality of the plan, communication processes, training elements, provision of biblical counseling resources, and the action steps.<sup>14</sup> This project did not attempt to cover any implementation of this ministry plan, but rather develop specific steps Quichua pastors and church leaders can take to integrate biblical counseling into their ministry. This goal was considered successfully met when one hundred percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level. If the one hundred percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms will be used in the ministry project:

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<sup>12</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>13</sup> See appendix 5.

<sup>14</sup> See appendix 12.

*Biblical counseling.* For the purposes of this project, biblical counseling will be defined as follows: “Biblical counseling is a ministry of, but not limited to, the local church whereby transformed believers in Christ (John 3:3-8) who are indwelt, empowered, and led by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) rightly understand and apply the living and active Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to others with the goals of evangelizing the lost and teaching the saved (Matthew 28:18-20) to live gospel-centered lives.”<sup>15</sup>

*Interpersonal ministry.* Because the Bible does not use the terminology of “biblical counseling,” the term interpersonal ministry will be used in instances where the principles of biblical counseling are found in passages that speak of believers ministering to one another. For the purposes of this project, “interpersonal ministry” will refer to biblical principles wherein believers minister to one another, specifically as this ministry involves teaching, exhorting, warning, admonishing, encouraging, and other aspects that resonate with biblical counseling.<sup>16</sup>

*Oral cultures.* “Cultures that have an oral tradition for perpetuating legends, histories, family lineage, and knowledge.”<sup>17</sup>

*Pre-literate.* “Unable to read or write due to the unavailability of literacy

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<sup>15</sup> This definition is a synthesis of two works. The first of these two, and the source upon which this definition heavily leans, is taken from John Babler, “What is Biblical Counseling?” Theological Matters: Theological Insights from Southwestern, last modified January 3, 2012, <https://theologicalmatters.com/2012/01/03/what-is-biblical-counseling>. Babler’s definition limits biblical counseling to the context of the local church. The definition provided here in this project includes the words “but not limited to” to reflect my view that biblical counseling may happen within the context of parachurch ministries as well. The second work is that of Elyse M. Fitzpatrick and Dennis E. Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009). The valuable addition of the words “rightly understand and apply,” which Babler’s definition lacks, is appropriately phrased by Fitzpatrick and Johnson to express the need for correct biblical interpretation and application. Moreover, the author emphasizes the similarity between discipleship and biblical counseling in order to denote the fact that biblical counseling may be done by all believers as they minister the Word to one another.

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this project, “one anothering” will serve as an alternate term for interpersonal ministry. However, it is important to note that interpersonal ministry, in each instance it is mentioned in this project, is not equated with biblical counseling. Rather, biblical counseling is considered a subset of interpersonal ministry. Even more specifically, biblical counseling has been described as intense discipleship; therefore, discipleship can be considered a subset of interpersonal ministry and biblical counseling a subset of discipleship.

<sup>17</sup> Adapted from the definition of “aural cultures” by Sills, “Highland Quichuas: Discovering a Culturally Appropriate Pastoral Training Model,” 16.

programs and schools.”<sup>18</sup>

Five limitations applied to this project. First, the nature of this project fell within parachurch ministry and not within the context of a local church. As such, I am not the overseer or bishop of the participants, but a fellow minister of the gospel. Therefore, the participation of these pastors was voluntary, not compulsory. Second, the participants came from various cities and provinces around the country. This reality meant that there could be no direct oversight over the implementation of the training or integration of the ministry plan. Third, the participants came from a primarily oral culture. Therefore, the interviews were conducted orally, and answers were written by the interviewer. Fourth, the interviews were conducted in Spanish and the findings were translated into English for the purposes of this project.<sup>19</sup> Fifth, due to COVID-19, this project was severely limited in scope; therefore, while this project originally provided for the participation of up to thirty students, only five eligible students participated in this project.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project entailed the development and teaching of a curriculum. This training was confined to six half-day seminars. Second, participation was limited to students of RTIM’s training institutes in Southern Ecuador.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to realize the ultimate, long-term goal of stimulating members of local Quichua churches in Southern Ecuador to biblically counsel one

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<sup>18</sup> Sills, “Highland Quichuas: Discovering a Culturally Appropriate Pastoral Training Model,” 18. Additionally, the preliterate fall into two additional missiological categories, which may be used interchangeably with “preliterate” in this project. The first term is *oral learners*, which is defined as “those people who cannot read or write the languages they speak.” The second term is *primary oral learners*, which is defined as “illiterate, preliterate, or nonliterate [people], which reveals that the delivery system of new information for them is primarily restricted to oral means.” “Primary oral learners” is a term used to distinguish those who cannot use literate means to communicate from those who can but choose not to, the second group being termed *secondary oral learners*. These terms are taken from Zane Pratt, M. David Sills, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 33-34.

<sup>19</sup> The author is bi-lingual and fluently speaks English and Spanish. No other translator will be required.

another, the pastors of those churches must first model how it is done. For pastors who do not know how to practice biblical counseling, someone must teach them what it is, why it is important, and how to put it into practice. Moreover, the pastors need to learn what specific steps they can take to develop a positive attitude towards biblical counseling. Therefore, this project was created in order to meet this need and train Quichua pastors and church leaders who can be catalysts for growth and change for biblical counseling within their churches.

CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR  
EQUIPPING QUICHUA CHURCH LEADERS IN  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Scripture teaches that the pastoral office necessarily entails that pastors lead their flocks by exemplifying engagement in interpersonal ministry (IM) and equipping others for ministry. As this phrase may suggest, IM is the godly, edifying behavior of all believers as expressed towards all other believers, regardless of their roles or functions within the church. The passages presented here are addressed thematically, demonstrating that pastors must set an example, church members benefit by following pastors' examples, church members must imitate the pastors' example among one another, and pastoral examples equip others for IM.

**Leading by example (1 Pet 5:1-3)**

An exegesis of 1 Peter 5:1-3 communicates that one essential aspect of shepherding the flock includes leading by example. This passage presents the reader with specific instructions for elders. Here, the apostle Peter differentiates between good and poor examples pastors may be to the flocks in their care, and ultimately Peter exhorts pastors to lead by exemplifying Christ.

**The Office: Elders and Pastors**

In this passage, the apostle Peter instructs the pastors among his readers as to the nature of their duties and how to discharge them. In the Greek, the word he uses for those he addresses is *presbuterion*, meaning elders. "Elders" must be understood as synonymous with other words often used for the same office, namely, pastor, bishop, and overseer. Of the various words authors of the New Testament use for church leaders, the

word “elders” specifically implies a spiritual maturity among the leadership.<sup>1</sup> This word, then, necessarily makes a distinction between church members and church leaders.

One might argue that distinctions must be made between the various words mentioned above for church leaders<sup>2</sup>, and that the responsibilities Peter outlines in these verses are specific to the role of elder. This argument would imply that the function of elders is entirely different from that of pastors or bishops or overseers. However, a sounder understanding of the nature of these words is that they represent different aspects of the same leadership office.

The synonymous nature of these words can be observed in the fact that Peter gives instructions for elders, which include language specific to the actions of a pastor and overseer. In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter commands elders to shepherd the flock, language specific to the pastoral role. At the end of that same verse, Peter also commands elders to exercise oversight, language specific to bishops and overseers.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, one can deduce that the titles elder, bishop, overseer, and pastor are not separate positions within the church. Rather, they are various words that express one idea among the church leadership. Moreover, the pastoral office includes the functions of elders as outlined in this Bible passage, thereby proving the relevancy that those who have spiritual authority in the church—pastors, elders, overseers, and bishops—should lead by example.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *1 Peter, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 263.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, elder, or overseer.

<sup>3</sup> The commentaries of Phillips, Leighton and Thomas, Harink, and Grudem agree on this point. For more, see the following works: John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005); Robert Leighton and Griffith Thomas, *1, 2 Peter, The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, Edited by Alister McGrath and J. I. Packer (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999); Douglas Harink, *1 & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009); and Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, in vol. 17 of *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> The commentaries of Phillips, Sproul, and Grudem also agree here. Additionally, Grudem says that the word Peter uses in this passage (*poimanō*) is the same word that Jesus used when he charged Peter to care for his sheep in John 21:16. For more, see Grudem, *1 Peter*, 194.

## **The Duty: Tending the Flock**

The apostle Peter, upon writing these first three verses of chapter five, must have recalled his last recorded conversation with Jesus. In John 21:15-17, readers are given a glimpse into Peter's reinstatement after his denials of Jesus. In this dialogue, Jesus asks Peter three separate times if he loves him. Peter answers in the affirmative each time. After each affirmation of Peter's love for Jesus, Jesus commands that Peter feed or tend to Jesus' lambs.

These commands communicate a positive, proactive role that Peter is to have in caring for the believers. In hindsight, readers today understand that a great wave of persecution was going to come upon the church and that believers would be dispersed throughout the world due in large part to the persecution. Hence, Peter addresses his letter to the believers among the dispersion. Peter appropriately cares for them by giving instructions to the church. As part of the instructions he gives, he specifically tells the elders to share in the task with which Jesus charged him—to shepherd the flock.

In 1 Peter 5, Peter uses the command form of the verb “to act as shepherd,” using the Greek word *poimante*. This word conveys the idea that pastors are to exercise all the shepherding tasks, including feeding, tending, and protecting (John 21).<sup>5</sup> Therefore, though the word “shepherd” is a noun, it is also used as a verb to denote the shepherding task, which is comprehensive in caring for the flock.

## **The Duty in Action: Setting an Example**

Jesus very clearly teaches what distinguishes a true shepherd from a false one in John 10, wherein he states that the shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Moreover, his sheep know his voice and follow him. In this text, Jesus is referring specifically to salvation and those who belong to him. It is clear from Scripture that Jesus is *the* good Shepherd. Because Jesus commands Peter to exercise the office of shepherd, and because

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<sup>5</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 194.

Peter likewise urges the elders to exercise those same shepherding actions, one may conclude that elders are under-shepherds; that is, they are men who, imitating the good Shepherd, steward the flock that belongs to Jesus. Therefore, by way of application, both of the truths that Jesus taught model what a pastor's (under-shepherd's) role involves, which is making sacrifices for those he leads and leading by example, even as Peter says in 5:2-3, "shepherd the flock of God that is among you . . . being examples to the flock." Stating that the only authority that shepherds possess is sacrificial in nature, Douglas Harink explains more, saying, "[Shepherd leaders] must display in their messianic leadership exactly the kind of servant lordship that the Messiah himself displayed, so that the members of the flock might in fact see in them a 'type' (*typos*) after which they themselves might pattern their lives."<sup>6</sup>

Peter uses the word *typos*, meaning "type;" shepherds were to be the example and the pattern after which other believers could model their own lives.<sup>7</sup> Pastor and theologian John MacArthur states, "Shepherds are to become sufficiently involved in the lives of the flock that they establish a godly pattern for the people to follow. The most important aspect of spiritual leadership and the best test of its effectiveness is the power of an exemplary life."<sup>8</sup> God designed the leadership structure of the church such that only men with certain godly qualities should be pastors. This design was given with the express purpose that the pastors should be men who establish a high standard of holy living that God wants from his people.

Specifically, though all Christians are called to live lives of integrity and holiness at all times and to model that to others continually, these elders are to exercise oversight for the flock that is among them. Moreover, these elders have a greater burden

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<sup>6</sup> Douglas Harink, *1 & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 124.

<sup>7</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 194.

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, *1 Peter*, 267.

to live godly lives before the congregation and world (1 Tim 2:11-3:13). As these Christians had been dispersed throughout various cities and nations, the elders to whom Peter wrote may have found that they had some people among their flock for a season, while others would be there for their entire lives. Regardless of the length of time or extenuating circumstance, the elders were and are never to consider relaxing the standard for those of the flock they are tending. Elders must continually set an example for all of those who are under their care.

Examining other texts of Scripture, one sees that the apostle Paul wrote about the same principle. Paul encouraged his readers to imitate his life, insofar as it imitated Christ's (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6). For Paul, this call to be a leader who people could imitate came with a high price tag; it meant that he had to provide a higher standard of godly, sacrificial living. Paul instructs Timothy also to set a good example for others (1 Tim 4:12). Indeed, the Bible is clear that all pastors must lead by example. Theologian Wayne Grudem says:

All in leadership positions in the church should realize that the requirement to live a life worthy of imitation is not optional--it is a major part of the job, challenging though such a responsibility may be. Moreover, those who select church leaders should realize that academic excellence and administrative or financial skills do not automatically qualify one for leadership in the church (as they would for leadership in the university of business worlds).<sup>9</sup>

In other words, both pastors and church leaders should recognize that setting an example is an instrumental and integral part of their roles. The potential for great changes towards godliness among church members is greater when pastors and leaders fulfill their functions as pattern-setters.

Peter distinguishes the means by which one must set an example. Seemingly, in answer to a real problem in the church at that time, Peter states some negative ways in which some leaders had been setting examples or may have been tempted to set

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<sup>9</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 196.

examples. Peter gives these negative illustrations in order to contrast them with his actual meaning, setting a positive example that would encourage godliness. Grudem observes from this passage that the pastor's responsibility should not lead to pride but, rather, humility, owing to the fact that his heart is still sinful and any holiness is all of God's grace.<sup>10</sup> He continues, saying, "To take pride in one's own spiritual progress would be to set exactly the wrong example for others. Those who like Paul cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' (2 Cor 2:16b) are most likely to set the best example."<sup>11</sup>

Peter states that pastors must not take on their role under compulsion or for shameful gain or domineering over others (5:2-3). These three negative leadership styles each denote some form of pride. In the first of these styles, acting under compulsion, pride may be seen in the form of laziness or selfishness, not desiring to work for the good of the church or for the Lord. Peter's response to this particular offense is that elders should exercise oversight of the flock willingly. The love that one has for the church should motivate those who fulfill the requirements for elders to act in that capacity.

The second negative aspect that Peter mentions is exercising oversight for shameful gain (5:2). The motivation for caring for God's people should not stem from a desire to receive a certain compensation or level of financial or material comfort. Peter contrasts this negative motive with a positive one, that the elders should work eagerly. It is as though Peter were encouraging the elders to work heartily as if there were to be no compensation or care from the church; that is, without a sense of entitlement. Paul is clear in other Scriptures that those who minister for the gospel are worthy of their wages (1 Cor 9:14). However, the wages cannot be the driving motivation for setting a godly example.

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<sup>10</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 197.

<sup>11</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter*, 197.

The third negative quality that Peter warns elders against is domineering over those in their care (5:3). In Mark 10:42-45, Jesus differentiates between his own kind of authority and that of the leaders of the Gentiles, who he said acted as tyrants. Jesus states that those who wish to be great must serve others; he emphasizes a servant leadership style, distinct among God's people. Harink says:

There is the persistent temptation to use authority and power in the church for one's own ends--the quest, perhaps, for a 'crown of glory' among the people. Peter continues his instruction to the elders by addressing this very issue: 'Do not lord it over [*katakyrieuontes*] those in your charge, but be examples [*typos*] to the flock' (5:3). Peter no doubt has Christ's own saying in his mind when he writes this.<sup>12</sup>

It is in humbly, eagerly, and willingly exercising oversight—that is, setting examples—that the elders will have the greatest impact among their congregations. It is upon this premise that the thesis is based. Pastors, setting examples in all ways, will demonstrate to their congregations how to correctly and appropriately minister the Word to one another.

### **Benefits of Imitating Overseers (1 Thess 1:6-7)**

An exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 teaches that there are positive outcomes when church members imitate and follow the example of biblically faithful overseers. In this passage, the apostle Paul teaches that there are great benefits for the church when believers model for others the good examples set before them by the church leadership. Paul encourages the believers of Thessalonica by mentioning the ways their example has served others, even when it was not easy. By joyfully receiving the Word in the Holy Spirit, even amidst affliction, believers who imitate elder leadership ultimately imitate the Lord. The fruit of following biblically faithful leaders' examples is that believers may then positively influence others in a far-reaching manner by becoming those who set the example.

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<sup>12</sup> Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 123-124.

## **The Patterning of the Thessalonians**

In his opening statements, Paul writes to affirm the Thessalonians in their Christian walk insofar as they have imitated this group of godly men who sent this epistle—Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. As previously considered, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul exhorts them to pattern their lives after his, to imitate him (1 Cor 11:1). This pattern of living he set forth as something to adopt was not of his own creation; rather, he was imitating Christ.

Even Jesus in his ministry did not claim to do what He did as if it were his own plan, but confessed that He came to speak, do, and fulfill the will of the Father. In John 6:38, Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” Indeed, all that Jesus desired was to do what God the Father required of him (John 4:34). This truth is most clearly seen when Jesus pled for the Father to remove the cup of wrath that was to be poured out on him, yet he yielded to the Father’s will, which was ultimately to crush Jesus for sinners (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).

Therefore, it logically follows that if Paul followed Jesus’ example and Jesus always does the will of the Father, then to imitate Paul is ultimately to imitate God the Father himself. For this reason, Paul said in verse 6 that the Thessalonian believers became “imitators of us and of the Lord.” Paul was not claiming perfection or the same standing as Jesus, but he recognized that his life characterized the qualities Jesus desires, and so he was able to hold up his life as an example to many.

## **The Proof**

In Acts 16 and 17, readers learn how this missionary group (Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus) formed and a little of the hardships they endured in Thessalonica. These men left to continue on their missionary journey and to escape the evil plans that the non-believing Thessalonians had for them. The believers to whom Paul writes, however, would have continued to experience this affliction that Paul mentions.

Clearly, many people in Thessalonica did not receive the word that Paul preached to them and were antagonistic towards him for what he preached. Yet, even in the midst of this affliction, the believers did receive the word that Paul proclaimed to them. Moreover, they had the joy of the Holy Spirit. Joy is the second aspect of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists (Gal 5:22). Joy can be described as a lasting and completely satisfying pleasant emotion based on God and the truth of his Word—namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, this supernatural joy came not from within, but as a result of the Holy Spirit’s presence among them. The fact that the Holy Spirit was among them confirms that these Thessalonian believers were now a part of the kingdom of God.<sup>14</sup> Michael Martin states, “The Spirit was both evidence of the fact of salvation and the assurance of the ultimate deliverance yet to come. Although conversion meant temporary affliction, it also promised eternal rejoicing.”<sup>15</sup>

People experience joy even amidst persecution and hardships simply because this joy is not based on circumstances, possessions, or experiences, but instead on the truth that Jesus came to save sinners and give eternal life. For example, Peter and John, after being beaten and threatened by the Sanhedrin, left “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:41). They had joy when it seemed most illogical. Likewise, the Thessalonian believers had the joy of the Holy Spirit under trying circumstances and with it received the word that Paul preached to them.

## **The Result**

Though the Thessalonian believers suffered because of having received the word, they persevered. Ultimately, they served as a tremendous example to the believers

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<sup>13</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring 1 & 2 Thessalonians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 32.

<sup>14</sup> Michael D. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1995), 62.

<sup>15</sup> Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 62.

in two large provinces, Macedonia and Achaia. In fact, nowhere else in Scripture does Paul tell a church that it has served as an example, a pattern, to other believers.<sup>16</sup>

The Thessalonian believers' example was powerful as it went out. In describing the way by which their example went forth in their preaching of the very word they received, New Testament scholar Leon Morris says, "It might describe the clarion call of a trumpet or the roll of thunder. It emphasizes the resounding nature of the witness borne by the Thessalonian church."<sup>17</sup> The following verses in 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10, though not considered here, further explain the manner by which the Thessalonian believers' behavior served as an example.

The various writings of Paul, which encouraged others to imitate him and set an example for others, emphasize the great importance that exists for Christians to follow this practice. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, communicated that God expects and desires that believers set an example (Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7). As Paul commended the Thessalonian believers, he noted in verse seven that they had become a *typos*, a pattern and example, for many others. In this commendation, one understands that this patterning was not only the task of the church leaders, but it was also for the church as a whole.<sup>18</sup> What the believers observed in the leadership they were to emulate in their own lives. The believers in Thessalonica emulated their leaders, and so became an example to the other churches and believers, not only in their time, but in today's world as well.

There is evidence of kingdom-wide benefits from these believers' behavior. The gospel had changed these believers. It left them wholly different than they had been before, and, even more notably, left a marked impression on the church throughout at least two large provinces. By the time Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, only a

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<sup>16</sup> Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 62.

<sup>17</sup> Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1984), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Gary S. Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 68.

relatively short time had elapsed since he had been present with them. Interestingly, word had already gone ahead of Paul regarding the pattern of godly living the Thessalonian believers had set. Paul, who wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth of the province of Achaia, states that he received reports from others who already knew something of what happened in Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:9). The fact that the news spread so quickly may be attributed to the fact that both Corinth and Thessalonica were port cities.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of how the news reached people so far away in so little time, the truth remains that their obedient and faithful response became an example to many others around the world.

### **Interpersonal Ministry of Believers (1 Thess 5:11-14)**

An exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14 teaches that church members admonish one another, even as the overseers admonish them. Until this point, one main focus of this chapter has rested primarily on the example of the church leaders among believers. Here, the focus will shift slightly to include the work of IM among lay believers. The apostle Paul gives specific instructions to the believers in Thessalonica with regards to their conduct among one another.

For context, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14 follows a discourse concerning the day of the Lord and contains some of Paul's concluding thoughts for his readers. Paul sought to encourage his original readers in reminding them of the confidence and hope they have as children of God for the day of the Lord. The instructions he gave to these believers in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14 had specific applications to their context, given the topic he addressed of the Lord's second coming; however, there is also a broader application for all believers. The IM actions he outlines are applicable to believers of all ages and in all places as they convey biblical precepts that reflect the timeless and unchanging character of God.

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<sup>19</sup> Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 68.

## **Edification**

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul was quick to recognize the fact that the believers had already been engaging in encouraging each other. Paul asserted that these believers, as children of God, did not have reason to despair in thinking of the day of the Lord, the second coming of Jesus Christ. He desired to comfort and reassure them.<sup>20</sup> Some among their number were apparently already seeking to build up the brethren in this regard. Paul sought to involve all of them in this endeavor. Moreover, as will be further explained below, the interpersonal nature of the ministry of lay believers ran deeper than mere positive words; and, the end of this multifaceted approach of IM is the same, which is building others up in love.

## **Instructions for All Believers**

Paul specifically wrote 1 Thess 5:11-14 for all believers, not merely the leadership of the church. The fact that these instructions are for all believers highlights the importance of IM among lay believers. Leaders, as previously observed and studied, are to set the example for the other believers; yet, these other believers also have a role with one another. Some theologians may argue that the following instructions (v 14) are for the leaders of the church. However, the fact that this passage is applicable to all believers can be noted by a couple of factors.

First, these believers were to respect and esteem their leaders. In 1 Peter 5:1-3 there are specific words of instruction for the elders, an exhortation to set a good example. In this passage of 1 Thess, however, there is a word to those under the care of elders. Part of this IM among believers not in leadership includes submitting to the elders' spiritual authority within the church. There is a command to respect and esteem them.

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<sup>20</sup> Phillips, *Exploring 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 138.

Respect comes from the word *eidēnai* in Greek, meaning “respect” or “recognize.”<sup>21</sup> Esteem comes from the word *hegeomai* in Greek, meaning “consider” or “regard.”<sup>22</sup> The meanings of these words have significant impact on the believers, given the roles that their leaders play among them. These men who exercised leadership had important and demanding responsibilities among the brothers, which included admonishing believers. This word admonish is the Greek verb *nouthetountos*, which means “admonish” or “give instruction.”<sup>23</sup> By receiving this admonishment from the elders<sup>24</sup>, they would essentially be submitting to them, respecting and esteeming them. Paul wrote separately to the Philippians stating that they ought to honor such men as Epaphroditus, who sacrificed much for the sake of the believers (Phil 2:29). Were these elders unworthy of respect, it is doubtful Paul would have encouraged the believers to esteem them. However, they were godly men, like Epaphroditus, who invested well in those under their charge to whom Paul wrote. Therefore, the role of the believers was to submit, respect, and esteem them.<sup>25</sup>

As previously noted, Paul was constantly challenging leaders to set a good and godly example for their congregations. One could conclude both from what is known of these writings of Paul and his desire for these believers in Thessalonica to respect their pastors that the believers were to follow their leaders’ example. Indeed, Paul tells them that the elders’ role was to admonish them, and shortly thereafter he encouraged them all

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<sup>21</sup> Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 219.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 101.

<sup>23</sup> John MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2002), 170.

<sup>24</sup> In reference to those who the believers should respect, Morris explains that the three participles (“who labor among you, who are over you in the Lord, and admonish you”) demonstrate that they are three functions of the role of elder, not three separate roles of leadership within the church. For more, see Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 100.

<sup>25</sup> Richard D. Phillips, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 236.

to do the same for each other. One can see Paul's intention and goal in encouraging these believers to be like the leaders.

Second, in 1 Thessalonians 5:13, Paul told them to be at peace "among yourselves." These instructions were clearly for the laity, as these instructions continue within the same context as that of the instructions for the respect they were to have for the elders.<sup>26</sup> To continue setting a good example to all believers, there was not to be any division among these believers or rebellious spirits against the leadership of the church. Rather, they were to behave towards one another in a godly manner.

Paul desired that the believers not be mere consumers within the church but recognized that each person has a part to play and encouraged them to play it. In other writings, Paul instructed believers that each person has a spiritual gift and contributes to the health of the body of Christ, the church (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12). In those writings, Paul emphasized that to not exercise one's spiritual gift is to create an impediment for the overall spiritual growth of the church. More specifically, in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14, Paul explained this IM in practical ways.

### **Interpersonal Ministry**

Paul clarifies IM in terms of what believers are expected to do in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. The four actions he lists that can be considered IM are to "admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." Understanding each of these aspects will emphasize the ripple effect created by the leadership; in other words, one may see how the actions of a few can impact many. Obviously, these kinds of effects can be positive or negative in nature, but the primary focus here is how godly leadership positively influences church-wide behavior, hence, Paul's words to the Thessalonians when he says in 5:11, "encourage one another and

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<sup>26</sup> Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 220.

build one another up, *just as you are doing*.<sup>27</sup> These positive behaviors were not new to them; only, Paul sought to exhort them to continue in those actions.

**Admonish the idle.** This phrase evidences a real problem within the church that existed in Paul’s day, and which remains a problem today. Too often, believers become complacent in their spiritual walk and disengage from the work at hand, so becoming idle. This work can include personal spiritual growth as well as participation in the church, including the expectation for believers to share the gospel with those around them. As previously noted, the word admonish means to give instruction, which can also be taken to understood to alert someone of some danger into which he or she is headed.<sup>28</sup>

From this word *noutheteō*, the entire modern biblical counseling movement was sprung.<sup>29</sup> In the early 1970s, Jay Adams began his ministry of nouthetic counseling, flying in the face of various popular psychological counseling approaches in his day.<sup>30</sup> The goal was to help believers with their various problems by lovingly confronting them with their own sin, and to encourage them to grow in God’s grace by putting off sin and putting on holiness. The motivation to admonish within the context of biblical counseling was to fulfill the words of Paul and so build up the church.

The word idle comes from the word *ataktos* in Greek. This word can convey both a stubborn unruliness and passive idleness.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, whether actively seeking to disobey the church leadership or carelessly disregarding instructions, the “idle” of this

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<sup>27</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 170.

<sup>29</sup> The word modern is inserted here to indicate that biblical counseling as a movement only, including the terminology it employs today, is modern. This paper presupposes that biblical counseling has existed since the time of the early church, though not termed as such. Rather, biblical counseling was identified and classified by the interpersonal ministry actions exemplified and instructed by Paul and other New Testament writers, as evidenced here.

<sup>30</sup> For more, see Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 177.

verse are in true spiritual danger. The task of brothers and sisters in Christ who observe this idleness in others are urged and exhorted to confront this sinful behavior.

The very act of admonishing a fellow believer is selfless and loving in nature. Admonishing is selfless in that the one who admonishes is vulnerable, either to verbal attack or being shunned by someone he or she may respect or value. It is a loving act in that ultimately the goal of this confrontation is saving someone from disaster and restoring him or her to communion with the Lord and the body of believers.<sup>32</sup>

**Encourage the fainthearted.** Paul again uses the word encourage. Paul's desire was that the believers lift up those who are down. One can see here the continued idea that believers assist one another to grow up into spiritual maturity even as "iron sharpens iron" (Prov 27:17).

The word "fainthearted" refers to those who are cast down. The range of words in English used by various theologians to describe this frame of mind reflects the multifaceted nature of this discouragement. Within the context of this chapter, Paul may be referring to those who remain doubtful regarding the Lord's return and what may happen to them or even what may have happened to their loved ones who died.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, he may be referring to the persecuted, those in sexual sin (4:1-8), or those in need of giving or receiving brotherly love (4:9-12). However, because he is not so specific, it allows for the reader to understand that in any instance of such faintheartedness, other believers should seek to come alongside them and lift them up and comfort them. Christians understand this task to mean more than simply distracting discouraged people with lighthearted activities or jokes, but that it entails pointing such

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<sup>32</sup> This truth can be clearly seen from other texts in Scripture, namely, Matthew 5:18; Galatians 6:1; and James 5:20.

<sup>33</sup> Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 102.

people to Jesus, who is the true source of joy and peace, and who will come again to make all things new.<sup>34</sup>

The beauty of this particular instruction is that there opens up to the pastor, counselor, or believer endless ways of seeking to lift up or encourage the person who is discouraged or depressed. Paul does not say to encourage in any one specific way but leaves the manner of encouraging up to the believers. One can see that there are many possibilities for ministering to the fainthearted. This fact is especially helpful as the manner of encouragement may change from one culture to the next. Therefore, the Highland Quichua pastors who must model for their congregations this encouragement for the fainthearted will have the freedom to do so within their own cultural contexts.

**Help the weak.** Many believers face various doubts and frailties of faith. For such believers, they are extremely vulnerable to temptations, and are likely to give in to sin. Often, they struggle to put biblical precepts into practice and live in obedience to God.<sup>35</sup> These are the spiritually immature—the weak.<sup>36</sup>

God has not left these weak believers alone. The Lord, through Paul, gives strong, mature believers instruction to help their weaker brothers and sisters. MacArthur says that the stronger should help the weak, that they should “establish close personal relationships with them, and provide them doctrinal instruction and encouragement toward righteousness and away from sin.”<sup>37</sup> Again, Paul desires there to be a deeper connection and unity between believers, and he assumes that there exist close

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<sup>34</sup> Phillips, *Exploring 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 141.

<sup>35</sup> MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 179.

<sup>36</sup> It is not fully understood nor do all theologians agree on what is meant by “the weak.” Paul could be referring to those who are physically weak and in need of assistance in that sense. However, for the purposes of this project, “the weak” is taken to mean spiritual weakness.

<sup>37</sup> MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 179.

relationships within which such help may be given.<sup>38</sup> Where there is an evident deficit of deep relationships, believers should seek to value and establish them.

Of the numerous examples given in the Bible of this kind of help, the battle between Israel and Amalek in Exodus 17:8-16 is apt. During this battle, God worked to give victory to Israel while Moses' hands were raised; if Moses let his hands down, Israel began to lose. Therefore, Aaron and Hur assisted in holding up Moses' hands, which allowed Joshua to win the victory for Israel. Likewise, believers must be prepared to assist others who may be unable to "lift their hands."

**Be patient with them all.** Patience is a necessary component of IM.

Obviously, experience teaches that not all believers will have a natural, close connection to all other believers. Each person's experiences in relating to others testifies to this truth. The Bible explains that there was a disagreement between Paul and Mark. Barnabas desired Mark's participation in their ministry; therefore, for the good of the testimony of their ministries (Acts 15:36-39), separated from Paul. However, Paul was not so blinded by Mark's previous faults that he could not note his spiritual growth; and, in later years Paul even desired his company (2 Tim 4:11).

Patience, or forbearance, requires humility and an honest examination of one's own position before God. "A patient person is one who is not quickly or easily provoked to emotional outbursts or precipitous actions."<sup>39</sup> This patience, an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, is neither apathy nor neglect. Rather, being patient with others is actively exercising self-control with those believers whose manner is cumbersome, whether due to personality differences or immaturity, and choosing to love them with the love of Christ. However, in recognizing one's own sin before a holy God, who is patient towards sinners

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<sup>38</sup> Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 178.

<sup>39</sup> Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 178.

(Ps 103:8), the need to be quick to forgive and patient with others becomes clearer; moreover, it provides the necessary motivation to be patient “with them all.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Equipping the Church for Interpersonal Ministry (Acts 20:18-35)**

An exegesis of Acts 20:18-35 explains that shepherding the flock, which is the pastor’s task, includes engaging in IM and equipping others for ministry. This particular passage occurs within the context of Paul’s journey back to Jerusalem from his missionary journeys. His travels took him to Miletus, near Ephesus where he had previously ministered. He stopped there and called the elders of that region together for what he believed to be a final meeting.<sup>41</sup> In this moving passage, Paul encouraged the elders and gave them instructions and warnings for their ministry.

Here, Paul explains his own past actions and urges them to imitate him for the sake of the believers. This farewell address, though lengthy, gives the reader a better understanding of the nature of the pastoral role, which stretches much further than Sunday sermons to include IM and equipping others for ministry, whether they be fellow ministers or lay leaders. Thus, this passage may be of some help to the HQ pastors and leaders to better understand their responsibility. Four aspects of this passage will be considered here in order to highlight its significance.

#### **Paul’s Past as an Example**

The first of these four aspects is that of Paul’s past work in the ministry, which he set forth as an example for the elders. Paul laid out his past, not all at once, but dispersed throughout his speech (Acts 20:18-21, 26-27, 33-35). Paul’s own ministerial

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<sup>40</sup> Phillips, *Exploring 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 143.

<sup>41</sup> John MacArthur, *Acts 13-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1996), 207-209.

experience is key to understanding what he desired the elders to do, knowing that he did not believe he would see them again.

One might conclude that Paul's description of how he worked among them suggests a kind of prideful boasting. However, John Calvin states that Paul is not boasting here, saying:

Nothing is more intolerable in Christ's servants than ambition and vanity, but since everyone knew very well the modesty and humility of this holy man, he did not need to fear incurring suspicion of vain boasting—especially when it was necessary for him to speak of his faithfulness and diligence in order that others should follow his example.<sup>42</sup>

To misunderstand this point is to misunderstand the purpose of this address. In many other instances in his writings, Paul states that he is the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15), how he had not attained perfection (Phil 3:12), how he often did what he did not want to do and did not do what he wanted to do (Rom 7:15-20), and how he only boasted in his weakness (2 Cor 12:9). In fact, Paul's desire to boast was only to do so in the person of Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14).

Theologian Howard Marshall states that “it has been suspected that [Paul] was replying to some accusation”, seeking to defend his ministry against some who opposed him in Ephesus.<sup>43</sup> While this is a possible explanation, there is no evidence of any specific opposition to him or his ministry there. Rather, a better understanding of this passage is that it served to encourage the elders there who would have to continue on without the hope of enjoying Paul's presence and personal teaching again. John Polhill writes, “Paul was not defending his ministry. He was presenting it as an example for the Ephesian leaders to emulate. It is a worthy example for every servant of the Lord: a ministry marked by humility, openness, and inclusiveness and rooted in the gospel.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> John Calvin, *Acts* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1995), 331-332.

<sup>43</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Acts* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 331.

<sup>44</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 385.

Paul's purpose in sharing his ministry activities was to lay out what he did among them, what they themselves witnessed, and to encourage them to model their ministry based on what he did. In essence, he was fulfilling what he called others to do—to set a godly example in ministry—and he called them, as he did with others, to imitate him.

In the nine verses where Paul outlined his past ministry, he mentioned ten main actions or characteristics of that ministry. First, he built relationships. The relationships that Paul built came by means of living among them (20:18). It was necessary that he spend time among them in order to more effectively model Christlikeness. Likewise, it is necessary for pastors today to live among, learn, and know well their flock.

Second, he served in humility (20:19). If anyone had a right to boast, it would be Paul. He could have boasted in the righteousness that comes from the law or in his many sacrifices for the sake of Christ. However, he was humble because “he knew his own weakness and so distrusted himself, and because he regarded himself as very far from equal to the excellence of his calling, and, finally, because he willingly submitted himself to bear the reproach of the cross.”<sup>45</sup>

Third, he ministered with tears, with compassion (20:19). Experienced ministers of the gospel understand the truth of this aspect of ministry. Often, tears are shed over hard hearts. The context of Paul's tears came from his suffering at the hands of his brethren, the Jews.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the evangelical HQ pastors of Ecuador can resonate with that sadness in observing the hardness of hearts among their Catholic countrymen who desire to persecute evangelicals.

Fourth, he persevered through trials (20:19). “‘Trials’ (πειρασμῶν, *peirasmōn*) is a summary term for all the persecution Paul experienced (Acts 19:9; 20:3; 1 Thess

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<sup>45</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 332.

<sup>46</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 212.

2:14– 15; 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 3:18) as the Lord’s bond servant (*δουλεύων, douleumōn*).<sup>47</sup>

Paul had been driven from Thessalonica, among other places, by the Jews. He had suffered greatly at their hands. It could have been quite easy for Paul to give up in light of such opposition. However, this perseverance demonstrated Paul’s devotion to the Lord and his church. His call to serve the Lord sustained him in moments of great distress. Likewise, ministers of the gospel may look to Paul in order to observe how to bear such hardships.

Fifth, Paul declared anything that was profitable (20:20). “He speaks about both encouraging and challenging things. Paul covers the full scope of what the gospel means. He wants the church to be prepared for the persecution coming as a result of preaching the gospel. So, he teaches the elders what is profitable, what will edify.”<sup>48</sup> Paul did not hesitate to share all that was necessary and useful for their Christian walk. The boldness of Paul in communicating God’s truth to the brothers is a helpful example to pastors today. Elders are not called to tickle the ears (2 Tim 4:3), but to speak truth in love (Eph 4:15), including the more difficult, confrontational truths of God’s Word. For this very reason, the HQ pastors, for whom public opinion is so important, must be taught that biblical counseling and IM skills require that they not shrink from declaring everything that will benefit their people—even hard truths.

Sixth, he taught publicly and privately (20:20). Some theologians understand this distinction to refer to the public places as renowned cities and the private places as places of assembly.<sup>49</sup> However, many other theologians understand this public and private teaching to be that of the teaching in the church and in homes where believers lived, respectively. John Calvin speaks to the deep impact of house-to-house teaching when he

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<sup>47</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 627.

<sup>48</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 627.

<sup>49</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 627. Here, Bock cites this view as presented by Jerome Neyrey.

says, “teaching that is given to everyone together will often grow cold unless it is helped by advice given in private. Therefore, there is no excuse for the negligence of those who preach one sermon and then, as if their task were done, spend the rest of their time in idleness.”<sup>50</sup> The HQ pastors, who likewise misunderstand their task as merely preaching once or twice a week, may be benefitted from understanding the true nature of pastoral ministry as demonstrated by Paul.

Seventh, he preached to Jews and Gentiles alike (20:21). The message that he proclaimed was the same to everyone, whether Jew or Greek—repentance and faith in Jesus. One might conclude that Paul sought to emphasize repentance for the Jews and faith for the Greeks; yet, the principal point of this text is that Paul shared with everyone regardless of his or her background. Polhill says, “Paul saw his own special calling as being the apostle to the Gentiles, but he never abandoned the synagogue. Perhaps more clearly than anyone else in the church of his day, Paul saw the full implications of his monotheism. God is the God of all.”<sup>51</sup>

Eighth, he spoke the whole counsel of God (20:27). The same idea from 20:20 can be observed here. However, the emphasis is that Paul preached the “whole counsel” of God, never partial truths. In order to preach the whole counsel, one must first be familiar with this counsel, which requires the personal spiritual discipline of Bible intake. The HQ pastors, if they are to truly develop IM skills and lead their congregations to follow their examples, must first seek a deep relationship with the Lord by seeking to grow in their understanding of his Word.

Ninth, he lived free of the desire for dishonest gain (20:33). Paul’s ministry was characterized by giving and blessing others, not seeking to amass a private wealth.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 333.

<sup>51</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 384.

<sup>52</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 230.

Too often pastors and leaders, whether true believers or those charlatans seeking to extort money from others, seek some sort of personal gain. For this very reason, Paul and other New Testament writers condemn those who minister for dishonest gain, whether material wealth or a better reputation (1 Tim 6:9-10; Titus 1:10-11). The HQ pastors, though not in danger of becoming ludicrously wealthy by North American standards, may still have in their heart the root of covetousness.

Tenth, he worked hard to earn a living (20:34). In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12, Paul exhorts the idle to work hard. Paul was familiar with the difficulties of bi-vocational ministry yet preferred those difficulties to either actually being idle or having others regard him as idle. Therefore, he worked hard, not wishing to be a burden on the church. Moreover, he reasons that hard work will not only keep them from being a burden on others, but it will enable them to give and bless others. To bolster this argument, he cites Jesus' authoritative words regarding the blessing of giving to others. "In this way Paul sought to be an example of helping the needy (1 Thess 5:14) and of living in accordance with the saying, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"<sup>53</sup>

These ten actions were not merely given to reinforce Paul's worth and the positive nature of *his* ministry to these elders. The purpose was to challenge these men to continue on in the same vein of Paul's work. That which he modeled for them is what they ought to do and model for their congregations.

### **Paul's Commands**

The second aspect includes his warnings, commands, and exhortations to the elders. These commands come from two verses (Acts 20:28, 31). Heeding these commands and warnings is crucial for long-term success in ministry.<sup>54</sup> Because Paul's

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<sup>53</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 336.

<sup>54</sup> The success mentioned here is not merely a human perspective and understanding of success, but rather it is the hard work of pastoral care invested in the kingdom of God, which God may choose to bless by growing the church in number and spiritual maturity. However, God will certainly not

concern extends beyond the faithful ministry of these elders to the spiritual health of the people they oversee, he urges attentiveness and alertness. “As a shepherd protects, cares for and feeds the sheep, so through teaching and exhortation these presbyter-bishops are to nurture those in their charge (Eph 4:11-12; 1 Pet 5:1-3). Sometimes that teaching will be admonition (*noutheteō*), the correction of the will that presupposes opposition (Rom 15:14; Col 1:28; 3:16).”<sup>55</sup>

The first command contains two aspects based on one single idea, to take care. Elders must pay careful attention to themselves and all the flock, caring for the church. In reference to pastors’ attention to their personal spiritual walk with Christ, Richard Baxter said, “Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues.”<sup>56</sup> The first step for any pastor is to evaluate his own heart before the Lord.<sup>57</sup> Before the HQ pastors begin IM in earnest, each must look to his own life before the Lord.

Considering the principle found in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, where Paul explained that overseers must manage their households well, it stands to reason that the principle can be applied even more specifically—that one must first give heed to oneself before governing a household or church. A further study of 1 Timothy teaches that examining and evaluating oneself has lasting benefits for others where Paul instructed Timothy, saying, “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you

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bles a disregard of the commands and warnings Paul mentioned, which the Christian understands to ultimately be from God himself.

<sup>55</sup> William J. Larkin, *Acts* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 298.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (1657; repr. Lexington, KY: Legacy Publications, 2017), 14.

<sup>57</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 222.

will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim 4:16).<sup>58</sup> Self-deception, an assumption that one has a spiritual maturity that he does not actually have, occurs all too often; therefore, all pastors must be taught to look to themselves.

Indeed, one must question how pastors could discharge their duties by setting a good example for the flock if they do not take heed to themselves. Calvin states, “If someone neglects his own salvation, he will never care about other people’s; in vain will the person who shows no desire for godliness urge others on to godly living. Someone who forgets about himself will not take pains with his flock, for he is a part of that flock.”<sup>59</sup>

Elders must not only attend to their own spiritual wellbeing, but must also focus on that of their church, which is actually a part of *the* church. Paul taught that this great, weighty responsibility stems from the incredible value that God places on the church by having purchased it by the shedding of his own blood. There can be no greater evidence of the church’s value than the fact that Jesus—God—gave himself up for her (Eph 5:25). Therefore, pastors have been entrusted with something very precious and dear to God, and must pay careful attention to the flock, the church.<sup>60</sup> This attention includes, though is in no way limited to, the IM instructions previously considered in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14, to admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with them all.

Ultimately, pastors must recognize that though there is an element of internal desire to serve the church and, consequently, the Lord, it is the Holy Spirit who calls and places men in these positions of leadership in his church. This truth can help men, like the

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<sup>58</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 222.

<sup>59</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 337.

<sup>60</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 228.

HQ pastors, develop the same kind of humility Paul exhibited. Moreover, it will induce leaders to take special care of the church, lest the Lord remove them from their positions.

The second command is that pastors must be constantly vigilant and alert. This truth is just as important, if not more so, than it was in the time of the early church. Just before he commands the elders to be alert, Paul explained that some people would enter to do harm to the church. Even as shepherds would have had to be especially alert at night, just when it was most difficult to see, to protect their flock from attacks, pastors must be ever ready to do battle for their people.<sup>61</sup>

Paul called on these men to recollect his tireless efforts for the Ephesian believers. He admonished everyone night and day with tears. This deeply compelling argument demonstrates the kind of sacrificial love the pastors are to have for their people. Such a pastor could never be content to only preach on Sundays, remaining ignorant of his people's needs and sufferings. For this reason, the HQ pastors who have adopted erroneous views of the pastorate must be taught to correctly understand, exemplify, and equip others for IM.

### **Reasons for Paul's Commands**

The third aspect includes the reasons he gives for the previous commands based on his and their present and future circumstances. These reasons can be found in two sections of this passage (Acts 20:22-25, 29-30). Presently, Paul has merely paused his journey to Jerusalem in order to meet with these brothers. Very soon after he would leave Miletus, he would experience great suffering. This present circumstance motivated him to speak as he did to the elders of Ephesus, believing he would not see them again.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 335.

<sup>62</sup> There are different schools of thought regarding whether he was ever actually able to see the believers of Ephesus again. Based on some extra biblical works, Paul is believed to have been released from his first imprisonment in Rome, after which he may have visited Ephesus once more. For more, see Bock, *Acts*, 628-629. The veracity of this claim is ultimately irrelevant to Paul's speech, as his intent was to leave such instructions and commendations that, were he to never see them again, he would have said his

In the same way, all pastors should seek to minister among their people in a way that might prepare the believers to carry on, following their pastors' examples, should God require that the pastors leave, be it by receiving a call to another ministry or by death.

Though Paul remained uncertain about the future with regard to specifics, he had ample warning from the Holy Spirit about the generalities of his coming suffering.<sup>63</sup> He was warned that he would face imprisonment and afflictions. More specifically, he believed his part in the care of the Ephesian church had come to an end and must therefore help the elders to understand that he may not be able to give more help in the future. Nevertheless, as difficult as it would be, he said that he was "constrained by the Spirit," and determined to continue on his journey. This warning of impending affliction was both a blessing and a test. It was a blessing in that Paul was forewarned, hence, forearmed, as the expression goes. It was a test in that embracing God's plan for him, though it came at a high personal cost, evidenced his devotion to and faith in the Lord and his goodness. Pastors who too readily embrace the blessings of ministry and shun the hardships do not follow the example that Paul set forth. Willingly submitting himself to such hardships, Paul left an indelible mark on the church of Ephesus, setting a high standard for godly leadership.

Paul explained further that the ministry to which he had been called and in which he still had a part to play was to "testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (20:24). This statement can accurately sum up the work of each minister and believer. Paul did not count his life as more valuable than finishing the race, the work of his ministry, which was to proclaim the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The HQ pastors desperately need to be taught that this is their work, and that it can be expressed in many IM skills, which they can and should model for their people.

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piece and sufficiently equipped them for future life and ministry.

<sup>63</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 331.

In Acts 20:29-30, Paul gave additional reasons as to why they must take care. He said that soon fierce wolves would enter and cause much damage, “not sparing the flock” (20:29). In reading this, one is reminded of Paul’s other writings, calling such men dogs and evil doers (Phil 3:2), and explaining how such men divide and upset whole families and that they must be silenced (Titus 1:10). Polhill writes, “The term ‘wolves’ often appears in the Jewish apocalyptic literature and in early Christian writings to describe false teachers and prophets. The early Christian writings appear to be influenced by Jesus’ warning against false prophets who come in sheep’s clothing (Matt 7:15).”<sup>64</sup> In the same way wolves will tear at sheep, the disruptive influence these people have would be violent in nature against the church.

Not only would the problem come from without, but even from within would men arise to teach false doctrines and heresy (20:30). Indeed, when Paul wrote to Timothy, who was ministering in Ephesus, he responded to the false teachings that had entered the church.<sup>65</sup> The pastors must therefore know the people of their church, having established relationships with them, in order to understand what they believe and teach. Moreover, the pastor must be alert and ready to respond to false teaching, not fearing men, but God.

### **The Blessing and Hope of the Church**

The fourth and last aspect of Paul’s speech considered here is the blessing and hope that he left with the elders. This commendation to the Lord’s care can be found in Acts 20:32. His last few words with these men were those of peace. Paul, knowing that he was headed into imprisonment and afflictions, desired to build up these brothers and

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<sup>64</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 387.

<sup>65</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 226.

lift their gaze to the Lord Jesus, and away from himself. As had been Paul's custom in ministry to point people to Christ, so he ended his ministry among the Ephesians.

The word he used was "commend," which in the Greek is *paratithemai*. It was used to express the idea of setting someone before something. "In the middle voice, when this concerns God, it is to commend someone to divine care and protection."<sup>66</sup> This word of blessing had both the aspect of prayer and of teaching. It was Paul's prayer that God care for and protect the Ephesian church, to keep them in his Word of grace, to build them up, and give them an inheritance. "It is Paul's handing over to God of the responsibility which he has borne for the church, and represents a farewell act."<sup>67</sup> In this prayerful attitude of commendation, he is also able to teach his hearers a few things.

First, he commended them to God. Though they would have understood this from Paul's other teachings, he reminded them of the truth that God is sovereign, implying his omnipotence and omniscience and omnisapience.<sup>68</sup> Paul was quick to teach that God is the ruler of all (Acts 17:24-28). This commendation also teaches that God is good, and should be trusted, which other Old and New Testament writers affirm (Exod 34:6-7; Jas 1:17). Therefore, though Paul, a powerful and wise leader they could hear with their ears and see with their eyes, would leave them, they were sure to have the continued care and blessing in the Lord, which was better. Paul wished to remind them of the surpassing power and greatness of God.

Second, he commended them to God's Word. Specifically, he states that God's Word was of grace. Marshall says, "Grace is a particularly Pauline word, to express the free unmerited favor of God in virtue of which he saves sinners; Luke also uses it

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<sup>66</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 631.

<sup>67</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 335.

<sup>68</sup> For more, see Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 102-135.

frequently, especially to refer to the gospel message (Luke 4:22; Acts 14:3).<sup>69</sup> God's Word was not confined to the Law, nor is it confined to explaining the damning nature of sin; rather, both of those truths inform the magnificence of God's grace extended to sinners under the Law through Jesus Christ.

Paul explained more, first saying that God's very Word is that which can build up spiritual growth. William Larkin states, "In the safekeeping of God and the gospel, [believers] will not be destroyed but will grow spiritually."<sup>70</sup> By the Word of God will believers have spiritual growth and maturity.<sup>71</sup> Reading and understanding God's Word does not come naturally for many Christians, yet it is necessary for spiritual health. Praying and fasting alone are insufficient, for they are the means by which believers communicate what is on their hearts and minds to the Lord. Bible intake, however, is what allows Christians to hear what God has to say on any given subject. For this reason, Donald Whitney lists Bible intake as one of the personal spiritual disciplines.<sup>72</sup>

The truth that God's Word is that which builds up believers into spiritual maturity is central to IM and biblical counseling, hence, the language of the latter. God's Word, biblical counselors argue, is sufficient to address any and all problems human beings face.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, it is imperative the HQ pastors and church leaders be taught how to read, interpret, and apply the truths found in Scripture. Not only will their understanding aid them in their own spiritual growth, but it will allow them to better guide their congregations in understanding and applying truth to their own lives.

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<sup>69</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 335.

<sup>70</sup> Larkin, *Acts*, 299.

<sup>71</sup> MacArthur, *Acts 13-28*, 229.

<sup>72</sup> For more, see Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

<sup>73</sup> For more, see Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 35-64.

Furthermore, as the believers understand and apply, they will be more apt and able to use the IM skills they learn from Scripture.

Secondly, God's Word of grace is the means by which an inheritance is granted. "Paul promises believers a continual increase of grace until they see and possess the inheritance they have been promised, which is stored up for them in heaven."<sup>74</sup> Because God's Word contains the truths believers need to navigate life, it allows those who apply the truths found therein to experience abundant life now (John 10:10). Believers will also "be empowered for perseverance all the way to heaven."<sup>75</sup> HQ believers, many of whom still live in fear of persecution from family or neighbors, need the encouragement that an eternal perspective from God's Word can give, in order to remain rooted in the faith.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, these four passages teach that pastors lead by example, and that their example can lead to far-reaching, positive changes within the life of their churches. The HQ pastors and church leaders, then, are no exception. They must be taught the necessary steps of what can, in today's terms, be considered biblical counseling, so that their people are prepared for the same kind of work. They know best the culture of their congregation and, so, are best qualified to exemplify these godly characteristics so that their people can put them into practice as well.

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<sup>74</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 341.

<sup>75</sup> Larkin, *Acts*, 299.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED  
TO EQUIPPING QUICHUA PASTORS AND CHURCH  
LEADERS IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Interpersonal ministry (IM) can be initialized within existing preliterate ministries and is a globally transferrable skill because it transcends literate culture. Simply because IM, like biblical counseling, has limited or no presence in preliterate cultures does not mean it is impossible to establish now. Biblical counseling has gained in recognition and popularity mainly in the West over the past fifty years.<sup>1</sup> The fact that it has only gained such popularity in the West, where there are many erudite, literate church leaders, does not imply that it cannot find a place among preliterate Christians. Personal experiences among missionaries indicate that few literate church leaders of Ecuador have any formal IM training, and even fewer have implemented such ministries.<sup>2</sup> The previous chapter sought to demonstrate the biblical grounds and necessity for the church of an IM like biblical counseling. This chapter will seek to demonstrate a practical, legitimate basis and opportunity for developing such a ministry in any context of the world, specifically in the preliterate culture of the Highland Quichuas.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information regarding the beginning of the biblical counseling movement in the twentieth century, see Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The author's personal history and experience in working with churches in Ecuador, both indigenous and *mestizo*, and the experience of others are the basis for this claim. There is currently no known research or data to support this statement.

## **Beginning a Biblical Counseling Ministry**

Interpersonal ministry, such as biblical counseling, can be established in places where there was previously no such ministry.<sup>3</sup> Because the biblical counseling movement has gained popularity in the West, a place where no such formal ministry existed, over the past fifty years, it stands to reason that this ministry can be developed and established anywhere. One aim of the biblical counseling movement seeks to encourage pastors and lay leaders of churches in the West to participate in establishing a more formal IM in their churches where previously none existed. Certainly, more challenges exist for establishing a biblical counseling ministry, dependent upon sound exegesis and hermeneutical approaches, in a place where few Christians can read, comprehend, and retain what is read of biblical texts; yet, it can and must be done.

### **The Basis**

The biblical counseling movement gained traction in the West, especially in places where IM was previously a foreign concept. Jay Adams, the first advocate of modern biblical counseling, began to fight what appeared to be a losing battle against popular, secular psychological approaches to problems, approaches to which even Christian churches were flocking. However, as critics began to evaluate his teaching and recognize the validity of his claims—that the truth of the Bible is sufficient to respond to personal problems—biblical counseling became more accepted and respected, especially among conservative Christian circles. This shift in thinking confirms that although IMs like biblical counseling may initially seem foreign, it can be established in unlikely places.

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<sup>3</sup> As considered under the definitions in chapter 1, it is important to note again here that interpersonal ministry should not be equated with biblical counseling. IM involves many other aspects of ministering the biblical “one anothers” which go beyond biblical counseling; therefore, biblical counseling can be considered a subset of interpersonal ministry, but not equated to it. This distinction is important to consider for this chapter to avoid confusion.

Books such as *The Pastor and Counseling* by Deepak Reju and Jeremy Pierre, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* by John MacArthur, and *Biblical Counseling and the Church* edited by Bob Kelleman, among others, exist because the idea of IM remains foreign to many churches and leaders even in the West. Each of these books seeks to give an overview of what biblical counseling is, its goals, and helpful hints for its implementation. The authors of these works see the necessity of providing these guidelines for evangelicals as well as the hope for success.

Though the term biblical counseling may be foreign to churches, the principle already exists in many places. Because nouthetic confrontation<sup>4</sup> or biblical counseling is inherent to the job description of a pastor, any church with a biblically qualified elder or pastor has already taken the first steps to incorporate IM into the life of the church.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in many instances, there is simply a need for a clarification of terms and a more clearly stated objective with regard to this form of IM.

Earlier in this paper, reference was made to the previous missionaries who evangelized the Quichua people of Ecuador and could not invest sufficient time in discipling all of those who came to faith. A word must be added here that this oversight or supposed negligence on the part of the previous missionaries should not be assumed as intentional. Missiologist David Sills graciously says, “The missionary educators of the past are not to be blamed for seeking to educate the church leadership in the best way that they knew. However, when a need is discerned whose resolution would result in the advance of the kingdom of God in a large part of his world, the church must address it.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Biblical counselor Jay Adams is known for his practice of nouthetic confrontation. The word nouthetic derives from the Greek words *nouthesis* and *noutheteo*, which translate to English as “admonish” or “instruct”. He describes nouthetic counseling as something in which all believers may participate, “problems are solved nouthetically by verbal means,” and includes admonishment given specifically to help the counselee. For more, see Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 41-61.

<sup>5</sup> For more information about the biblical requirements of a pastor, see previous chapter.

<sup>6</sup> M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichuas: Ministry in Animistic Oral*

It is for this reason that this project was developed, because the need has been discerned and the church must respond.

As the history of missions in Ecuador is examined, three factors may be considered as to why biblical counseling was not incorporated into previous missionaries' ministries. First, the biblical counseling movement is still relatively new in the West today, and churches there are somewhat slow to adopt these practices. Various biblical counseling organizations were formed in light of this movement, but on the local church level biblical counseling programs, methods, or favorable attitudes are slow to be incorporated. Therefore, previous missionaries of fifty years ago, when the biblical counseling movement was only just beginning with Jay Adams, can hardly be blamed for not teaching or practicing that which is still new today.

Secondly, as was previously noted, the spiritual awakening among the Quichua of the Andes in Ecuador occurred in a relatively narrow space of time, spanning just a decade or two. With few biblically trained laborers serving as missionaries in a place where thousands were coming to faith in Christ, the task before them to equip and disciple new believers must have seemed enormous. Beyond the need and desire to evangelize, these missionaries were faced with the need of establishing churches for these new believers. Basic leadership training for those who could serve as pastors would undoubtedly have demanded the missionaries' time and energy. Again, it is not surprising that they would have had little time to invest in discipleship.

Former missionary Daniel Sheard says, "Discipleship among oral peoples is a social exercise of verbal teaching and interaction. It is not information transfer as we have come to know discipleship."<sup>7</sup> Sheard makes an excellent point that for Westerners discipleship has been reduced to information transfer and has little to do with developing

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*Contexts* (n.p., 2012), 110.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries* (n.p., 2007), 35.

Christian character and living in godliness. It has come to mean learning the information that the Bible teaches, which certainly is a part of discipleship. However, discipleship should not be head knowledge divorced from Christian living based on observation and imitation. If the previous missionaries did not have time to devote to “information transfer,” and if discipleship is much more, as Sheard hinted, then it is not surprising that one would see a lack of discipleship today.

The third reason expands on the issue of the time-consuming nature of discipleship. Biblical counseling has often been referred to as intense discipleship, owing to the fact that counselors seek to help their counselees grow in godliness, regardless of or because of the positive or negative circumstances in which they are living. Biblical counseling is intense in that it often occurs in specific, one-on-one, formal settings, wherein the counselor is able to focus his or her attention on the counselee. Naturally, this form of IM is time consuming. This time issue, along with the other reasons considered, echoes the unsurprising reality of the lack of IMs of discipleship and biblical counseling found among the Quichua churches today.

It is necessary to consider the history of the Quichua church as it has had a profound impact on the church today. Moreover, it serves to highlight that the Quichua church as a whole is not so different from many churches of the West today who do not understand biblical counseling nor have IMs incorporated into the life and DNA of the church, even if it were only a belief, attitude, or guideline rather than a formal ministry.

The writings of biblical counseling proponents Jay Adams, David Powlison, Paul David Tripp, and Heath Lambert all agree that when church members participate in the biblical “one anotherings”, IM is actually taking place, if only informally. One could argue that the degree to which a church body incorporates this IM reflects the degree to which the pastor has developed a passion for it and a desire to see it grow among the flock he oversees. Therefore, much of the broad-scale implementation that one would

hope to see take place in the church must begin with the leaders casting vision and leading by example, and it can be done.

### **The Need for Appropriate Teaching Models**

Oral communicators of preliterate cultures think and learn differently than literate communicators. As a result, interpersonal ministry skills must be taught using an appropriate teaching model. One must consider both the existing teaching models in place today among literate groups and how preliterate groups think, and then adjust the teaching methodology accordingly in order to successfully communicate the material. This concept is applicable even to those who might fall under the category of functional illiteracy, as many westerners do. Functional illiterates are defined as, “those who can read basic instructions or headlines but live their lives as illiterates.”<sup>8</sup> This is important because the goal in adapting an appropriate teaching method is not to change what is taught but the manner by which the material is communicated. Hence, regardless of literacy level or other contextual factors, the target audience should be able to understand with an appropriate teaching model.

Here, a brief word on contextualization may be helpful. Some misunderstand the idea of contextualization, and, so, disregard it completely. However, in *Introduction to Global Missions*, contextualization is simply summarized as “the process of proclaiming the gospel and living as the church in a modern cultural context.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, true contextualization does not change the message of Scripture; rather, it allows Scripture to

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<sup>8</sup> Zane Pratt, M. David Sills, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 34. Additionally, the International Orality Networks says, “‘Functional illiterates’ have been to school but do not continue to read and write regularly after dropping out of school. Within two years, even those who have gone to school for eight years often can read only simple sentences and can no longer receive, recall or reproduce concepts, ideas, precepts, and principles through literate means. They prefer to get their information orally. Their functional level of illiteracy (as opposed to published data) determines how they learn, how they develop their values and beliefs and how they pass along their culture, including their religious beliefs and practices.” David Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, no. 25 (2004): 21.

<sup>9</sup> Pratt, Sills, and Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions*, 260.

presented in a way that can be understood and applied within the context of those who receive the message or teaching. Additionally, “aspects that may be contextualized include things such as language, music style, musical instruments, clothing style, and building materials. Contextualization adjusts for extrabiblical aspects; the message never changes.”<sup>10</sup>

An appropriately contextualized teaching model for IM based on the sound teaching of Scripture can yield good results and prepare the ministry for long-term success. Therefore, when a teacher seeks to implement an appropriate teaching model, one must also consider the context in which he or she will be teaching, adapting the teaching accordingly, so as to yield the best results possible. This type of contextualization is what must also be done for preliterate groups like the Quichua pastors and church leaders of Ecuador.

### **Literacy in Ecuador**

The focus of this project is training primarily oral indigenous pastors and church leaders of Ecuador to incorporate IM into their churches. This means, then, that a quick study of literacy rates in the country of Ecuador will be helpful. Unfortunately, as in the case of many countries, it is suspected that the national rates of literacy presented by the Ecuadorian government are higher than what it is in reality. A quick search for literacy rates in Ecuador would suggest that there are not many illiterate or preliterate people. As of 2017, Ecuador claims a literacy rate of 92.83 percent for individuals between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 200.

<sup>11</sup> “Education and Literacy,” UNESCO Institute of Statistics, last modified 2021, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ec>.

However, upon closer inspection, a number of variables are not taken into consideration when determining this literacy rate. One Ecuadorian literacy investigator noted that “no instruments have been developed to assess levels of illiteracy. Also, literacy experiences (programs, campaigns, projects) that have concluded with an evaluation of learning outcomes are exceptional. In general, the person who completes the program or even who registers in it is considered literate. This practice is quite widespread in the region.”<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, in the same article the investigator says that many of the various indigenous groups who would naturally receive the least education are not surveyed or tested, and so very little information is gathered of their literacy rates. The investigator goes on to state that the illiteracy rates among indigenous are at least 28.2 percent.<sup>13</sup> This data calls into question the legitimacy of Ecuador’s published national literacy statistics.

As one examines the positive historical change in the nation’s literacy rates, according to the government statistics, two issues come to bear. First, in the past thirty years or more, Ecuador has laudably committed to growing the literacy and education rates by creating many schools throughout the country, providing education even in remote areas. Second, the standards for how the government defines a person as literate has dropped significantly. It has been noted in various countries, including Ecuador, that if a person is able to hold a pencil and write their name, they have technically passed the literacy requirements and are so included in the literate category for the statistics. For instance, missiologist Sills says, “oftentimes, governments look to banking or voting statistics as a way to measure literacy, since signing one’s name is required for both, and

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<sup>12</sup> Rosa María Torres, “Analfabetismo y alfabetización en el Ecuador. Opciones para la política y la práctica.” (Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006 Literacy for Life, 2005), accessed online on August 7, 2021, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000146190>.

<sup>13</sup>Torres, “Analfabetismo y alfabetización en el Ecuador. Opciones para la política y la práctica.”

some use that ability as a test for literacy.”<sup>14</sup> However, one can see that this does not encompass literacy in the manner a Westerner might naturally think of literacy, as there is no evidence that the people in question could read and comprehend any given text. Additionally, literate people who comprehend what they have read often have the ability to summarize it to someone else. Oral learners (preliterate, illiterate, and functionally illiterate people) do not have that skill.

When one considers the Highland Quichua people as a preliterate or oral culture, one may wonder why they remain so when their language has been reduced to writing and they even have a Bible in their language. Missiologists have noted that “many indigenous groups are preliterate because their languages have never been reduced to writing, while others simply do not value literacy.”<sup>15</sup> The fact that they remain largely oral learners reflects the truth that they do not value literacy. Sills says that preliterate groups often prefer oral methods of communication and learning, even when they have the option of reading and writing, and that some groups think of literacy as “a social practice rather than a technology.”<sup>16</sup> So, while they have access to education and their written language, they often choose oral means of communication instead.

Moreover, as will be developed further in the following section, literacy is much more than being able to read and write. Literacy affects the entire way that the mind functions and operates. Therefore, simply because an illiterate person learns to read and write does not necessarily make them literate, regarding the ways they would choose to reason with or communicate truth to others. A truly literate person’s thought processes are so thoroughly changed in the course of time through extensive reading and writing

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<sup>14</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 182.

<sup>15</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua* 107.

<sup>16</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 107-108.

that it distinguishes them from other categories of literacy, namely the functionally illiterate.

The International Orality Network (ION) states that “those who intend to work with unreached people groups would be wise to be skeptical of governmental literacy statistics when it comes to functional literacy.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, one can assume caution must be exercised in reading and interpreting national statistics on literacy and education. The reality of literacy for the Quichuas is quite different from what is published. Many of the Quichua pastors, possibly the majority, would fall into the preliterate, illiterate, or functionally illiterate categories; hence, they are an oral people.

### **How Oral Peoples Communicate Truth**

Given the gap between published literacy statistics and reality, it is increasingly important for teachers among preliterate societies to consider different teaching methodologies.<sup>18</sup> These different methodologies are essential because oral communicators do not tend to think in the logical, linear manner so common among learning styles in the West and among literate groups.

Literate people think in a logical, linear manner because their thinking has been so influenced by the ability to read, write, implying a learned reasoning style in line with such education. Additionally, literacy cannot be simply limited to the ability to read and write. While helpful, this skill is insufficient when reading comprehension is so important for literates. Being able to read a text, think about it, and summarize or

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<sup>17</sup> Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Known for his work on orality, Walter Ong, a Jesuit priest, historian, and author, wrote of a scale of orality and literacy. Ong demonstrated that people live on this scale anywhere from having no exposure to pictures or writing of any kind (oral) to the extremely erudite literates (literate). The Quichua people are familiar with pictures and books and even have a Bible in their own language. However, they do not rely on the printed word for communication, secular or religious, professional or lay. Hence, they would land closer to the oral end of this spectrum than the literate and are considered oral learners. For more on orality and literacy, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

paraphrase it to someone else is a skill many literate people have and take it for granted that anyone who can read and write would be able to do the same.

The definition of literacy can be extended even further to include the ways in which a person thinks. The ION states that literate learners “understand and handle information such as ideas, precepts, concepts, and principles by literate means. They tend to rely on printed material as an aid to recall.”<sup>19</sup> For literate people, “information is presented in sequential linear logic with abstract ideas, and individuals are expected to gain a significant portion of their learning on their own through written material.”<sup>20</sup>

For literate people, linear logic teaches that if A is true and B is true, then C would be the logical conclusion. Not only do literates think this way but teach the way that they think. Literates place a high value on lecture and the written word for communication purposes.

However, oral learners and communicators think in a manner based much less on sequential linear logic. For oral learners, just because A is true and B is true does not necessarily mean that C would follow. Unlike their literate counterparts who think in abstract thought, for better or worse they tend to communicate and receive truth through “concrete-functional thought. For this reason, parables and stories are highly effective in such a setting.”<sup>21</sup> Oral learners also have “a different hierarchy of values. It values narrative, not lecture. Oral cultures appreciate story. It reflects who they are and how they live. It is the common way to transmit beliefs, expected behaviors, and hopes.”<sup>22</sup> This manner of thinking has an obvious impact on the way that they will hear, understand, reflect on, and apply Scripture.

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<sup>19</sup> Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Pratt, Sills, and Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 111.

<sup>22</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 61.

Moreover, oral communicators learn by listening to people with whom they have a relationship and who they trust. Sills says that primary oral learners “learned what they know through their own personal experience or through the life skills and wisdom of people they know and trust. Instructing them using bullet points, steps in a plan, outlines, or detailed instructions is ineffective. Oral cultures are face-to-face cultures and prefer a watch-and-do method of education.”<sup>23</sup> The messengers serve as bridges between new truths and the rest of the group and these messengers often serve as mentors. In order to receive new truths, there must be trust between the mentor and the mentee. If the teacher is an outsider, then the mentor must trust the teacher and be the bridge between him or her and the group in order for the teacher’s message to be accepted. Missiologists have seen that oral cultures “tend to believe what it is told by reliable people” and “an axiom of unwavering certainty is truth equals relationship plus experience.”<sup>24</sup>

The ways in which they think will obviously impact the way that they consider practical application of Scripture. The ways they think also affect the way that they absorb new information in a way that they will commit to memory and communicate the same material to others later. If the information is to be passed down to the next “generation” of learners, then it must be correctly assimilated when it is first taught.

The history of missions demonstrates that literate missionaries believed that next to salvation, the greatest need that people had was to learn to read and write. This is evidenced by the fact that often they would establish a church and, soon thereafter, a school where they could teach their target people to become literate with the end view of reading and knowing the Bible. This practice stems from the belief that without the written word, people will not be able to learn and retain new information. However,

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<sup>23</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 177.

<sup>24</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 111. For more see, Paul Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

“studies continue to show that oral cultures accurately retain more information for longer periods of time than literates. That is because they must remember it; anything forgotten is lost forever since they cannot look back in their notebooks to refresh their memories.”<sup>25</sup>

Literate people may assume that because oral learners cannot or do not use the written word to communicate, that they must be savage. However, “far from being ignorant savages, oral societies are said to have large bodies of information regarding their past and legends in the form of stories and songs. A proper method of ministering to and among oral societies must include these same methods.”<sup>26</sup> Some may wonder how oral cultures are able to retain an abundance of information without writing it down. They do this “using various methods of telling stories such as songs, proverbs, riddles, and narrative retelling of ancient legends, the children learn what is important in their culture from their elders, and these lessons are quickly learned by heart.”<sup>27</sup> It is this method of communicating that the literate missionary must learn in order to communicate truth to oral learners.

Teaching the oral learners by traditional literate means will clearly be insufficient if the teacher hopes that the oral learners will accept the information. Given the great gap of communicating truth that exists between literate and preliterate people, the teacher must use an appropriate teaching method in order to realize long-term change with the truths he or she wishes to communicate. In the following section, appropriate teaching methods for oral learners will be considered in more detail.

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<sup>25</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 109.

<sup>27</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 115.

## Appropriate Teaching

Finding appropriate teaching methods for any specific group can be a challenge even in literate societies, whether the group be children, youth, or adults. While one may be able to teach children and adults the same material, the manner of presentation changes. Likewise, appropriate teaching methods must be employed when considering teaching oral communicators, and specifically the Quichua people of Ecuador. ION says that “current estimates indicate that around two-thirds of the world’s population are oral communicators either by necessity or by choice,” and continues, saying that “to effectively communicate with them, we must defer to their oral communication style. Our presentations must match their oral learning styles and preferences.”<sup>28</sup>

Thankfully, former missionaries like Daniel Sheard have already helped pave the way for necessary considerations in teaching oral learners. Sheard developed what he calls the “oral training technique”. He says that the “oral training technique is a group of methods used to instruct oral learners using repetition and on-the-spot verbal accountability. It involves the use of spoken teaching routines. In oral training the teacher assists the oral learner in processing through the three stages of memorization progression: acquisition, recall, and retention.”<sup>29</sup>

If teaching oral communicators is to be effective, one must learn what appropriate teaching methods look like for that context. How oral learners think, learn, communicate truth have already been considered and must be taken into account when developing an appropriate teaching method. While there are many to choose from, six helpful components to teaching oral learners will be considered in this section:

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<sup>28</sup> Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 70.

memorization, repetition, narrative, verbal accountability, volunteers, and mentor relationships.

First, memorization is helpful for all people on the literacy-orality spectrum. The Bible commands believers to memorize Scripture. Of all things to memorize, the Christian teacher should encourage and aid his or her students to memorize Scripture. “Understanding occurs when a student suddenly finds memorized data relevant in a living context. This is exactly why we are told repeatedly in Scripture to memorize, hide the words in our heart, and meditate on them.”<sup>30</sup> Specific to this project, biblical counseling relies heavily on Scripture, and this is true for many other areas of study for the believer. If the students must understand God’s Word, then they must know it. “It is for this reason that verse memorization is imperative; it is the only way they will actually have access to the exact words of God not mediated by a narrator interpreting the scriptural narrative.”<sup>31</sup>

Second, repetition is crucial for those who depend, not on the written word, but on their memory. Repetition is the means by which information can be memorized. Therefore, these two factors of memorization and repetition often overlap. Missiologists have said that “repetitive memorization remains a much-maligned skill that an incarnational teacher must reconsider. We fail our students when we take away the only verbal strategy in which they excel and replace it with several new kinds of verbal learning that are difficult for them at best.”<sup>32</sup> That is, repetitive memorization, though often rejected and replaced by more modern, Western teaching styles, is helpful and widely used in non-western learning for the purpose of memorizing information. These missiologists say that repetition involves teaching the same material “in as many different contexts as possible inside and outside the classroom until the process or the principle is

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<sup>30</sup> Judith E. Lingenfelter and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 40.

<sup>31</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 40-41.

internalized by the students.”<sup>33</sup> Sills also notes that “spaced repetition is the best teacher.”<sup>34</sup>

When working with oral learners who cannot or will not choose to read Scripture, it is important to consider how to help the students assimilate the Bible into their memory. The teacher may want to delve deeper into theological implications of passages of Scripture but will have to consider emphasizing few things of utmost importance to remember. Of those things, Scripture should be prioritized. Sheard says that “because the abundance of words tends to relativize theological teachings so that the listener often does not know what the principal thing the speaker wants his listeners to remember, it is imperative to leave the audience with a few key scriptures that are in fact, the word of God. Patterned drilling is the repetition and repeating of scripture verses. It embeds the exact word of God into the mind of the listener.”<sup>35</sup>

Third, communicating in narrative form is helpful for oral learners who think in concrete-functional thought. “If a missionary speaks in narrative, he is speaking what people live . . . . [Oral peoples] are all the more quick to perk up [when they receive narrative teaching] because they do not have a highly developed capacity to objectify their thoughts as literate people do. Also, oral peoples value repetition in a learning setting, not necessarily novelty.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, though the teacher repeats the same thought various times through narrative teaching, the oral learner will not tire of hearing the same information as it is the means by which he or she can understand and memorize the material.

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<sup>33</sup> Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 41.

<sup>34</sup> M. David Sills, “Highland Quichuas: Discovering a Culturally Appropriate Pastoral Training Model.” (PhD diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 2001), 284.

<sup>35</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 38-39.

<sup>36</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 61.

Fourth, utilizing verbal accountability throughout the teaching is helpful to ascertain that the students are following along and grasping the information. Sheard says that verbal (or oral) accountability “is in now-time; it is immediate,” and is “tantamount to putting someone on the spot. It is bold, but there is no substitute. By asking people to repeat what is said, there is vocal accountability. A structure for vocal accountability needs to be put in place so that oral learners know what is expected of them.”<sup>37</sup> There must be, therefore, less material to teach at a given time as the teacher will need to leave space to ask students to verbalize what was taught. Verbal accountability ensures that the material has been acquired and, as such, is a necessary component of teaching oral learners.

Fifth, asking for volunteers is also helpful. The teacher should ask the volunteer to repeat the material in front of the class and ask the class to listen and correct what was recited. This process is of great value for oral learners to fine tune their understanding of the material. “Whatever size the oral material is that is presented for mastery to oral learners, it is imperative to ask learners to repeat the material.”<sup>38</sup> Asking for volunteers can be a means of testing the students. “Any oral instructional method utilized should also include a time of thorough examination to determine whether the lessons have been properly learned. This...may consist of asking the learners to repeat the story.”<sup>39</sup>

Sixth, mentor relationships are best for long-term teaching. Through mentorship, the teaching will continue long after the original teacher has left, as the mentored now become the mentors. Sills notes that one of the best methods for teaching the Highland Quichua in particular is through mentoring relationships, and ideally these

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<sup>37</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 40.

<sup>38</sup> Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 40.

<sup>39</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 185.

would come in the context of relationships with other Highland Quichua pastors rather than with foreigners.<sup>40</sup> Sills continues by saying that this teaching method of “on-the-job training” must also be consistent, reminding his reader that, as has already been observed, spaced repetition is the best teacher. In order for these mentors to teach those they disciple and mentor about biblical counseling, then it is essential for them to receive the training themselves. Moreover, as they learn, it is necessary to repeat the main themes and issues of biblical counseling, for example, so that they can remember it and allow it to change their thinking.

It has been noted that “a teacher who seeks to work within the cultural context of his or her students must also employ real-life and learning-in-context activities.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, the teachers must engage the students in a ways that allow the students to learn. “The primary point of using culturally appropriate teaching techniques for primary oral learners is so they can understand, remember, and repeat the stories to others and remain faithful to the truth.”<sup>42</sup> Hence, appropriate teaching methods are needed.

### **What Must be Contextualized**

Though contextualization is not a main focus of this project, it is important to explain exactly what is contextualized, or adapted, for the appropriate teaching method. The goal of contextualization is not to change the message but how the message is communicated. The fact that so much of biblical counseling is dependent on a knowledge of Scripture and interpreting it correctly demands that these pastors and church leaders be able to do so in some form or other. As previously considered, this is a long-term process wherein Scripture memorization and mentorship are helpful.

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<sup>40</sup> Sills, “Highland Quichuas: Discovering a Culturally Appropriate Pastoral Training Model,” 280.

<sup>41</sup> Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-culturally*, 41.

<sup>42</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 186.

There are other aspects of biblical counseling that must also be considered and taught. One is theoretical and theological. The other aspect is practical. Both of these aspects form part of this project. The theoretical and theological components are found in the curriculum, which establishes a case for even considering what biblical counseling is and why it is important. The practical component is considered in the long-term ministry plan developed for the students who are favorably disposed to biblical counseling.

The purpose of this section is to indicate the main points that must be emphasized when teaching biblical counseling. There are many important issues one may wish to address when teaching theology, but, considering the oral culture context such as the Quichua specifically, one will have to decide which are most crucial that can be developed well. As one weighs which of the many beneficial theological points to include in introducing people to biblical counseling, Heath Lambert's *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* is a good guide.<sup>43</sup>

The theological component of the project encompasses six main themes that are helpful to communicate so that one understands what biblical counseling is and why it is important. Without understanding the need for biblical counseling, the practical aspects would fall on deaf ears. These themes consist of the following: what biblical counseling is, the goal of biblical counseling, why the counseling must be biblical, why it is considered counseling, the pastors' role in biblical counseling, and the church's role in biblical counseling.

When considering practical issues for incorporating biblical counseling into church ministry for the first time, Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Raju's book *The Pastor and Counseling* provides helpful guidelines.<sup>44</sup> Some of the methods that they call for are not

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<sup>43</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016). Other resources that informed the curriculum will be listed in chapter 4.

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015). Other resources that informed the long-term ministry plan

applicable to this context, and so must be excluded. There are other aspects that they consider for Western, literate style of thinking that must be adapted to the Quichua culture. Seven primary issues were considered in laying out a long-term plan. They consist of the following: study God's Word, teach the importance of biblical counseling, encourage others to participate in counseling one another, implement biblical counseling into your ministry, lead by example, provide biblical counseling, and pray for and with your church members for God's help to implement it.

Both the theological and practical components are primary issues that need to be communicated in culturally appropriate ways that oral learners could understand and accept. With this information, the hearers can be better prepared to integrate IM into their ministry practice. Mentor relationships are also incredibly important to be able to adopt IM well, and exceeds the parameters of this particular project, but the author's intent is that the material to be contextualized and taught would be repeated to the students at regular intervals, following up with them to evaluate their attitude and practice.

### **Interpersonal Ministry Was Intended for All Christians**

In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation *to everyone who believes* [emphasis added], to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Evangelical Christians believe and preach the necessity for all men to hear and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Christians today also read, preach, memorize, and meditate on Scripture. Additionally, missionaries are actively working on translating the Bible to other languages to make it more accessible to more people in the world. These facts indicate the widely held belief that its entire message is applicable to all people. By way of inference, therefore, the biblically mandated practice of IM, is also meant for all peoples. This section will seek to address

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will be listed in chapter 4.

this issue and is broken down into two parts: the original intent of Scriptural mandates for the church, including pastors, and the context of literacy in which the Scriptures were originally received.<sup>45</sup>

### **Original Intent**

Interpersonal ministry skills are transferrable and transcend literate culture because they were originally intended for all Christians. Paul's and Peter's exhortations of Acts, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Peter, considered in chapter 2 do not limit their application to only those who can read and write. In fact, in none of those passages are reading and writing mentioned for shepherding the flock of God. If one assumes literacy to mean the manner of thinking and processing information influenced by years of reading and writing (and not simply limited to only possessing the ability to read and write), then on a world-wide level there would be quite few men who qualify for the pastoral office.

The words of the Bible, then, were meant for all men, regardless of their ability to read and write. In the same way that the words penned by Paul to the Romans (or any of the other epistles addressed to other churches) were shared among the churches of his day and are considered pertinent for all Christians today, the principles found therein are also relevant to all Christians today. Included in these biblical principles are those instructions to pastors and elders along with the "one anothering" passages for all Christians.

If the words of Paul and Peter were intended for all people groups, regardless of literacy level, then it stands to reason that IM such as biblical counseling can and should be applied to any church, regardless of the cultural context. The Highland Quichua

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<sup>45</sup> The author will seek to argue that the original hearers and readers of the closed Canon of Scripture were primarily oral. Because works of literature and writings were, to some extent, part of religious and philosophical thought in the time of their writing, the majority of the original hearers and readers of biblical texts were, at best, merely functionally illiterate.

of Ecuador can be no exception to the rule of original intent of scriptural mandates and principles. If every church's membership is expected to practice "one anothering," and if every pastor is expected to shepherd the flock under his care, then the pastors and church leaders among the Highland Quichuas in Ecuador can and should practice IM such as biblical counseling as well.

### **Original Context**

Interpersonal ministry skills are transferrable and transcend literate culture because they were originally established among the original hearers and readers of the Bible, a primarily oral people. This fact is important as many people of the world today live within the same literary contexts as the people of Jesus' day. It has been suggested that "in many countries, literacy rates are still at the same levels that Jesus encountered in his ministry."<sup>46</sup> The message of the Bible, then, can be considered even more beautiful because God desires that all know his Word, whether they are literate or not. The Bible is simple enough for anyone to understand and yet complex enough for theologians to continue studying and plumbing its depths two thousand years later.

That biblical principles are able to be understood by all cultures, regardless of literacy, is important because oral cultures like the Quichua of Ecuador can, like the people of Jesus' day, implement IMs like biblical counseling in their contexts. Jesus ministered to people who were at best considered functionally illiterate. Ecclesiastical historian Carol Harrison states that "It would not be a wild overstatement to suggest that around two-thirds of the early Christian texts which we now read were originally spoken, rather than written, and were intended for hearers, rather than readers."<sup>47</sup> Sills reinforces this idea when he says, "When Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and

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<sup>46</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 181.

<sup>47</sup> Carol Harrison. *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

taught the people of his day, he did not use a highly literate education model. Less than ten percent of the people of his day were literate, so he used a method of teaching that incorporated illustrations, stories, and parables.”<sup>48</sup> Jesus knew the importance of oral communication for his hearers and taught accordingly.

Historian Stephen Young suggests credible statistics of the literacy levels of people in Jesus’ day, saying that only a very small percentage of the Jewish people would have been able to read and write with such regularity that they could be considered literate. He says that “while in a few select Greek cities the rate of literacy among adult males may have risen to as high as thirty to forty percent between 400 and 100 B.C., by the first century A.D. even there it had decreased considerably, and the rate for the general population might not have reached even ten to fifteen percent. Among Jews in Israel the percentage of literacy during this period would have been much lower, probably not much higher than three percent.”<sup>49</sup> Harrison corroborates this idea by saying that “the uneducated, illiterate early Christian (and they were the vast majority) depended primarily on words, communicated to their ears through the physical sense of hearing, as the medium through which they received God’s message, rather than, say, reading a written text with their eyes.”<sup>50</sup> By and large, the people were preliterate or functionally illiterate, and certainly would have fallen into the oral learner category.

Pieter Botha says that many have naturally assumed that the literacy rates were higher in that time period due to the existence of books and book sellers but criticizes the way that this information was previously deduced. Botha states that “popular (written) literature did not exist in antiquity; the papyri conclusively show that the ‘literary’ texts were copies of Homer and Euripides (almost exclusively). Other genres or writings were

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<sup>48</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 180.

<sup>49</sup> Stephen E. Young, *Jesus Tradition in the Apostolic Fathers* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 74-75.

<sup>50</sup> Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church*, 25.

not intended for mass consumption . . . Reading did not feature in Greco-Roman popular culture.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, people could not be considered to be literate the way that literacy has been considered here, where literates depend up on the written word for information and communication and think in linear logic.

Kelly Iverson makes a good clarifying point about literacy in the time of Jesus when he says the following:

Jesus, the disciples and his early followers lived in a milieu that was largely illiterate, and though literary texts were important in the culture of late Western antiquity, the primary means of communication was through the spoken word. Email, internet blogs and daily newspapers were not the media employed for social networking or information exchange. Christianity was birthed and its traditions first circulated in a predominantly oral culture.<sup>52</sup>

Ultimately, one must accept that though there were some who could read and write, and who possibly depended upon the written word to assimilate and remember information, the vast majority of people in the time of Jesus and the apostles lived in a low-literacy culture. “First-century Palestine was largely an oral culture and Jesus ministered and trained leaders according to that cultural reality. Jesus did not need the Western model of education to train leaders. This should be an encouragement to us as the cultures of the world are varied and, as has been noted, frequently nonliterate.”<sup>53</sup>

The point, then, is that the Quichua pastors and church leaders who also fall into a nonliterate, oral, or preliterate category have much in common with the people who originally received the Scriptures of the New Testament, wherein there are specific examples of how Christians should practice IMs like biblical counseling with one another. The thought processes, the learning styles, and the teaching methods that impact them are similar for the Quichua and the original hearers of the New Testament writings.

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<sup>51</sup> Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, Performance Biblical Criticism Series 5 (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2012), 40.

<sup>52</sup> Kelly Iverson, “Orality and the Gospels,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 8, no. 1 (2009): 71-72.

<sup>53</sup> Sills, *Reaching and Teaching the Highland Quichua*, 109.

Therefore, the implication is that all people, regardless of literacy level can apply these IM principles.

### **Application for All**

The original intent and context imply that all peoples can be taught to incorporate IM skills into their lives and ministries. Because the original recipients of what is now considered canonical Scripture were primarily an oral culture, it stands to reason that the biblical “one another” passages were meant for all believers, not only those who would be classified as literate.

Moreover, because the biblical texts were often read aloud by the more literate among them, Christians were without excuse to not participate in IMs now more commonly referred to as biblical counseling. It logically follows, then, that Christians today, especially pastors, who fall into the same oral culture category would also have no excuse for not participating in biblical counseling.

Though this project specifically addresses the need and opportunity for integrating biblical counseling into the Highland Quichua churches, the principles extend far beyond this people group to all of the oral learners of the world. Here, Quichuas are representative of many people groups in the world today. As such, there is great potential for local churches worldwide to establish IMs like biblical counseling, whether formally or informally.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, several theoretical and practical issues have been addressed for establishing IMs like biblical counseling in new contexts. IMs can be established in oral learner contexts and is a can be applied universally because the principles apply to all people, regardless of literacy levels. Through appropriate teaching methods and leading by example, biblical counseling ministries can be established in places where it is unknown, even among the preliterate. Biblical counseling can be established in all places

because Scripture teaches that all Christians are to practice it. Moreover, there is a strong argument that the preliterate can also integrate biblical counseling into ministry practice because the original hearers of the Bible lived in a similar context regarding literacy. Therefore, Quichua pastors and church leaders of Ecuador can and should adopt the IM practice of biblical counseling, and by adopting these practices they can benefit the church of Christ and seek to increase his glory in the world.

## CHAPTER 4

### TRAINING PRELITERATE QUICHUA PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING

This project is a case study in equipping Quichua pastors and church leaders in biblical counseling. Part of equipping involves teaching and training. I set out to implement my project, equipping these pastors and church leaders through teaching, keeping in mind the long-term goal of seeing the indigenous churches of the Highland Quichuas adopt and integrate biblical counseling. Due to the unexpected effects of COVID-19, I found that this project became much more limited in its scope and reach. Ecuador enforced very strict measures in order to try to avoid the spread of the virus, leading to an overflow of patients in ICU hospital beds. These measures included no inter-provincial transportation, early curfews, no gatherings of over ten people, restricted driving days, mask use, gloves, temperature checks, and the use of alcohol or antibacterial gel, to name a few. These factors affected the ability and desire to gather together for teaching. Additionally, and more importantly, a respected and beloved pastor passed away unexpectedly due to this virus. Therefore, all trainings were suspended, and this project came to a standstill.

However, governmental regulations eventually relaxed somewhat, and the opportunity to gather again became realistic. As the restrictions relaxed and as some of the pastors felt more comfortable in traveling, I was pleased to be able to invite the students to Reaching and Teaching International Ministry's (RTIM) training center. There, I was able to teach a handful of students interested in learning more about this subject of biblical counseling.

This chapter will examine the three phases of executing the project goals

detailed in chapter 1. The first section of this chapter, which details the first phase of the project, includes the preparation for implementing the project. The first phase was perhaps the most time-consuming part of the project and consists of the preparation of the pre-training interview questions, administering those interview questions, evaluating the answers, developing the curriculum, requesting the expert panel to evaluate the curriculum, and revising the curriculum so that it was ready to be taught. The second section discusses phase two, the actual implementation of the project. Phase two involved teaching the curriculum to the pastors and church leaders and administering a post-training interview. Finally, the third section discusses the third phase, which concerned the follow-up with those men I taught, the preparation of the long-term ministry plan, and the delivery of the long-term ministry plan to the students.

### **Phase 1: Preparation**

Phase one involved the various components necessary for me to be prepared to put the project into place. This phase included the preparation of interview questions, the development of the curriculum, and coordinating the week of teaching. In this section, I also discuss the various steps, points, and processes of each component.

#### **Pre-training Interviews**

In the first phase, I began by reviewing the interview questions I previously created. These questions were necessary to evaluate the students' knowledge of and feelings toward biblical counseling, both before and after teaching the curriculum. The interview would require questions specific to their cultural context. Moreover, the study would have to include questions that would allow me to understand what they believed about biblical counseling or secular psychology so as to direct the teaching to the correct biblical understandings of these issues.

The interview questions covered six different categories important to the topic of biblical counseling. First, there were questions about the role of pastors within the

church. I wanted to ask this to gain an understanding of what they believe the pastor's primary responsibility to be. A second category was that of the importance and sufficiency of the Bible for problems today. It seemed necessary to know whether they believed it was powerful and practical enough to help suffering people. A third category dealt with whether the student felt prepared to provide counseling to others. If they, leaders in their churches, do not feel equipped to do so, then it is unlikely they would offer biblical counsel to those in need or lead others to do so. A fourth category had to do with psychology and whether it should have a place in church ministry. The term psychology is not unfamiliar to them as secular psychology has grown in popularity throughout Ecuador. A fifth category regarded church members' participation in biblical counseling. The sixth and last category dealt with how they felt about counseling in general, as the hope of this project is to leave the students feeling more positively inclined towards adopting biblical counseling as a part of their personal and church ministries.

As has been previously noted, literacy was an essential aspect to consider for this project. In particular, the issue of literacy would affect both the interviews and teaching. Therefore, I originally considered asking what level of education each participant had received or how they felt about reading and writing in order to determine the literacy category into which they might be placed. However, it was determined that those questions could lead the participant to feel somehow lacking or that it might cause him to feel demeaned or ashamed. Therefore, based on my experience with Quichua pastors, and given the information on literacy previously considered in this project that established this group as preliterate or functionally illiterate at best, I opted to teach the material in a manner consistent with oral learners.

Following the preparation of the interview questions and receiving basic feedback, I prepared to administer them to the students who would participate in the course I would later teach. This preparation included communicating to the students that

there would be a time of training and asking who would be able to attend, in order to have an idea of who would participate in the study. Though I attempted to find out who would be able to attend, the answer was unreliable. The culture of the Quichua students is such that an affirmative answer is nearly always given so as not to offend the person who has invited them by turning him down. However, at this point I had done all I could in preparation for the interviews.

Once I had sufficiently prepared and as the students arrived at the training center, I sat down one-on-one with each student who was to receive the teaching to orally administer the interview questions. My hope was to administer many more interviews than was possible. As mentioned earlier, COVID-19 had a negative impact on the scope of the project. Normally, there would have been close to twenty students. However, there were only five that I was able to interview and teach.<sup>1</sup>

It was difficult to communicate to these Quichua men why I was interviewing them, something we had not previously done in RTIM's trainings. They are unaccustomed to such seemingly formal interactions and a bit wary of procedures with which they are unfamiliar. While they were willing and patient to sit and respond to my questions, it was difficult to get them to respond to the questions whose answers correlated to the Likert scale. They did not fully understand, and they felt uncomfortable when I pressed them to make some kind of firm answer requiring them to reply positively or negatively in response to a given statement. Making such hard and fast judgments, based on individual thought, is uncommon; hence, the difficulty.

After the initial interview, I analyzed the students' answers to find a pattern of beliefs and attitudes regarding biblical counseling. Their responses led me to believe that very little formal counseling was being given by the pastors and even less by their church

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<sup>1</sup> For clarification, eight students arrived for the training, but only five were eligible to be included in this project's focus and study. The same five were initially interviewed, taught (along with the other three), and interviewed again.

members. I will give an account of their responses to the general categories I mentioned before respectively.

First, I noted that their general perception of the primary role of pastor was to preach. This response was unsurprising and is in keeping with much of other missionaries' experiences in ministry here, along with my own. Sadly, the idea of preaching within the context of shepherding the flock has not been established here and for that reason I have sought to emphasize that idea in the curriculum.

Second, I found that they place great value on the Bible and consider it to be sufficient for people's sufferings and problems today. This finding is unsurprising as many Quichua pastors have been influenced by Catholicism (either having been converted from Catholicism or whose mentors were), which teaches that everything that pertains to the church is sacrosanct. This high view of Scripture would be a natural carryover from Catholic practices and backgrounds. Moreover, as Christian leaders, they have come to value the Bible on their own and have seen the power of God working through his Scriptures.

Third, the students seemed to indicate a lower level of confidence their own ability to counsel others well from the Bible. This fact, too, seemed unsurprising when there seems to be such unfamiliarity with hermeneutical principles. They may have a good number of Bible passages memorized, but the ability to use those passages to appropriately point people to change in Jesus is and will continue to be a difficult task. Therefore, the curriculum touches briefly on the need for good hermeneutical studies. To that end, I also gave the students a bookmark that lists the seven questions used in Matt Roger's Seven Arrows Bible study method, which utilizes a series of arrows in various shapes and directions to help the student easily recall the respective questions (e.g., the question "What does this passage say about God?" is coupled with an arrow pointing

upwards).<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, I found that many of the students placed great confidence in what they understood as secular psychology, though not many could articulate what it actually does. The cultural expectation that problems are solved using modern psychological methods had reached even to these preliterate leaders. One student even professed to have attended a psychology class, the principles of which he endeavored to use in his ministry when dealing with troubled people. For that reason, I briefly distinguished between psychologists, Christian counselors, and biblical counselors in the training.

Fifth, nearly every student remarked that the members of their churches rarely, if ever, practiced biblical counseling with one another. Again, this response was unsurprising. Sadly, my experience with the Quichua people leads me to say that they are not known for kindness or giving wise, biblically based counsel to others, even those suffering unjustly. This area is where I am most passionate for the church in Ecuador, as I understand from Scripture that God is also passionate about believers counseling believers. For this “one anothering” to happen, however, the leaders must first understand and practice it and so I included this idea in the curriculum.

Sixth, they believed that counseling was useful, but in each case the student framed the need for counseling from the secular psychology sense of the term. This sentiment has been so pervasive in Ecuador that when one refers to counseling, even biblical counseling, one must define the terms so as to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, the curriculum seeks to address this issue by emphasizing what biblical counseling is, is not, and why it is important.

### **Preparing the Curriculum**

In addition to preparing and administering the interview questions, in this first

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<sup>2</sup> Matt Rogers and Donny Mathis, *Seven Arrows: Aiming Bible Readers in the Right Direction* (Spring Hill, TN: Rainer Publishing, 2017).

phase I prepared the curriculum I planned to teach.<sup>3</sup> The curriculum was divided into six lessons, each one building on the premise of the preceding lesson. In chapter 3, I explain that the curriculum covered the following topics: what biblical counseling is, the goal of biblical counseling, why the counseling must be biblical, why it is considered counseling, the pastors' role in biblical counseling, and the church's role in biblical counseling.

A combination of principles and ideas based on various books written by biblical counselors formed the foundation of the curriculum.<sup>4</sup> These books include Heath Lambert's *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, which helped to provide the bulk of the theological basis.<sup>5</sup> Another resource that informed some of the curriculum was Paul David Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*.<sup>6</sup> In that book, Tripp helps to layout the more interpersonal nature of biblical counseling and the central issue of heart change for the glory of God. A third book that helped form the curriculum is John MacArthur's *Biblical Counseling*, that lays out the differences between biblical counseling and other secular alternatives.<sup>7</sup> One other helpful book was David Powlison's *Speaking Truth in Love*, in which he teaches that counselors must know and love Scripture well in order to point others to the hope it provides.<sup>8</sup> One last book that was helpful was Paul Tautges' *Counseling One Another*, that emphasizes the need for believers to counsel other

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<sup>3</sup> See appendixes 6-11.

<sup>4</sup> The preparation of this curriculum was aided by the use of the following books listed in this paragraph. The reason for limiting the assisting resources to these five books is that I feel each of them best encapsulates the general ideas that I sought to include in the curriculum in a comprehensive manner: theology, interpersonal ministry targeting heart changes, distinguishing biblical counseling from other forms of counseling, the necessity of Scripture, and the role of believers in counseling.

<sup>5</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005).

<sup>8</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

believers.<sup>9</sup>

My goal in developing this curriculum was to cover the most important information for biblical counseling, allowing time for continuous review, illustrations, testimonies, and repetition. As previously considered in chapter 3, the best way to teach oral communicators (or the preliterate or functionally illiterate) is through spaced repetition, offering concrete ideas rather than linear, logical abstract thought. Therefore, my hope is that the way I developed the curriculum could conceivably be used to teach biblical counseling in various preliterate societies.

The curriculum was written and remains in outline form so as to avoid the western tendency of mere information transfer. Rather, it served merely as a guide for the teacher to be able to engage the students, leaving space for repetition, testimonies, commentary or questions. As such, it is not a manuscript but still contains the pertinent information for basic instruction in biblical counseling.

After I developed the curriculum, I submitted the six lessons to review by an expert panel of six men. The expert panel was formed by a group of men who have all had experience in teaching the Quichua people. The expert panel was extremely helpful in offering suggestions for improving the teaching material and ensuring that it was appropriate for this context. A difficulty I did not consider beforehand was the knowledge or lack thereof the panel members would have of biblical counseling and whether their own views (e.g., psychology in the church) would be at odds with what biblical counseling teaches. However, the panel members are trained in sound theology and are familiar with Scripture. So, while they are not necessarily trained in biblical counseling, they have a solid theological framework from which they could critique the curriculum.

As can be noted in appendix 2, there were nine components of the curriculum

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2016).

that the expert panel was requested to evaluate. While each of these components will not be considered here, I will point out the areas where some members of the expert panel indicated the need for improvement.<sup>10</sup> There were three specific areas where they indicated the need for improvement: the theses of each lesson are clear, the lessons contain points of practical application, and the material is sufficiently thorough.

First, in the area regarding the clarity of the theses of each lesson, a panel member suggested I more clearly define what is the goal or main point of each lesson. Therefore, I gave each section a heading that I would explain while teaching in order to ground the students in the main idea of the lesson. The main ideas would naturally be repeated throughout the teaching of each lesson.

The second area that needed improvement was the need to include more points of practical application. The suggestions and examples of aspects to include were very helpful. However, the practical points in the curriculum serve more to illustrate the theoretical and theological *basis* for biblical counseling than in giving practical *tips* for counseling. The suggestions were taken into consideration and later included in the development of the long-term ministry plan for these pastors and leaders.

Third, regarding whether the material is sufficiently thorough, a panel member commented expressing concern that mention should be made about the “supervision” or care the pastor or counselor and (possibly) his family would need. This issue, too, touched on the practical aspects of biblical counseling. Therefore, while incredibly important to communicate to those new to biblical counseling, it was added to the long-term ministry plan but not specifically addressed in the curriculum.

Of the other components that formed part of the evaluation questions, I was most anxious to receive feedback for whether the material could be contextually adapted

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<sup>10</sup> For the full remarks offered by the members of the expert panel regarding the curriculum, see appendix 4.

for the target audience. Thankfully, all of the panel members responded in the affirmative, that it was indeed exemplary in its ability to be applied to this particular context of the Quichua pastors and church leaders. Though the material would need to be taught appropriately, I was encouraged that they felt it was not too complex to teach to this group of students.

Upon receiving the evaluations from the expert panel, I was able to make the necessary revisions. I spent time taking their suggestions into consideration, weighing them against the other panel members' opinions along with what I have learned through personal study of biblical counseling. The curriculum presented in this project is the finalized, post-evaluation version of the material that I taught.

### **Phase Two: Implementation**

Phase two involved the various components necessary for the implementation of the project. This phase included the teaching of the curriculum as well as the interviews administered after the training. As before, in this section, I also discuss the various steps and processes of each component.

#### **Teaching the Curriculum**

After reviewing the interview questions, preparing the curriculum, submitting the curriculum to the expert panel for evaluations, and revising the curriculum based on the suggestions of the expert panel, I was prepared for the second phase of the project. In phase two, I was able to implement the project by teaching the curriculum I had developed. This part of the project was what I most anticipated as I would be able to interact with these students and seek to help them to see the value of biblical counseling, not in theory only, but as something they themselves could put into practice in their own ministry contexts.

Having previously coordinated this training with the students, I taught the course in the training center in the community of Sisid Anejo in Ingapirca, Ecuador. The

church Cristo Rey in Sisid Anejo is home to the training facility that RTIM uses and was where I administered the interviews and taught the biblical counseling curriculum. There are several classrooms and dormitories for teachers and students, a kitchen, cafeteria, and worship center—everything a group needs for overnight on-campus trainings.

Eight men arrived for the training along with one woman to this training center. Though all eight people were present for the duration and participated in the class, not all are counted in this project as some of them are not involved in church leadership or pastoral ministry and fall outside the bounds of this project's goals. The students represented at least five different churches in Ecuador.

The training was given over the course of six half-day seminars. During the training, the students were encouraged to participate through asking questions, offering commentary or testimonies, and repeating the material as a group and by volunteers. When not in the classroom, I would often have opportunities for personal conversations with the students and was able to refer back to the material when discussing problems or struggles. These conversations were an unanticipated benefit to teaching the students at the training center.

During the training, we discussed important counseling-related issues present in their churches, demonstrating the need that pastors have in providing biblical counsel to their church members. The testimonials they offered as well as the ones I provided served to reinforce many of the ideas addressed in the curriculum. The students were quick to learn the material and were able to recite what was taught back to me. At times, the other students would correct any students who volunteered to summarize the material.

The students most engaged with lesson five, the pastor's responsibility in biblical counseling. I was offered difficult examples where they were faced with issues with which their church members were struggling. These issues ranged from interpersonal issues, health, financial and other issues. The students were quick to agree that the pastor's responsibility includes shepherding and not merely preaching.

## Post-training Interviews

After the teaching was concluded, I was able to give a post-training interview with those who had participated in the course. The post-training interview repeated all the questions from the first interview and included a few additional ones as well. The post-training interview included new questions that sought to evaluate the students' general feeling towards biblical counseling.

After the course was taught and the post-training interviews given, I spent time evaluating the difference in the understanding and attitudes that the men had towards biblical counseling. The students' general attitude towards secular psychology seemed to diminish, while the need and desire for more regular counseling to take place between pastor and church members as well as believers counseling believers seemed to grow. The students also seemed to demonstrate a greater confidence in their own ability to counsel others from the Bible. It would be prudent to remark further on the differences that I observed here. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the interview results numerically by participant (where 1 represents strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree). One can see the difference in the before and after responses in the totals, highlighted in Table 3.

Table 1. Pre-training interview results

<b>Pre-training Interview Results (5 participants)</b>										
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q5</b>	<b>Q6</b>	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	6	1	1	6	6	6	1	6	6	<b>39</b>
<b>2</b>	5	1	2	6	5	5	1	5	6	<b>36</b>
<b>3</b>	5	2	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	<b>32</b>
<b>4</b>	1	1	3	4	2	3	1	4	5	<b>24</b>
<b>5</b>	6	1	3	6	6	6	1	5	6	<b>40</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	

Table 2. Post-training interview results

<b>Post-training Interview Results (5 participants)</b>										
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q5</b>	<b>Q6</b>	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	6	2	3	6	6	6	2	6	6	<b>43</b>
<b>2</b>	6	2	3	6	6	6	3	5	6	<b>43</b>
<b>3</b>	5	3	3	5	4	4	3	4	6	<b>37</b>
<b>4</b>	2	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	6	<b>44</b>
<b>5</b>	6	3	5	6	6	6	4	6	6	<b>48</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	

Table 3. Pre and post-training interview response totals by participant

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Pre-training</b>	<b>Post-training</b>
<b>1</b>	39	43
<b>2</b>	36	43
<b>3</b>	32	37
<b>4</b>	24	44
<b>5</b>	40	48

The pre and post-training interview results were taken and computed with a t-Test to evaluate the statistical differences between them to identify whether there was any significant change in thinking due to the training that the students received. Table 3 indicates an increase in results for each participant after the training, indicating that the training was successful. This information is further confirmed by the t-Test seen in Table 4.

Table 4. T-Test: paired two sample for dependent means (totals)

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>43</b>
Variance	42.2	15.5
Observations	5	5
Pearson Correlation	0.312800841	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	4	
<b>t Stat</b>	<b>3.047190789</b>	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.019066432	
t Critical one-tail	2.131846786	
<b>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</b>	<b>0.038132864</b>	
<b>t Critical two-tail</b>	<b>2.776445105</b>	

The T-Test results are helpful to see that there was a positive change in thinking among the participants. The teaching of doctrine to the select group of median adults made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge ( $t_{(4)} = 3.047$ ,  $p < .038$ ). The T-Test is limited to the Likert scale statements of the interview questions but is corroborated by the other open-ended questions. The responses will be explained in more detail in the following pages.

The students' responses to the post-training interview questions indicated an overall positive response to the training. The responses should be considered by the various sections that formed the interview questions. These sections are as follows: questions based on the Likert scale, open-ended questions shared between pre and post-training interviews, and those questions limited to the post-training interviews.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For detailed answers to the interview questions, see appendix 2.

**The first of these sections includes the Likert scale statements.** All of these statements that the students rated yielded a positive change in the post-training interview. The most successful changes (where at least 60 percent of the participants positively changed their responses) are seen in statements two, five, six, and seven.

Statement two, which reads, “the pastor’s primary job is not to preach,” three of the five participants indicated a change in belief regarding his job. Before the training, the general belief among the participants is that preaching is the pastor’s primary responsibility. One of the emphases of the training was to articulate that preaching is an integral part of pastoring but cannot be considered the primary responsibility. The idea of pastoring the flock must extend beyond preaching on Sundays and incorporate personal spiritual care, including biblical counseling when needed.

The fifth statement is another in which the students expressed a positive change in thinking. This statement says, “I feel confident that I can counsel another person from God’s Word.” Again, three out of five students indicated that they felt more confident that they could counsel others. I desired this response when I created the curriculum and sought to incorporate some practical elements in teaching that would help them to feel more prepared to counsel others.

Statement six also yielded three positive changes among the participants’ responses. This statement reads, “I feel equipped to train my church members to counsel others from God’s Word.” I was surprised to see these results as the curriculum did not focus much on equipping others. However, if the participants feel confident that they can counsel others, then it stands to reason they may feel equipped to teach others to do so.

The seventh statement indicated the greatest change among all of the participants. This statement says, “psychology should not be a part of the church ministry.” Four of the five participants’ attitudes towards psychology changed after the training. Prior to the training, these students believed in the importance and priority of psychology in the church, and after the training they indicated that they felt that it should

not be a part of church ministry. This change reflected so much more than the idea of psychology and represented in many ways the new understanding of biblical counseling and its value to the church in place of secular psychological methods.

**The second section of the interview questions included open-ended questions that were shared among the pre and post-training interviews.** This section includes five questions. However, only three of these were applicable to the post-training interview. The applicable questions ask the students what it means to counsel someone from God's Word, who should participate in counseling people from God's Word, and what place psychology should have in the church.

Question one asked the participants to define what it means to counsel someone from the Bible. At least three of the answers were vague and general and indicated that there was no clear understanding of this concept. In all three of those instances, there was a positive change in that they could each state what they thought biblical counsel is. Whereas before there was no clarity, after the training they were able to somewhat define counseling as "helping a person in need," "restoring the person," or "being an example to someone to have hope and trust in Jesus Christ."

Question four asked who should participate in providing biblical counsel, and the answers here indicate some positive change. Two of the students changed their responses after the training. Before the training, these students said that either pastors or leaders only should counsel. After the training, one of these said the pastor and a deacon. It may be only a small change, but it is significant that this responsibility is now not only limited to the pastor in his mind. The other participant stated after the training that all Christians should counsel each other.

Question five asked about the place of psychology in the church. This question repeats statement seven in the Likert scale section. The purpose in repeating it was to allow the students an opportunity to expound on their answers. Before the training, all

five stated that psychology should have some place within the church as a ministry. After the training, four stated that it should not have a place in the church. This response agrees with the responses in the Likert scale section.

**The third section of the interview questions included open-ended questions limited to use for the post-training interviews, as listed above.** These questions were designed to analyze the students' overall acceptance and feeling towards biblical counseling as a valid and relevant ministry to their contexts. The students responded positively to all five questions. The new questions are as follows:

1. Will you seek to implement biblical counseling as a part of your church's ministry?
2. Do you feel equipped to counsel others biblically?
3. Name one to three ways you plan to implement biblical counseling in your church.
4. What is your overall attitude toward biblical counseling?
5. How can your church best develop interpersonal ministries?

For the first question, all five of the participants indicated that they would seek to implement biblical counseling in their churches. Likewise, all five participants indicated that they felt equipped to counsel others biblically. This question was somewhat of a repetition to statement five in the Likert scale section and was intended to give the participants an opportunity to expound on their answers. Here, all five students said yes and in the Likert scale section all five also indicated yes (including agree somewhat, agree, and strongly agree).

Question three yielded an interesting result in that of the ways that the participants planned to implement biblical counseling two main themes presented themselves. First, three students indicated the need to equip or teach their church members about biblical counseling. Second, two students indicated the need to proactively offer biblical counseling to those in their churches. One can conclude from this question that the participants were positively inclined to incorporate biblical

counseling by the evidence of these practical approaches to do so.

The fourth question truly answers one of the main goals of this project, which was to leave the participants feeling encouraged to adopt biblical counseling as an interpersonal ministry of their churches. All five participants indicated that they felt that biblical counseling was good, that they were in favor of it, and that they should implement it. That all five responded in this way agrees with the response to statement ten of the Likert scale, indicating that biblical counseling is important. This response is exactly what I desired both for these students and their churches.

The fifth and last question asked how their churches could develop interpersonal ministries, and the answers were interesting. Three responses indicated again the need for pastors and leaders to equip and train the church members in biblical counseling. Another three responses stated that the church should practice biblical counseling, seeking out participants in the church.

Overall, the responses were positive, and the open-ended questions give evidence of the changes in the Likert scale responses. The T-Test responses from Table 4 reflect the same changes in attitude and thinking reflected in the open-ended questions. Therefore, through these additional questions, the students indicated a change in thinking that reflected the fact that they learned correct doctrine through the training they received in biblical counseling.

### **Phase Three: Following Up**

In phase three, I developed a long-term ministry plan geared to help these Quichua pastors and church leaders, providing specific action steps to integrate biblical counseling into their existing church ministries. As the curriculum focused on the need and opportunity for establishing biblical counseling into existing personal and church ministries for the Quichua pastors and church leaders, there was little in the way of practical application for them. Therefore, my intention was to provide these pastors with

information that could help them in adopting this type of IM.

As stated in chapter 3, the ministry plan included the following concepts: study God's Word, teach the importance of biblical counseling, encourage others to participate in counseling one another, implement biblical counseling into your ministry, lead by example, provide biblical counseling, and pray for and with your church members for God's help to implement it.

Once I developed the long-term ministry plan, I submitted it to the same expert panel and received their critique and suggestions for how to improve it.<sup>12</sup> There were five main areas of focus for the long-term ministry evaluation. These members responded to the areas of evaluation with constructive criticism where necessary and positive reinforcement of the ideas and principles with which they agreed that were presented in the ministry plan. While the responses to all of these will not be discussed here, the areas they felt could be improved will be considered.<sup>13</sup> Their evaluations showed that there were two main areas that needed improvement.

The first area for improvement dealt with whether the plan was appropriately contextualized to the target group. One member suggested that I consider their cultural bent to lean on the wisdom of their elders when considering counseling in the Quichua context. Another member suggested that the material was broader and less contextualized than the curriculum, meaning that it could be applied to a larger audience. The third member also noted the need to adjust the material to be more contextualized but stated that as it would be translated it would naturally be more contextualized.

The second area was in reference to whether the plan provides for various counseling resources. One member indicated that there simply are not many resources for

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<sup>12</sup> The finalized, post-evaluation long-term ministry plan can be found in appendixes 14-20.

<sup>13</sup> For the full remarks offered by the members of the expert panel regarding the long-term ministry plan, see appendix 13.

this group, given culture and language barriers, and that the best resources for them would be other pastors. This helpful comment led me to encourage them to seek out, meet, and imitate other pastors who are faithfully implementing IMs like biblical counseling in to their personal and church ministries. Hopefully, the long-term ministry plan itself would serve as an initial resource for these pastors and church leaders until such a time as more resources are developed for this specific group of oral learners.

After receiving their evaluations, I revised the ministry plan based on the suggestions and finalized the plan. Again, I first weighed the panel members' different opinions against each other and took into consideration my own understanding of the target culture, oral cultures, and biblical counseling to afford the greatest success in the finalizing of the long-term ministry plan.

In order to disseminate the plan to these men, I needed to use a means of recording the information and distributing it in a way that would not presuppose literacy. Therefore, I contextualized the ministry plan in the form of a series of videos that I burned to DVDs and gave to the men. I also uploaded these videos to a YouTube channel that those more familiar with social media could access. Additionally, I took the audio from the video recordings and loaded it onto small MP3 players that I could give to those who would not be able to access either DVD or the internet.

These videos were recorded in Spanish, as most Quichua men are necessarily bilingual, speaking Spanish and Quichua. Although they are bilingual, Quichua remains their first and heart language. As a future goal that goes beyond the parameters of this project, I will seek to have the videos dubbed or re-recorded in Quichua for the further benefit of these students. Due to time, pandemic, and translator limitations, I personally recorded the long-term ministry plan in Spanish only. My hope is that the Spanish version will be more versatile and applicable to groups other than the Quichua as well.

By distributing the material in this way, I was able to avoid using literate-dependent means (written material) and give them the teaching in a way that they could

access and refer to again later if necessary or desired. While this method of delivery may have been sufficient, I desired to ensure that they had a general idea of what it included. Therefore, I sought to encourage them by also going over the general points of the ministry plan in person.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, this project had three phases for leading the students to feel more encouraged to adopt biblical counseling as a practice in ministry, and included preparation, implementation, and follow up. The goal of this project was primarily to see a marked, positive change in the students' perspective in favor of adopting biblical counseling into their personal and church ministries. Beyond the direct impact the training that this project had on the pastors and church leaders who attended the training, my hope is that this will have a lasting effect on the church among the Quichua of Ecuador as members begin to counsel one another from the Bible.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

To culminate the presentation of this project, this chapter will serve to evaluate the project overall, considering seven different aspects. These seven aspects of evaluation are divided into four different categories. The first category seeks to evaluate the project and goals of this project. The second category will interact with the strengths and weaknesses of this project. The third category considers that which I would do differently were I to repeat this project. The fourth and last category deals with general reflections on the entire project.

My hope is that this conclusion will serve as a help to others who may wish to engage the Quichua or other preliterate cultures with biblical counseling. I wish to demonstrate helpful components of the project that could be repeated with good results as well as aspects to avoid in the future. Not only do I hope to help others, but this evaluation can also help me as I continue to work with the Quichua pastors and church leaders, reminding me of the successes and any disappointments of this project.

#### **Evaluation of Purpose and Goals**

In this section, I will evaluate the purpose and goals for this project that were originally stated in chapter 1. In order to evaluate the purpose and goals, I will take into consideration the results of the pre and post-training interviews. These interviews will demonstrate changes, if any, in the students' understanding and attitude towards biblical counseling.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of pre and post-training interview responses, see appendix 2.

## **Purpose**

The stated purpose of this project is to train pastors and church leaders among the preliterate culture of the Highland Quichua people group of Southern Ecuador to implement biblical counseling in their current ministry contexts. This purpose was chosen because there has been a lack of training in the area of biblical counseling worldwide, and especially among oral learners like the Quichua. My desire has been to change that and offer training in this area of study.

The need that these leaders have to receive training in biblical counseling reflects a much greater need throughout the church in oral cultures because the leaders are representative of the people overall. As seen in chapter 2, the leaders set the pattern of living and behavior for their congregations. If these leaders remain unequipped in biblical counseling, then the majority, if not all, of their church members will also remain unequipped in this area.

If there is to be a positive change towards adopting interpersonal ministries (IM) like biblical counseling, there must first be an understanding of what it is and why it is important. The way to correct this lack of misunderstanding is through equipping that, as was mentioned in chapter 4, requires teaching and training. Hence, the project sought to provide training in biblical counseling for these men.

The interviews revealed the need for a change in thinking regarding counseling, what it is and why it is important. The students' answers were not necessarily surprising, but still indicated to me that offering them training on biblical counseling was a good idea. At the very least, it could cause them to consider their own perspectives about the pastor, the church, God's Word, secular psychology, and other aspects addressed in the training.

As I evaluate the project's purpose, insofar as the need exists for training in biblical counseling, the project's purpose was sufficient for what I hope to see long-term in the Quichua churches. As RTIM often provides training to these students, it was

natural to think of providing training to them in a manner consistent with previous trainings. The training afforded me an opportunity to invest the teaching in more individuals, who will hopefully invest that teaching in the lives of their church members and see a more favorable attitude adopted for biblical counseling as a result.

However, the project's purpose was possibly too broad to see any lasting change in the short duration of the project. The project sought to equip as many of RTIM's students as possible. Perhaps this goal was rather ambitious. It may have been better to focus the study on one individual, hoping to see some shift in thinking, possibly even a greater shift than was seen with the students who attended the training, rather than seeking to engage a number of students with biblical counseling.

## **Goals**

In order for this project to be implemented, there was need for objective goals in the process. There are five stated goals for this project. In this section, I will consider and evaluate each goal as it sought to fulfill the project's overall purpose.

The first goal was to assess the current levels of knowledge and practices of biblical counseling among Quichua pastors and church leaders. This assessment was done via pre-training interviews with the participants. Whereas I might have been tempted to include any number of irrelevant topics in the training curriculum, these answers helped me to establish what would be most useful to include in it, and I deem this goal to be a necessary and useful step in this project.

The interviews included a combination of statements the students would grade based on the Likert scale and a series of open-ended questions. This combination proved necessary as the open-ended questions allowed the students to qualify some of his answers from the Likert scale. Taking information from both into account helps to provide a better understanding of what the students know and believe regarding biblical counseling.

The second goal was to develop a curriculum to teach Quichua pastors and church leaders biblical counseling and its methodology. This goal was achieved by use of the interview questions as well as the expert panel's input. This goal seems to me to be necessary as well, as it is always important to prepare for teaching a course, outlining the material in a way that can best address the important issues the teacher wishes to communicate. Given that I, the teacher, am a literate person and the students are oral learners, I did have to ensure that the curriculum was not in manuscript form, but left in a general outline to help me not be tied to the notes, but to use them merely as a guide.

The second goal stated that it would be considered successfully met when ninety percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level. According to the evaluation of the expert panel eighty-nine percent of the material was at the "exemplary" level, nine percent was at the "sufficient" level, and two percent was at the "requires attention" level. Therefore, this goal can be considered successfully met.

The third goal was to increase participants' knowledge of biblical counseling. This goal was achieved through teaching the curriculum of the second goal, offered to the students at the training center mentioned in chapter 4. This goal seems to me the most essential of the five. Even if I did not know what these men believed about biblical counseling, if I hoped to help them understand and adopt the concepts of it, then I would need to teach them and offer training.

As noted in Table 4 of chapter 4, the results of the T-Test demonstrate the effectiveness of the training, due to the change in their doctrinal knowledge. Moreover, the open-ended questions serve to confirm the change in doctrinal knowledge. In order for students to be encouraged to implement biblical counseling, they must have an accurate understanding of what it is and why it is important. Therefore, I conclude that this goal is good and necessary.

The fourth goal was to encourage participants to integrate biblical counseling into their church ministries. This goal spans both the curriculum and the long-term

ministry plan for the pastors and church leaders. This encouragement offered was given in three ways in both the training and the ministry plan. First, I sought to help them see the expectation that God has for his church to practice biblical counseling. Second, I tried to demonstrate the need that people have to be pointed to hope in the gospel as seen in the Bible. Third, I created a ministry plan that they could use to be reminded of the need for biblical counseling along with explanations of how to practice it.

This fourth goal stated that it would be successfully met with seventy percent of the seminar participants expressed a positive motivation to integrate biblical counseling into their church ministries. Based on the post-training interview, this project successfully met and surpassed this seventy percent benchmark. All of the five students expressed a positive motivation to implement biblical counseling.

The fifth goal was to develop a contextualized long-term ministry plan to enable participants to integrate biblical counseling into their ministry. This ministry plan is beneficial for at least three main reasons. First, the plan reviews the same material presented in the curriculum. Second, it affords the oral learner the spaced repetition so necessary for them to retain information. Third, the plan also provides some methodologies of biblical counseling so as to help them in their practice of it.

This goal stated that it would be considered successful when one hundred percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level and that if it is not initially met, then the material will be revised until it meets the standard. The evaluation of the panel members suggested that it did not initially reach the one hundred percent benchmark and so was revised accordingly. Once the revisions were in place, the plan met the one hundred percent benchmark for the project and the goal was considered successful.

Although the long-term ministry plan can be considered beneficial, it may be an unnecessary component of this project. Perhaps in place of a long-term ministry plan, it would have been better to offer in-person follow up several times in the two to three

weeks following the training. This approach may have been more difficult, owing to the fact that the students live in different places, but it might have yielded a higher success rate in the attempt to encourage them in integrating biblical counseling into their ministry.

All things considered, I would say that the purpose statement was good, and the goals were appropriate in order to realize the purpose. The project was successful in that the goals were accomplished, and the purpose has begun. There is still much more that needs to be done for these students to help these students implement biblical counseling into their ministries, but this project's purpose and goals allowed for a good start in that direction.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project**

In this section, I will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this project. In order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses, I will consider the ways the project indicated positive or no changes in thinking in the students after the training. To determine these changes (or lack thereof), I will consider the students' answers to the pre and post-training interview questions.

#### **Strengths**

Four main strengths of this project are the interviews, the curriculum, the training, and the long-term ministry plan. I will discuss each one of these in more detail, highlighting why these can be seen as strengths of this project. Most of these strengths can be seen as such based on the interviews; however, the last strength cannot rely on the interviews as it refers to the ministry plan given to the students after the interviews and training.

The first strength was the use of the interview questions themselves. The pre-training answers to these questions provided the baseline against which the post-training answers could be measured. As such, they were beneficial in helping me to see what I

should emphasize in the training. Moreover, the time spent with the students helped me to see and consider their individual ministry contexts and engage them in class accordingly.

The second strength of this project is the curriculum that was developed to be taught, which is closely connected with the third strength. Because there was positive change in the interview questions post-training, it stands to reason that the material itself contained helpful biblical insights that would affect the way the students understood biblical counseling and its importance. The curriculum responded to each of the interview questions indirectly and provided the variable needed to induce the change in thinking for which I hoped.

The third strength of this project that I saw was the time of training. As a result of the teaching and our interactions, the students generally moved to adopt more theologically solid ideas of biblical counseling. Whether it referred to the pastor's primary responsibility, the use of psychology, the confidence they had to counsel and explain biblical counseling, or feeling equipped to biblically counsel others, the changes were positive in each case. As some of their ideas were challenged, I did not expect them to see so many positive changes in thinking so quickly after only six lessons.

Another reason why I saw that the training was a strength of the project is due to three additional factors as seen in the post-training interviews. First, the students indicated interest in establishing biblical counseling ministries in their churches. Second, they stated various ways that they would seek to implement biblical counseling in their churches. Third, they noted that the way that they could incorporate IMs like biblical counseling into their church ministries was through teaching and training their church members. These responses indicated a positive attitude towards biblical counseling and demonstrated a desire to implement it in their churches.

A fourth strength that I observed as a result of this project was the long-term ministry plan that was delivered to the students. The long-term ministry plan is useful in that it could be considered an abbreviated methodology course, wherein there is review of

the material originally covered as well as helpful hints on what the pastor or church leader can do to implement biblical counseling in his church. This ministry plan is also beneficial because it is something to which the students can refer later if needed and does not require gathering again at the training center.

### **Weaknesses**

As with any project there are weaknesses even as there are strengths. I want to list five key weaknesses that I see in this project. These weaknesses include the location of the training, limited time to teach and interact, the purpose of the project, the ministry plan, and the interview methods.

The first weakness I see is that the project was somewhat limited in its potential because it sought to train pastors and church leaders from various churches and ministry contexts in a training location that is separate from those contexts. The men traveled to the training center from four different provinces and some live up to four or five hours away by bus. The majority of the students also live and minister in rural settings.

The difficulty with this approach is that I could not see them in their ministry context, nor could I ascertain exactly what challenges or advantages they would naturally experience. If I had been able to see them in their ministry contexts, I would have been able to reply directly to the “if, how, and why” questions regarding the counsel they give to others. Knowing this information would have allowed me to contextualize the material even more before the training.

This first weakness is evidenced by the fact that when I interviewed them, I asked how often they counsel others. The answers were all different, but at least two indicated that they rarely counseled anyone. They also said that their church members do not regularly seek to counsel one another from the Word of God, meaning that their options of counselors are very slim, implying that many who probably would benefit by

receiving counseling do not get it. If I could see and teach them in their own contexts, I could address these issues more specifically and immediately in the training.

A second weakness I see is that because these pastors and leaders came from different places to RTIM's training center. Hence, I had more limited time with them as a result due to everyone's need to travel to and from the training center as well as the obligations they have at home and church which requires shorter training times. These factors may be common in trainings, but limited time is something that affects what can be taught and how much time can be invested in questions and commentary.

A third weakness is that the purpose statement of the project may be too broad. As stated before, it may have been better if the purpose statement had been much more specific, seeking to teach one Quichua pastor to implement biblical counseling. Though hardly acceptable for this project, a one-on-one approach is helpful in so many areas of ministry, and biblical counseling is no exception. Because I was teaching several students and interacting with them in a place that was not their ministry contexts, my attention was divided from just one to several, meaning that I was not able to invest as much as I might have had it been only one student.

A fourth weakness is that the long-term ministry plan may be an unnecessary step. As stated above, there are several benefits to offering the students a ministry plan that helps them to implement biblical counseling. However, it may not have been a necessary component to reach the project's purpose. The students could have been encouraged by visits from me providing in-person follow up rather than videos that provide review and discuss methodology, thus eliminating the need for the long-term ministry plan.

A fifth weakness is the interview method. Because the Likert scale is unfamiliar to them and for reasons mentioned in chapter 4, the participants were hesitant to land on one particular response. Moreover, as a communal culture, they find it difficult to give their own opinion without knowing the opinion of the group. This response is

typical and is something that I should have anticipated for the interview questions.

### **Project Modifications**

In this section, I will discuss what I would do differently given what I have experienced through the course of implementing this project. There are four main things that I would change were I to do it again. These four things are the focus of the project, the means of encouraging the pastors, the time spent with the students, and the interview method. I will discuss each one further in more detail.

First, regarding the focus of the project, I would choose to focus on just one pastor and his church. As I mentioned before, the project may have been too broad in its scope to be able to see pastors implement biblical counseling into their ministries. In retrospect, I would choose to focus on interviewing and teaching just one pastor in his ministry context and try to help him implement biblical counseling in his church.

By limiting it to one pastor, I would be able to see him in his ministry context, know what challenges or advantages he faces, and help him through regular, specific teaching. The impact of the teaching on his life would be greater and I would be able to see more clearly the changes in his thinking and perspective on biblical counseling. Moreover, with a greater impact on one Quichua pastor, he would then be an ideal mentor for another Quichua pastor and could make a larger imprint on the Quichua church than I could as an outsider.

Second, I would seek to have more of an intentional mentorship with a pastor (as in the previous scenario) or the pastors I actually taught. That is, I would like to have spent time in practical, transitional situations so helpful in training new counselors. It would be helpful, after the initial training, to have them observe me counsel someone, then participate with me in counseling someone, and then counsel someone while I observed them.<sup>2</sup> This mentor style training is incredibly helpful for many groups, but

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<sup>2</sup> This model is practiced by the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors as they train new

especially the Quichua people.

I would seek to spend more time teaching and training, whether that be training the students that I actually taught or the one pastor I suggested in the change of project focus. If I were to spend more time in each lesson, I could have a greater assurance that there would be a marked change in attitudes, perspective, and beliefs with regard to biblical counseling. Additionally, with longer times given for each lesson, I could also have adapted the interviews to ask pre and post-training questions regarding ideas specific to each lesson.

I would also seek to change some aspects of the interview method. Because the men were unfamiliar with the Likert scale, they were unsure in some instances how to answer and avoided making distinctions between “agree somewhat”, “disagree”, and “strongly agree”. Therefore, it would have been helpful to offer them an illustrated scale using happy and unhappy faces. Using an illustrated scale like that, I could have asked them to point to the picture that most accurately represented how they felt about a given statement in the interview questions.

## **Reflections**

In this section, I will discuss theological and personal reflections I had from this project. These reflections are based on my own observations and insights throughout and after the project. While not based wholly on objective data like the other evaluations, these reflections stem from personal experience and can still be taken into account when considering the overall benefits or challenges of this project.

### **Theological**

It is unsurprising that after working on a project like this one there would be

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counselors.

some ways in which one would be impacted by theological issues. My own experience demonstrates this idea. There are several theological reflections that I would like to offer that come as a result of this project.

The first is that this project has left me more convinced than ever of the theology of biblical counseling and the need to teach it to others. This conviction is a result of the kinds of counseling situations that I have observed firsthand before beginning this project as well as the insights I gained through the interviews and conversations with the students.

One reason this particular conviction is so great is because of the threat of popular psychology methods present in Ecuador. It has become common practice that if people have problems, they should look for a psychologist. Even one student claimed to have been a part of a psychology class in some respects and sought to use that information in ministry. These psychological approaches do not address the issues of the holiness of God, the depravity of man, or the hope found in the gospel—central biblical ideas. Therefore, it is clear to me that the church needs a shift in thinking based on solid theology.

Another reason that I am more convinced of the theology of biblical counseling is that it addresses the lack of mercy and grace so often given to those suffering, even within the church. Gospel-based teaching should inevitably lead pastors to counsel biblically; however, they (like others from other contexts) are often distracted by the situational or circumstantial problems of the counselees or church members and try to “fix” the problem, seeking to control the counselee. Good theology in practice should lead the counselor to help the counselee see that God is at work at all times in all situations and that the goal is not to change the situation but rather how the heart responds. Good theology teaches that a heart that seeks to respond in a way that glorifies God (even in hard situations) will pray and trust God for situational changes to take place, knowing that even if He does not, He will use it for the believer’s good.

A second reflection is that I see a far greater need for these students to receive teaching and investment of hermeneutical principles. I observed this need (not for the first time) through interacting with the students while teaching the curriculum. RTIM has sought to teach this very topic at various times at this training center. However, this particular area of study is one that particularly needs to be reinforced with oral learners like the students I taught.

Another reflection regarding theology is that students have a great need for more studies in ecclesiology. This area is also something that RTIM has sought to incorporate in its trainings, but the need is ever present. With each new training comes a wave of new students who want to learn and grow in their understanding of God's Word for the purpose of serving the church.

### **Personal**

Though I have felt a growing need in Ecuador for biblical counseling, I did not anticipate pursuing a doctoral degree in it, but God directed my steps to this program and this project has played a significant role in my life. Apart from being affected by the theological aspects of this project, I have also been personally impacted by this project. In this section I will share a few of these personal reflections.

First, I have grown in gratitude to God for how he is working throughout the world and especially among the Quichua pastors and church leaders. As I studied the arrival of the gospel in Ecuador and the spiritual awakening that occurred among the Quichua people in the Andes, I am amazed at how God began and has sustained his work in different ways. Personally, as a missionary that serves among the Quichua people, I am so grateful to be invited by God to participate in the work he is doing in this people group today, specifically in the area of biblical counseling.

Second, as a result of this project I am even more thankful to God for brothers in Christ and co-laborers working for the advance of the gospel. This gratitude extends to

both the Quichua students as well as the men who served as the expert panel members. These Quichua pastors and church leaders serve in difficult areas where some are still hostile to the gospel; yet, they work tirelessly for the kingdom's advance. I am also thankful for the expert panel members, for their wisdom and participation in equipping these Quichua pastors. Their efforts are just as important and valuable as what I can contribute to this project.

Third, I am thankful to my family for their encouragement and patience with me during this process of writing and project implementation. It was a long process and they kept encouraging me to press on. During the writing and implementation of this project, God has also taught me more about stewarding my time and energy well by means of my family.

Fourth, this project has also pushed me in practically applying studies from both my Master of Divinity degree in missions as well as working towards this Doctor of Ministry degree in biblical counseling. This project has caused me to delve deeper into the subjects in a way that has personally benefitted me as a believer, missionary, pastor, and teacher. Moreover, it has reminded me of the need to be a lifelong learner so that I can better serve the church in Ecuador.

Finally, this project has increased my desire to work with these Quichua pastors and others like them, helping them continue to grow in understanding and applying God's Word in life and ministry. The ever-present need that exists in these preliterate contexts demonstrates the ongoing need for men theologically equipped for ministry to invest in those who are not. When I see the desire that these men have to serve the Lord and the church, it increases my desire to aid them in that process.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, this project to equip preliterate Quichua pastors and church leaders in biblical counseling was a helpful first step. In no way could this project be

sufficient for the great need that still exists for theological education and ministerial practice for IMs such as biblical counseling. The field is still ready to be worked and needs workers to invest their lives among this dear people group. However, I hope that the initial investment of training and the ministry plan they received serves the church in Southern Ecuador and, Lord willing, other oral groups as well.

As I conclude this chapter, I want to note a few implications for further ministry. First, it would be of immense value to create a mentor style counseling system to equip new counselors, pastors or lay members. In such a mentor program, these men could have on-the-job training and learn from observation and by being observed. Such a mentor counseling program could operate in many ways as other counseling training programs like the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). The ACBC, for example, is designed to train literate counselors. However, the focus of a ministry I am suggesting would be to train oral learners in culturally appropriate ways rather than following the western, literate teaching models.

Second, a course on methodology could be very valuable. In a methodology class, there could be more role-playing, discussion of risk management in counseling (e.g., meet in a place where the interactions between counselor and counselee are visible), and other practical issues in helping hurting people. This hands-on approach would fit nicely with the mentor program previously suggested.

Third, it could be prudent to develop each lesson as its own course. There is so much that can be unpacked and further explained in each lesson than there was time for in this project. There is a wealth of information waiting to be tapped for the sake of these pastors, leaders, and their churches.

Lastly, it could be a good idea create a system of accountability and consultation for the pastors and lay counselors. This system of accountability would be helpful both in the sense of protection (from sin or other risk factors) as well as fellowship and help from other counselors. By caring for counselors in this way, one

would also care for the church at large.

The success of this project serves to demonstrate that there is an opportunity to establish a biblical counseling ministry in the churches of Southern Ecuador and, in fact, anywhere in the world regardless of literacy levels. Obviously, it requires prayer, diligence, patience, and hope in God. This attitude is exactly what I hope the results of this project elicit and evoke in others, for the glory of God and the good of the church.

APPENDIX 1  
ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

Participants in this project will be given a twenty-minute interview prior to and after the developed curriculum is taught. The following interview will be used in fulfillment of Goals 1, 3, and 4. Additional questions pertaining to Goal 4 will be designated as such along the lower portion of the interview form. The questions designated for Goal 4 will be asked after the curriculum is developed. The interviewer will be administering this interview and noting the responses utilizing the Assessment Interview Form.

## ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW FORM

Participant ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Interview (Indicate which): Pre \_\_\_\_\_ Post \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark the appropriate answer to the following questions based on the interviewee's responses:

	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Disagree Somewhat (DS)	Agree Somewhat (AS)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
1. The church should always follow the pastor's example.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. The pastor's primary job is not to preach.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. Personal or relational problems in the church must not be solved by the pastor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. The Bible is sufficient for all problems in life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. I feel confident that I can counsel another person from God's Word.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I feel equipped to train my church members to counsel others from God's Word.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. Psychology should not be a part of the church ministry.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. My church members regularly counsel each other from God's Word.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I can explain how to counsel from God's Word.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Counseling others from God's Word is important.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Please indicate the interviewee's responses to the following open-ended questions:

1. What does it mean to counsel someone from God's Word?
2. Name two or three ways your church members minister to one another.
3. As pastor/church leader, how many times do you privately counsel someone from the Bible each week?
4. Who should participate in counseling people from God's Word?
5. What place does psychology have in the church?

Additional Questions, limited to use for Goal 4:

1. Will you seek to implement biblical counseling as a part of your church's ministry?
2. Do you feel equipped to counsel others biblically?
3. Name one to three ways you plan to implement biblical counseling in your church.
4. What is your overall attitude toward biblical counseling?
5. How can your church best develop interpersonal ministries?

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW FORM: PRE AND POST-  
TRAINING RESPONSES

Statements	Pre/Post Training	Responses (6 participants)					
		SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1. The church should always follow the pastor's example.	Pre	1				2	2
	Post		1			1	3
2. The pastor's primary job is not to preach.	Pre	4	1				
	Post		2	2		1	
3. Personal or relational problems in the church must not be solved by the pastor.	Pre	1	1	3			
	Post			3		2	
4. The Bible is sufficient for all problems in life.	Pre				2		3
	Post					1	4
5. I feel confident that I can counsel another person from God's Word.	Pre		1		1	1	2
	Post				1	1	3
6. I feel equipped to train my church members to counsel others from God's Word.	Pre			1	1	1	2
	Post				1	1	3
7. Psychology should not be a part of the church ministry.	Pre	4	1				
	Post		1	2	1	1	
8. My church members regularly counsel each other from God's Word. <sup>1</sup>	Pre	2		1	2		
	Not included in post-training interview						

<sup>1</sup> This question was not asked in the post-training interview because this answer was a fixed

9. I can explain how to counsel from God's Word.	Pre				2	2	1
	Post				1	2	2
10. Counseling others from God's Word is important.	Pre				1	1	3
	Post						5

Please indicate the interviewee's responses to the following open-ended questions:<sup>2</sup>

1. What does it mean to counsel someone from God's Word?

Pre-training

1	It is important to know what problems members and nonmembers have and one must counsel them from the Bible to help them fix it.
2	That the person is a Christian
3	The Word of God is something that can change our lives. I have changed and I want others to change.
4	Helping someone
5	A person first has a problem before the Lord and then with others and they need to talk to the pastor or leader in the church.

Post-training

1	To help the person in need that is lacking in something.
2	To restore the person.
3	To teach them that there is a Savior that can help us.
4	To help other people.
5	To be an example to have hope and trust in Jesus Christ

2. Name two or three ways your church members minister to one another.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-training

1	In place of counseling there are more problems because they have not studied. Very few do it.
2	We minister according the loving heart of God and respond when people have strayed
3	We sometimes work in groups because it is necessary to do this to support one another
4	None
5	Sometimes my wife and I counsel one another

fact and would not change with training.

<sup>2</sup> The following answers have been translated from Spanish to English by the author.

<sup>3</sup> Questions 2 and 3 were not asked post-training as the answers would not change with training.

3. As pastor/church leader, how many times do you privately counsel someone from the Bible each week?

Pre-training

1	Each week I offer counsel to someone. Sometimes a couple, a woman, or a young lady
2	Sometimes three or more
3	Sometimes three times a week
4	None
5	Almost none at all; sometimes once a month

4. Who should participate in counseling people from God's Word?

Pre-training

1	The equipped minister can counsel others
2	The pastors
3	The pastor or Elder or someone equipped
4	The leaders, but when the church is grows it becomes difficult
5	The Christian because it is his responsibility

Post-training

1	The well-equipped pastor has the most right to do so.
2	One of the deacons and the pastor
3	The elder or pastor
4	All Christians
5	The counselor (everyone)

5. What place should psychology have in the church?

Pre-training

1	There is carnal psychology that isn't spiritual
2	It should have a place of importance
3	A pastor or Elder should incorporate psychology
4	First the Bible and then psychology later in order of importance
5	The person should have psychology with the Lord and later with others

Post-training

1	Only if it is biblical; the secular has no value
2	Possibly second in priorities in the church
3	It would not be good because it would not be biblical counseling
4	None
5	None

Additional Questions, limited to use for Goal 4:

1. Will you seek to implement biblical counseling as a part of your church's ministry?

1	Yes, of course. It should be biblical.
2	Yes
3	Yes
4	Yes, of course.
5	Yes because everyone should do so.

2. Do you feel equipped to counsel others biblically?

1	I am thankful to say yes, and I am willing
2	Thanks to God, yes
3	Yes
4	Yes
5	Yes

3. Name one to three ways you plan to implement biblical counseling in your church.

1	Equip my brothers, train others in the church
2	Equip others so that they can help me
3	Based on the studies and the Bible, I want to help others understand biblical counseling
4	Speak with the brothers; possibly ask if anyone needs counseling during church services
5	Create groups and offer times of counseling

4. What is your overall attitude toward biblical counseling?

1	In favor of it
2	In favor of it and I want others to join me in it
3	It is very good
4	It is very good
5	We should do it; I agree with it

5. How can your church best develop interpersonal ministries?

1	The pastor and deacons should be equipped in biblical counseling and the believers
2	Seek out willing people to participate
3	Use people's spiritual gifts to work in different ministries of the church
4	Give a workshop and train the church members
5	Equip, train, and practice biblical counseling

APPENDIX 3  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

An expert panel comprised of current RTIM missionaries and employees and expatriate pastors in Ecuador familiar with the people group in question will be asked to evaluate a ministry plan. The evaluation will consider the plan's functionality, communication processes, training elements, provision of biblical counseling resources, and action steps.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC FORM

<b>Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lessons are clearly relevant to the issue of pastors and church leaders integrating biblical counseling.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on interpersonal ministry.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The theses of the lessons are clearly stated.					
The points of the lessons clearly support their theses.					
The lessons contain points of practical application.					
The lessons are sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lessons are clearly presented.					
The lessons can be contextually adapted for presentation to the target audience.					

APPENDIX 4  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RESPONSES

<b>Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation Tool<sup>1</sup></b>			
<b>(6 participants)</b>			
<b>Insufficient (I); Requires attention (RA); Sufficient (S); Exemplary (E)</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. The lessons are clearly relevant to the issue of pastors and church leaders integrating biblical counseling.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-Excellent giving pastors a better understanding of pastor's roll and all believers -Absolutely necessary, urgent, and practical
2. The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on interpersonal ministry.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-Very biblically based and part of discipleship through counseling and follow-up -It would be good to point to some biblical examples (OT and NT) of BC, as it was used by God. Example: Nathan and David; Peter and Paul; in the issue of gentiles and Jews

<sup>1</sup> The comments made by panel members submitted in Spanish have been translated by the author.

3. The material is theologically sound.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-Excellent foundation established and followed throughout the lessons
4. The theses of the lessons are clearly stated.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	2	-Perhaps a “goal” or “main point” of each lesson would help
	E	4	-Very clear with practical application to any setting
5. The points of the lessons clearly support their theses.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	1	-Need clearer theses
	E	5	-Excellent in every lesson tying together in fulfilling God’s Purpose -It would be good in lessons 5 and 6 to expand the theme a bit more, to avoid risks, abuses and bad practice of BC within the church, especially. For example: Can everyone counsel? Are there any biblical requirements for this ministry, for the counselor, and including the counselee?
6. The lessons contain points of practical application.	I	0	None
	RA	1	-Not sure practical app needed, but not listed on outline
	S	1	-I think that you should say something about the logistics of BC, practical rules like: men never visit women alone, never be in a closed office without others being able to see inside, never meet in informal places like vehicles, never give false hope, never “touch” the counselees, never continue when the counselees are “professional patients” that

			only seek ears to hear their problems but don't follow advice
	E	4	-yes, more "testimonials" should be included -very practical for the local church -Excellent with time to share testimonies and do practical role playing in classroom
7. The lessons are sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	1	-I suggest that you should include something about the care of the pastor counselor and his family. The question is: And who cares for the pastor and his family? What about the need for the pastor to be mentored? What about the balance of the psycho-emotional, social, and spiritual of the pastor counselor? This is important as the ministry of BC can end up being risky without "supervision" nor accountability to another qualified mentor.
	E	5	-Super -Plenty of Scripture used and modeled by Author and Finisher our Lord Jesus Christ
8. Overall, the lessons are clearly presented.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-There are only a few syntax issues in Spanish to correct -Very clear with opportunities for testimonies and role playing and interaction with students.

9. The lessons can be contextually adapted for presentation to the target audience.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-This is one of the strengths...very adaptable. -I suggest mentioning the topic of the risks of the bad use of BC that can end in abuse of the counselee or abuses of the counselor. Rules to avoid religious violence, sexual abuse, or legal suits, etc. -Clearly adaptable to the culture and history of the audience

## APPENDIX 5

### STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

In order to ensure that the expert panel understands and agrees with the premise upon which this ministry plan is based, each member of the panel will receive and sign a statement of affirmation. By affirming the statement(s), these panelists will be qualified to participate in the evaluation of the ministry plan that will be utilized in this project.

## STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I (please mark one) \_\_\_ agree \_\_\_ disagree with RTIM's statements of belief as defined on the website <http://reachingandteaching.org/reaching-teaching-statements-of-belief>, and the following definition of biblical counseling:

Biblical counseling is a ministry of, but not limited to, the local church whereby transformed believers in Christ (John 3:3-8) who are indwelt, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) rightly understand and apply the living and active Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to others with the goals of evangelizing the lost and teaching the saved (Matthew 28:18-20) to live gospel-centered lives.

APPENDIX 6  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM:  
LESSON ONE

**Introduction to Biblical Counseling (Part 1)<sup>1</sup>**

1. Introducing Biblical Counseling (BC)
  - a. Everybody counsels
    - i. Testimonies
    - ii. How Christians should counsel, from what framework
  - b. What BC is not<sup>2</sup>
    - i. Popular psychology
    - ii. Opinion
    - iii. Three main groups of counselors:
      1. Secular psychologists
      2. Christian counselors
      3. Biblical counselors
  - c. What BC is
    - i. Definition: “Biblical counseling is a ministry of, but not limited to, the local church whereby transformed believers in Christ (John 3:3-8) who are indwelt, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) rightly understand and apply the living and active

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The following curriculum of six lessons is an outline (not a manuscript) for the teacher. This curriculum is designed to provide time for interaction, testimony, repetition, and evaluation of students’ understanding. Moreover, this curriculum is designed for teaching traditionally oral peoples (including pre-literate, illiterate, or functionally illiterate).

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005).

Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to others with the goals of evangelizing the lost and teaching the saved (Matthew 28:18-20) to live gospel-centered lives.”<sup>3</sup>

- ii. 12 aspects of biblical counseling<sup>4</sup>:
  1. Based on Scripture
  2. Christ-centered
  3. Based on sound theology
  4. Dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer
  5. Directed toward sanctification
  6. Rooted in the life of the church
  7. Founded in love
  8. Attentive to heart issues
  9. Comprehensive in understanding
  10. Thorough in care
  11. Must be practical and relevant
  12. Must be oriented toward outreach

---

<sup>3</sup> Author’s hybrid definition taken from chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> “The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition,” Biblical Counseling Coalition, last modified, July 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/>.

APPENDIX 7  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM:  
LESSON TWO

**Introduction to Biblical Counseling (Part 2)**

1. The goal of biblical counseling (BC)<sup>1</sup>
  - a. The primary goal
    - i. Not primarily behavior modification
    - ii. A change of the heart
      1. Based on Scripture and dependent on God
      2. Produces external behavioral changes
      3. Produces lasting changes
    - iii. BC seeks to respond to the heart
      1. The heart motivates sinful behavior
      2. The heart needs to be changed
        - a. Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:33-35; 15:17-20;  
Galatians 5:16-26; Hebrews 3:12-13; 4:12-13;  
James 3:13-14, 17-18; 4:1; 1 Peter 2:11
    - iv. BC must start with a correct understanding of God and man
      1. God is totally good
      2. Man is totally depraved
        - a. We sin and, thus, we have problems in life

---

<sup>1</sup> This lesson depends heavily on the work of Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).

- b. Others sin against us and, thus, we have problems in life
  - 3. Man needs the grace of God to experience necessary heart changes
    - a. The gospel is foundational for lasting change
    - b. God uses means to produce these changes:
      - i. Himself (Holy Spirit)
      - ii. The Bible
      - iii. Other believers
      - iv. Other Christian, theologically sound resources
      - v. Circumstances
  - 4. Three-tree model diagram
- b. BC vs. evangelism
  - i. Counseling believers
    - 1. Only believers have the Holy Spirit
    - 2. Thus, biblical counsel is given to believers
  - ii. Evangelizing unbelievers
    - 1. Do not have the Holy Spirit
    - 2. Thus, unbelievers must first be evangelized
      - a. To experience true changes that last
      - b. To understand Scripture
      - c. To confess and repent of sin
- c. BC as intense, intentional discipleship
  - i. What is discipleship
    - 1. Teaching others to:
      - a. Understand God's Word

- b. Love God
  - c. Follow Jesus
  - d. Change their lives to obey God's Word
- ii. Why counseling can be compared to intense discipleship

## APPENDIX 8

### BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM: LESSON THREE

#### **The Importance of Biblical Counseling (Part 1)**

1. Emphasis on “biblical”<sup>1</sup>
  - a. What biblical counselors affirm about God’s Word:
    - i. Inerrant
    - ii. Infallible
    - iii. Inspired
    - iv. Authority
    - v. Sufficient
    - vi. Profitable
  - b. Why God’s Word?<sup>2</sup>
    - i. The Bible’s relevance for all situations
      1. Because of the previous affirmations about the Bible
      2. The Bible speaks to all situations in life (want, need, sin, etc.)
    - ii. We must understand the message of the Bible and context of Scripture
      1. Implies a personal, private study and understanding

---

<sup>1</sup> This theological foundation of this lesson relies heavily on the work of Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> The foundation of the importance of Scripture has its basis in the work of David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

2. Proper hermeneutics and exegesis are key
  3. Important for all believers, but especially pastors
- iii. Not simply quoting Scripture
1. Knowing Scripture is important
  2. Understanding the message of Scripture is important
    - a. In the context of the Bible
    - b. In the context of the Old or New Testament
    - c. In the context of the book
    - d. In the context of the chapter (or argument of the author)
  3. Counselors allow their knowledge and understanding of Scripture to inform their counsel

APPENDIX 9  
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM:  
LESSON FOUR

**The Importance of Biblical Counseling (Part 2)**

1. Emphasis on “counseling”
  - a. Counseling as seen in Scripture
    - i. Old Testament
      1. Proverbs
      2. David and Nathan
    - ii. New Testament
      1. Paul, Peter, James, others
  - b. Counseling vs controlling
    - i. Counselors help others to understand God’s Word
    - ii. Counselors help others to see practical implications of the Bible’s teaching
    - iii. Counselors avoid telling people what to do
    - iv. Counselors encourage people to do what they know is right according to God’s Word
  - c. Importance of gathering information
    - i. Ask a lot of questions
      1. Get facts, not opinions
      2. Seek to understand the situation or person, even if the counselor disagrees with the counselee
    - ii. Do not assume information or heart motives

1. Suspicions should be probed with questions
  2. Help the counselee come to conclusions, comparing actions and motives to God's Word
- d. Honesty in counseling
- i. Counselors should not be shocked by sin, nor flattered or intimidated by the counselee
  - ii. Cry with those who cry, rejoice with those who rejoice
    1. The situation is not the issue, the person is!
  - iii. Church discipline
    1. Even in the context of counseling, biblical church discipline guidelines should be followed in the event of unrepentant sin
      - a. What are the guidelines?
      - b. Matthew 18:15-17
- e. Hope in counseling
- i. God's Word offers hope for each person and situation
  - ii. End each session or meeting with a word of hope

## APPENDIX 10

### BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM: LESSON FIVE

#### **The Pastor's Role in Biblical Counseling**

1. BC and the pastor
  - a. What is a pastor
    - i. Shepherd, overseer
    - ii. Caretaker
    - iii. Under-shepherd
  - b. What is the job, role, or responsibility of the pastor?
    - i. Preaching?
      1. Yes, teaching and preaching are vital
      2. But it's not enough
    - ii. Shepherding?
      1. Yes, caring for the souls of the sheep
      2. Meeting each person where he or she is
      3. Developing a concern for the individuals and congregation
  - c. Why the pastor should counsel biblically
    - i. Expected by God
    - ii. Outlined in Scripture
    - iii. God's Word as our hope today and always

## APPENDIX 11

### BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM: LESSON SIX

#### **The Church's Role in Biblical Counseling**

1. Counsel one another<sup>1</sup>
  - a. The church preaches salvation in Christ through the preaching of the Word
    - i. Romans 10:12-15
  - b. The church offers everyday hope in Christ
    - i. Christ offers believers abundant life
      1. John 10:10
  - c. The church as the body of Christ
    - i. Study of biblical texts about the body of Christ
    - ii. Using spiritual gifts and building one another up
  - d. How is the church to counsel one another?
    - i. Admonish one another
      1. Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
    - ii. Speak truth in love
      1. Ephesians 4:14, 25
    - iii. Submit to one another
      1. Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5
    - iv. Teach one another

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<sup>1</sup> The foundational issues presented in the lesson rely heavily on the work of Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2016).

1. Colossians 3:16
- v. Comfort one another
  1. 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- vi. Encourage one another
  1. 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- vii. Exhort one another
  1. Hebrews 3:13
- viii. Stir up one another
  1. Hebrews 10:24
- ix. Pray for one another
  1. James 5:16
- x. Not only the job of the pastor
- xi. The goal: Christ will present the church to himself spotless
  1. Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:21-22

## APPENDIX 12

### MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC

An expert panel comprised of current RTIM missionaries and employees and expatriate pastors in Ecuador familiar with the people group in question will be asked to evaluate a ministry plan. The evaluation will consider the plan's functionality, communication processes, training elements, provision of biblical counseling resources, and action steps.

## MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC FORM

<b>Biblical Counseling Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The ministry plan is viable in functionality.					
The ministry plan appropriately communicates the material.					
The ministry plan uses contextualized training elements.					
The ministry plan is theologically sound.					
The ministry plan contains practical action steps.					
The ministry plan provides for various counseling resources.					

APPENDIX 13

MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION RESPONSES

<b>Biblical Counseling Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool<sup>1</sup></b> <b>(6 participants)</b>			
<b>Insufficient (I); Requires attention (RA); Sufficient (S); Exemplary (E)</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. The ministry plan is viable in functionality.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	1	None
	E	5	-Yes, because it is appropriate to a level of learning and execution that they can manage -I think this plan is feasible to implement
2. The ministry plan appropriately communicates the material.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	1	None
	E	5	-Yes, it is well outlined and systematized -Good presentation and simple for them to understand -The plan thoroughly relates the curriculum
3. The ministry plan uses contextualized training elements.	I	0	None
	RA	1	-It seems to me that this ministry plan is more broad/general in its contextual direction than the BC curriculum
	S	1	-There are contextualized elements, but the translation will come with added points of

<sup>1</sup> The comments made by panel members submitted in Spanish have been translated by the author.

			contextualization not listed in this outline
	E	4	-As it is focused on Quichua pastors and leaders it would be ideal to check some principles of counseling according to their culture (like listening to the wisdom of their elders) -The material seems to be well-suited to its target audience
4. The ministry plan is theologically sound.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	0	None
	E	6	-Good job in using appropriate Scriptures as solid foundations -I like always showing God as a merciful God and not a judgmental or punishing one
5. The ministry plan contains practical action steps.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	2	-There are sufficient application steps but more practical help would be beneficial
	E	4	-Great challenges for the students and may add time of sharing testimonies if not included in the lesson plans. I find it very helpful in ministry and see the fruits -In fact, I think this is the emphasis of the material
6. The ministry plan provides for various counseling resources.	I	0	None
	RA	0	None
	S	3	-Resources for this, outside of a few people and a couple of books are hard. The best resources are other pastors. The “sufficient” mark is not a negative for this project, but for theological resources as a whole.
	E	3	-Without doubt, you present various strategies for

			support in BC -Good resources and you probably add more as you teach and may come to your mind.
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## APPENDIX 14

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON ONE

*Note: This ministry plan is divided into different sections and each section will be recorded as its own video/audio. The purpose of recording this material to video/audio is to make it accessible to as many as possible, avoiding any need for a certain literacy level among the pastors and church leaders. Therefore, this serves as a general teaching outline and will not be written in paragraph form. Moreover, each of the videos will vary in length, ranging from fifteen minutes to one hour per video.*

#### **Ministry Plan for Highland Quichua Pastors to Implement Biblical Counseling:** **(Video #1)**

1. Review from curriculum:
  - a. What is biblical counseling?
    - i. “Biblical counseling is a ministry of, but not limited to, the local church whereby transformed believers in Christ (John 3:3-8) who are indwelled, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) rightly understand and apply the living and active Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to others with the goals of evangelizing the lost and teaching the saved (Matthew 28:18-20) to live gospel-centered lives.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Why is it important?
    - i. It is expected, fruitful, God-honoring, God-dependent
  - c. Why is it important that they as pastors implement BC in their ministries?
    - i. Pastors are to lead by example; moreover, the very term pastor implies a deep and intentional care for the people in their flock done in ways consistent with how the Chief Shepherd would lead

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is a hybrid definition used by the author for the purposes of this project.

In this ministry plan, I will discuss some first steps for implementing biblical counseling:

We will consider six ways that you as a pastor can begin implement it. As a pastor, you can:

1. **Study** God's Word
2. **Teach** on the importance of biblical counseling
3. **Encourage** others to participate in counseling one another
4. **Implement** biblical counseling into your ministry
5. **Lead** by example, providing biblical counseling
6. **Pray** for and with your church members for God's help to implement it

We will consider each one in more detail.

## APPENDIX 15

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON TWO

#### (Video #2)

#### 1. Study

- a. As pastors, those who shepherd God's flock, must study God's Word
  - i. Personal Bible intake and study form a core spiritual discipline for the believer
  - ii. Becoming familiar with the Bible is an essential element in biblical counseling
- b. Personal study of God's Word will prepare you to counsel others
- c. Interpretation of Scripture: consider the "7 arrows" method to better understand<sup>1</sup>
  - i. The "7 arrows" are a series of questions that will enable the student to better understand the purpose and meaning of biblical texts. The questions are:
    1. What does this passage say?
      - a. -In other words, summarize the passage.
    2. What did this passage mean to its original readers?
      - a. -Explain what they would have understood, given the time in which it was written, who wrote it, the circumstances leading to its writing, etc.
    3. What does this passage say about God?
      - a. -Specifically, how does it point us to Jesus?
    4. What does this passage say about man?
    5. What does this passage demand me to do?

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Rogers and Donny Mathis are credited with having developed this Bible study method.

6. How does this passage change the way that I relate to others?
  7. What/how does this passage lead me to pray?
- d. Correctly interpreting Scripture will help us to correctly counsel others
  - e. Scripture memory and meditation, another spiritual discipline, will also aid you as you counsel.
    - i. Being familiar with God's Word helps to respond directly to specific problems.
  - f. A big-picture understanding of Scripture and God's work in redemption history will help you as you tackle big/complicated problems
    - i. What is the over-arching message of the Bible?
      1. The Bible primarily points to Jesus as God's response to man's sin
      2. Luke 24:27: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."
  - g. David Powlison says, "We cannot articulate, practice, or regulate what we do not know how to do. Wisdom, love, and efficacy are highly attractive and persuasive...the church has been poor in understanding and enabling the processes of change, which makes the psychotherapies attractive to many."<sup>2</sup>
    - i. Therefore, pastors must grow in their understanding of God's Word through personal study.

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<sup>2</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 113.

## APPENDIX 16

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON THREE

#### (Video #3)

##### 1. Teach

- a. As pastors, we much teach people the importance of God’s Word and how we can and should counsel from it
- b. The basis of all counseling should be God’s Word
- c. Why we base our counsel on God’s Word
  - i. The importance of God’s Word – a high view of Scripture
    1. At least 5 affirmations:
      - a. Inspired – 2 Timothy 3:16-17
      - b. Infallible
      - c. Inerrant
      - d. Our authority
      - e. Sufficient for faith and practice
- d. How God’s Word is relevant today
- e. Biblical teaching on imitating overseers as they imitate Christ (1 Thess 1:6-7)
- f. Paul Tautges says, “As pastors, we have the responsibility to teach and train believers to make loving service to one another the normal Christian life. That is how disciples grow.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Shepherd’s Press, 2016), 63.

- i. He also says, “As equipping shepherds, therefore, we must be committed to the priority of teaching the Word publicly from the pulpit and privately through the ministry of biblical counseling.”<sup>2</sup>
- g. Who is to counsel others?
  - i. As part of their roles, shepherds should always be prepared to counsel their flock as a way of caring for and providing for their needs
  - ii. And, based on the definition we previously considered, we can conclude that all believers can and should counsel each other
  - iii. But they must be taught to do so
- h. Remember: your goal is not to fix problems, but lead people to consider how they can respond to their problems biblically and seek God’s help to change themselves, trusting him for wisdom for how to respond to their circumstances
  - i. There are often practical steps that you may suggest, but as a biblical counselor, remember that God changes people in ways that last
    - 1. Those internal changes will often lead to either external changes of behavior or circumstance or a new Christ-centered perspective on a circumstance they may not be able to change

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<sup>2</sup> Tautges, *Counsel One Another*, 64.

## APPENDIX 17

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON FOUR

#### (Video #4)

##### 1. Encourage

- a. Evaluate what your church members know/believe about biblical counseling and their roles in it
- b. Teach/Remind your church members of the one-another passages
- c. In 1 Thess 5:11-14, we see 5 ways we are to minister to one another
  - i. Edify
  - ii. Admonish
  - iii. Encourage the fainthearted
  - iv. Help the weak
  - v. Be patient with them all
- d. Our attitude in counseling<sup>1</sup>
  - i. Galatians 6:1-5: “<sup>1</sup> Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. <sup>5</sup> For each will have to bear his own load.”
  - ii. Love initiates biblical counseling even when not sought out, when destructive/foolish behaviors are observed

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<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the teaching in this video is taken from chapters five and eight of the work of Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015).

- iii. 3 presuppositions of biblical counseling:
  - 1. BC presupposes a spiritual relationship (brethren)
  - 2. BC presupposes a spiritual problem (caught in trespass)
  - 3. BC presupposes a spiritual goal (restoration)
- iv. “Instead of rejecting our spiritual siblings or abandoning them in their time of need, it is the family of God that must actively come alongside them in order to set the broken bones of their hearts and minds, teach them how to get back on God’s path and thereby train them to consistently walk in his way.”<sup>2</sup>
- v. There is a difference between punishment (punitive) and discipline (corrective)
- vi. The responsibilities of the biblical counselor:
  - 1. restore with gentleness and grace
  - 2. restore humbly, with self-examination
  - 3. restore supportively, with accountability
- vii. “The church is a body. The church is a family. The church is an assembly of the redeemed linked together; not independent, but interdependent. Therefore, there is no better place for the ministry of counseling than a Christ-centered, cross-driven, faith-stimulating community of the faith.”<sup>3</sup>
- viii. As believers counsel believers, they should invite the counselees to address sin issues they see in the counselor’s life in a biblical manner
- e. “Church members should serve as practitioners of BC under the authority of the elders.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 102.

<sup>3</sup> Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 174-175.

<sup>4</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 114.

- i. Therefore, we are not “free agents”, but accountable to God and others for the ways that we seek to counsel others

## APPENDIX 18

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON FIVE

#### (Video #5)

##### 1. Implement

- a. Powlison says, “Every pastor ought to dedicate some percentage of his ministry to counseling conversations.”<sup>1</sup>
- b. One practical step for integrating biblical counseling into your ministry is to talk to other pastors who are actively engaged in biblical counseling.
  - i. In Ecuador, there are several pastors who seek to counsel their members well
    1. If you are interested in learning more from these pastors, please reach out to me at a later time so that I can put you in contact with them.
- c. In many groups, like the Quichuas, there is a great dependence on the wisdom and counsel from the elders of the community
  - i. One must always weigh the counsel of community elders (as with anyone else) against Scripture
  - ii. Simply because one holds a place of prominence in the community does not mean that the wisdom they offer is always biblical
  - iii. If you are an elder in your community, do not lead people to assume they should trust your words because of that alone
    1. Demonstrate that the true source of your counsel is the Word of God
- d. Methodology<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 129.

<sup>2</sup> The following methodology is taken from Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and*

- ii. Establish your initial goals:
  - 1. Address presenting problem
  - 2. Display the relevance of the gospel
    - a. “The gospel is relevant because it reframes all earthly trouble with an eternal perspective (37).”
  - 3. Help people grow in Christlikeness
- iii. Prepare for the initial contact:
  - 1. Preview
    - a. Learn as much as you can about the person and the problem.
  - 2. Prioritization (This means prioritizing what counseling situations get greater portions of your time. Consider the following elements to be best prepared to respond to your limitations and the counseling need.)
    - a. Time required
    - b. Level of exploration required
    - c. Level of urgency
    - d. Available gospel-oriented relationships
  - 3. Pursuit (Consider how much you should pursue someone in need based on the following categories of the counselee.)
    - a. Initially interested but bad at follow-through
    - b. Those who are uninterested or busy
    - c. Those who are hostile
    - d. Those who are overzealous
- iv. The method:
  - 1. Listen to the problem, and consider:
  - 2. (Understand the context of the person’s life and troubles.)
    - a. Circumstances – What’s going on?

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*Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Crossway, 2015), 35-56.

- b. Other people – Who are the most prominent people and what part do they play?
    - c. Self – What is his posture towards his troubles? What is his role in it?
    - d. God – How does the person factor God into his troubles?
  - 3. Consider heart responses based on what is said about:
  - 4. (How the person’s heart is responding to his troubles.)
    - a. Circumstances – Is his response characterized by faith or something else?
    - b. Other people – Is this person loving others? Influenced by others in unbiblical ways?
    - c. Self – What does this person believe about himself that shapes his conduct?
    - d. God – Does this person trust God to be who he says he is?
  - 5. Speak truth in love regarding:
  - 6. (Speak truth to teach, comfort, warn, admonish, etc.)
    - a. Circumstances – A pastor gives biblical guidance appropriate to the situation.
    - b. Other people – A pastor helps people develop a biblical understanding of how to relate to others with both the dignity and humility of Christ.
    - c. Self – A pastor helps the person to understand his true identity in Christ.
    - d. God – A pastor helps the person to have a more accurate view of God from his Word.
- e. Risk factors in biblical counseling
  - i. Avoid unwise practices
    - 1. Do not be alone with a female counselee who is not your wife

2. If meeting in private, make sure that you and the counselee are clearly visible (e.g., through a window, open door, etc.)
  3. Seek accountability and, when possible, others to be present during counseling so that you avoid abuse or the appearance of abuse
- ii. Care for the counselor
1. As believes, we should always be discipling and being disciplined
  2. Seek someone to mentor you to whom you can give an account of your life, who will pray for you, counsel you, and seek the good of you and your family
  3. Set boundaries for you and your counselee and ask that your accountability partner helps you enforce them
  4. Make sure that you are seeking counsel when burdened or struggling with some issue in your life
    - a. Seeking counsel is a mark of humility

## APPENDIX 19

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON SIX

#### (Video #6)

##### 1. Lead

- a. Very often, words are not enough when we want people to adopt a certain philosophy, attitude, or lifestyle change
- b. Words are powerful and God can work through the teaching and encouragement of pastors to their congregations
- c. But, when our words are accompanied by practicing what we preach, the result is that much more powerful and effective
- d. Not only is it more helpful, practically, but it also is living in obedience to Scripture
- e. Two helpful passages:
  - i. 1 Peter 5:1-3
    1. Tend the flock
    2. Set an example
  - ii. Acts 20
    1. Paul's example as a pattern after which others could model their lives
- f. Therefore, regularly practice biblical counseling in formal and informal settings
  - i. Invite others to observe your biblical counseling
- g. Powlison says, "skill in counseling individuals, couples, and families must become as important a part of doctrinal faithfulness as skill in speaking to crowds."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC; New

- h. Practical aspects to consider:
  - i. Make appointments for formal counseling moments
  - ii. As you teach your people about BC, invite them to an appointment with you
  - iii. Always have your Bible with you when you counsel (encourage your counsees to read the pertinent passages)
  - iv. Pray with your counsees
  - v. Gather information – ask a lot of questions to understand the situation
  - vi. Give homework – read/listen to God’s Word and interact with it
  - vii. After others have observed you, allow them opportunities to lead sessions

## APPENDIX 20

### LONG-TERM MINISTRY PLAN: LESSON SEVEN

#### (Video #7)

#### 1. Pray

- a. Prayer is essential in the life of a believer and the pastor
- b. Personally praying that God would help you to both establish this aspect of pastoral ministry and bring others to the same point of view is a necessary component
- c. By inviting others to pray this with you, they will see the need and benefits of biblical counseling and counseling one another through the very act of prayer
  - i. They will be more motivated to learn from God's Word so as to be able to better counsel others
- d. Pray, pray, pray!
  - i. Pray before meeting with people
  - ii. Pray with the people you counsel
  - iii. Pray for them consistently after you meet with them
- e. God is the one who we want to work so that there will be true, lasting changes resulting in good fruit, so we must ask for his help

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## ABSTRACT

### A CASE STUDY IN EQUIPPING PRELITERATE QUICHUA PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS IN SOUTHERN ECUADOR FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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This project explores the need and opportunity for establishing biblical counseling in any context, regardless of literacy. Chapter 1 explains that this project was implemented among the Highland Quichua of Southern Ecuador. Chapter 2 discusses the theological basis for equipping pastors and church leaders in biblical counseling based on three biblical texts: 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7; and Acts 20:18-35. Chapter 3 interacts with theoretical and practical issues involved in equipping Quichua pastors and church leaders in biblical counseling, arguing that biblical counseling can be implemented among preliterate because the Bible's original recipients formed a largely oral society. Chapter 4 explains the process of implementing the project, including pre and post-training interviews, the development and teaching of a curriculum, and the preparation of a long-term ministry plan. Chapter 5 provides reflections on the project outcome, including strengths and weaknesses and areas to change for future implementation of like projects.

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