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**A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE COUNSELLING
OF MULTICULTURAL POPULATIONS**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to present a Christian perspective on the counselling of multicultural populations. The Christian perspective is aware of the sin problem in its worldview. The sin problem dates back to the Garden of Eden. Parsimony is in order here, hence a brief sketch of the story. The original couple sinned; that is, they broke God's command not to partake of the tree of good and evil. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). The couple was driven from the Garden. The righteous God will never compromise with sin. Sin marred His masterpiece of creation. Sin brought chaos into the cosmos. Sin erected the cross of Calvary. Sin caused the Son of God to leave the throne room above on His errand of mercy, to appear in this world of time for the purpose of the substitutionary, sacrificial death upon the cross for sinful creatures (Vallowe, 10). According to the Bible, mankind's only Saviour is Jesus (Acts 4:12). God, the ardent lover, sent His Son for humankind's redemption. That was humankind's redemption and solution then and now. The Christian Counsellor who loves God is imbued with the same world vision of being an instrument in the hand of God to help make humans whole through the marvellous vehicle of Godly love. Dr. Rick McKinney, in his book *The Clinical Jesus: The Doctor Who Never Lost a Case!* observes "In the mind of Jesus, his worldview consisted of two kingdoms – the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Satan. The core of his ministry addresses the misunderstanding of the nature of God and the nature of the kingdom of God as taught by the Jews" (McKinney, 2003).

It will be sufficient, due to time and space, to cite one or two more writers on the Christian perspective. Elder (1979) asserts that humankind is basically sinful, having a profound impact on our freedom of choice to change. White (1944) says it is our privilege to counsel together, we must be sure in every matter, to counsel with God, for He will never mislead us. Alphonse Maeler, a psychiatrist from Zurich, Switzerland, points out the need for spiritual reconstruction.

Sin, evil, committing the forbidden deed constitutes a violation of the divine command, a rebellion of the self against God.... Something central in him is broken, namely, the inner bond with his origin and his Divine Master.... Then like a ray of light in the darkness I was struck by the words: 'For the son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' It appeared to me as the perfect model for god psychotherapeutic activity....

(Cramer, 1976)

The Christian counsellor will seek to balance divine with human guidance. He/she will not choose one and omit the other. Dudley (1981) posits the following definition, "counselling is the process by which one person helps another in an accepting non-threatening relationship to grow toward his fullest potential for successful and satisfying living both in this world and in the world to come."

God's Sensitivity and Biblical Examples

God has sensitivity for culture. The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8). Further, we read in Genesis 1:1, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In verse 27 it states, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The word was with God in the beginning and without him nothing was made. (John 1:1-3.) This Biblical background allows an assumption. Since God created human beings in His own image, this suggests a relationship. S. Kubo asserts, "But God did not become a Deity of love when He created us. He was a God of love before He brought any beings, even the angels into existence. He is eternally love.(Kubo, 1993) Love would be useless if there was no one to love. Love needs expression to be truly meaningful. Anders Nygren has flushed out the full meaning of agape (God's Love). He maintains that:

1. It is spontaneous and "unmotivated." Not a thing inherent in the object of love motivates such a response. It derives instead within God Himself.
2. It is "indifferent to value." In other words, it loves no matter what the inherent worth of its object.
3. It is creative. The valueless object acquires worth when it becomes the object of God's love.
4. It initiates divine-human fellowship. God seeks out humans. God's way to men and women is via love. (Nygren, 1953).

Characterizing God through eternity, love is His very essence. Can a God of love be insensitive to the values, concerns and needs of His created beings? This writer believes that is impossible. It is as impossible as it is to be a racist and a Christian at the same time. Ellen White states,

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or cast [check original—is it plural?] is recognized by God. He is the maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. (White, 1941).

The woman of Samaria that Jesus met at Jacobs' well in John 4: 5-10 was asked by Jesus for a drink of water. She responded "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, asked of me, a woman of Samaria, for a drink of water? For the Jews have no dealing with Samaritans." Here love shows through when Jesus counsels her that if she gave him to drink he would give her living water. Jesus built trust with her by respecting both her person and the confidentiality of her past marriage history.

Another Biblical case showing God's sensitivity is found in the New Testament, first in Matthew, Chapter two, when the birth of Jesus is announced to the wise men (apparently upper-class) and then to the shepherds (apparently lesser-class) in Luke, Chapter two. The Syrophenician woman (Greek) chronicled in Mark 7:26 presents a clear-cut case of Jesus in consultation with a person not of his ethnic group. The God of love in him constrains him to drive the devil out of the woman's daughter, and upon arrival [do you mean the mother's arrival? or Jesus'?] now her daughter is upon the bed, well. Then Jesus sails on to Despoils (verse 31-33), taking care of a speech impediment problem a man suffers with. Suffice it to say, Jesus, an early proponent of the Christian /love approach to counselling, made a difference with multi-cultural populations.

Is it possible that when a counsellor who loves God, who loves all people from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) and who worships the God who "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26) interacts with clients, that the encounter is different from mainstream counselling?

Changes in the Worldview Counselling on Sensitivity

During the past few decades, North America and a reasonable portion of other world cultures have moved from an assimilations orientation regarding cultures to one that recognises and values differences. Harper and Mc Fadden (2003) observe that the late 1970's ushered in the era of culture and counselling as an attempt to be more inclusive of special populations and diverse groups. They continue, "Because of professional requirements and the increasing diversity of groups and cultures in the United States and the global community, it seems that the need for multicultural competent and diversity- sensitive counsellors is here to stay." In the counselling profession, especially after 9/11, cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, and tolerance are fast becoming very important in the United States and the world.

This awareness will become even more important as transcontinental and cross-cultural migration continues to rise as people in various parts of the globe cast about for opportunities for a better life or for refuge in nearby or distant lands, due to disaster, economic, political, educational or religious reasons.

I. Knowledge

The author selected for the purpose of this paper the person-centred theoretical approach developed by Carl Rogers. It is by no means the only framework that lends itself to Christian counselling. The person - centred approach, probably more than other models, has been applied to bring people of diverse cultures together for the purpose of developing mutual understanding.

Carl Rogers in 1948 began developing a theory of reducing tension among antagonistic groups, and he continued until his death in 1987. His workshops were conducted in Poland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, France, South Africa, the Philippines, the former Soviet Union and the United States (Corey, 1996, Sue 1990).

Person-centred therapy relies heavily on active listening, which is a key component to effective group work. Enshrouded in this approach is the importance of hearing the deeper messages that clients bring to a group. Empathy and respect for the values of clients are particularly important attitudes and skills in groups with culturally diverse clients. "An advantage of this approach is the emphasis that is placed on empathic understanding, respect, unconditional positive regard, and acceptance, as well as other core qualities that transcend culture" (Sue and Sue, 1999). Person-centred counsellors would likely show respect for the cultural norm pertaining to showing one's feelings as in the case of Japanese Americans. They would help the clients work within the framework of their values.

The Person-centred approach has some limitations, due to the processes that characterize its application.. For example, the communication style, emphasizing summarization, reflective listening, and restatement, tends to be of limited use in working with indigenous/Native American clients. Although working exclusively within the person-centred perspective with certain clients may result in some limitations, it should not be concluded that this approach is unsuitable. Indeed, more than the method itself, the manner in which the intervention is presented to clients determines the outcomes. The love of God shining through the countenance of a Christian counsellor, regardless of the theoretical framework, will make a difference.

II. The Importance of Cultural Diversity Work

The implications for Christian mental health professionals are many.

- a. The clash of worldviews, values, and lifestyles is inescapable for counsellors, teachers, or ministers, not only in their personal lives, but professional lives as well. It is well nigh impossible for most of us, in terms of race, culture, and ethnicity; unless Christ is in our lives... The counsellors' worldviews must differ in codes of ethics, standards of practice, and culture specific counselling.
- b. If counsellors, teachers, and ministers are to provide meaningful help to a culturally diverse population, they must not only reach out and develop new culturally effective helping approaches; they must reach in.
- c. Since approach and ethical practice may be culture-bound, counsellors who work with culturally different clients may be engaging in cultural oppression using harmful practices for the particular population. This is where much prayer is needed.
- d. Since none of us is immune from inheriting the images/stereotype of the larger society, we can assume that most counsellors are prisoners of their own cultural conditioning. This is where Biblical examples used by Christ can help us.

Hence, as a result, they possess stereotypes and preconceived notions that may be unwittingly imposed upon their culturally different clients. This may affect how they define problems, the goals they set, and the standards they use to judge normal and abnormal behaviour. Mental health providers whose biases and prejudices influence their work with culturally different clients have the potential to oppress and harm them. Thus it is imperative that all providers explore their own stereotypes and images of various minority groups.

Since many of our stereotypes are unconscious, we need to work tirelessly in uncovering them with as much non-defensiveness as possible. One of the greatest obstacles to this process is our fear that others will see our racism, sexism, and biases. Thus, we try to deny their existence or hide them from public view. This works against our ability to uncover them. (Sue and Sue, 1990).

When cultural diversity work is attempted earnestly and honestly, the barriers to cultural competency may be as challenging to overcome. Brown (1994) suggests that even Seventh-day Adventist counsellors need to be aware of the philosophical and cultural baggage that may mitigate against successful counselling.

III. Barriers to Cultural Competency

The barriers are many. For starters, economics might or could be a barrier. Usually counsellors are economically better off than their clients, who are often less well off. Secondly, class/nationality may be a barrier. Class values are important to consider in counselling because many racial/ethnic minority groups are disproportionately represented in the lower socioeconomic classes. Self-direction through the presentation of the results of assessment instruments via verbal interaction between counsellor and counsellee are flawed because it is permeated by middle-class values.

Bernstein (1964) observed this in the early 1960s by investigating the suitability of English for the lower poor class.

While there are pockets of other languages in the United States, language can be a barrier, because the society is definitely monolingual. The use of Standard English for communication may unfairly discriminate against persons from a bilingual/trilingual or lower-class background.

Even African-Americans who come from a different cultural environment may use words and phrases (Black English/Ebonics) not entirely understandable to the therapist (Sue and Sue 2003).

Additional barriers are insight, self-disclosure, verbal/emotional/behavioural expressiveness, and mental/physical separation, ambiguity and communication patterns. "Finally, additional barriers may come in the form of cultural practices that are encouraged by some communities and not others. The ways in which we work toward insight, our comfort levels with self-disclosure, verbal/emotional behavioural expressiveness, mental/physical separation, and ambiguity and communication patterns are just some of these learned practices to help facilitate counsellor work."

AWARENESS

Counsellors can begin an understanding or awareness in two basic ways. First, the counsellor's own self-exploration and growth; key to this process is a growing understanding of the influence of culture on one's own belief system and worldview. Second, the self-education about clients and cultures, which usually leads to a deeper understanding of clients, counsellors refers to these explorations as "reaching within to understand and reaching out to understand." Awareness can also precipitate an understanding of the impact of diverse cultures on a counsellor, by looking at his or her own generational experience or inexperience with disability, religious or spiritual upbringing, ethnicity and so on.

This education may be done by a series of exercises that teachers, counsellors, and ministers can explore about their own identities in relation to each of the stated influences. By recognizing the areas in which they are members of dominant groups, counsellors will become more aware of the ways in which such identities can limit their knowledge base and experience, particularly regarding ethnic minority cultures of which they are not members. Two things germane to individuals or small groups wishing develop awareness are to (a) list the cultural groups of which you are a member, and (b) ask which of the cultural groups listed influences you the most.

Counsellors would do well to pay special attention to the role of privilege, defined as the advantages one holds as a result of membership in a dominant group. M. McGoldrick, in her book, *Revisioning Family Therapy: Culture, Race and Gender in Clinical Practice*, uses excerpts from research entitled: *The Invisible Knapsack of Unearned White Privileges* by Peggy McIntosh. A couple of representative examples include: I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will be waited on and will not be followed or harassed. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence and capabilities of their race and if a cop stops me, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

Current research suggests that at the individual level, prejudice is over when one holds the "knowledge structures" to categorize others as having multiple group's memberships and identities. This framework helps counsellors avoid making inaccurate generalizations on the basis of a client's physical appearance, language abilities and/or family name. Dr. L. N. Pollard, observes ... "those who in light of the Bible cannot articulate a biblical critique of their culture of origins' cherished and transmitted values are not qualified to objectively evaluate another culture." (Pollard 2004).

Using the following guide, a therapist/counsellor attempting to understand an older man of East Indian or West Indian heritage would not consider as sufficient a general understanding of values, beliefs, and behaviours considered common among East Indian/West Indian people. Rather, the counsellor/therapist would want answers to the following questions:

1. What are the age-related issues and generational influences on this client, particularly given his status as a second-generation immigrant?
2. What is this man's experience with disability/etc? Might he have a disability that is not readily apparent or have experienced the impact of disability as a partner, parent, or child?
3. What was his religious upbringing, and what are his current beliefs and practices? (Same hypothesis would be that he is Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, but any one of these cannot be assumed.)
4. What is the meaning of his ethnic identity in an urban area where non-Indians often mistake him to be Pakistani or Arab?

5. What is his current socioeconomic status as defined by his occupation, income, education, gender, marital status, ethnicity, community and family name?
6. What is the client's sexual orientation, not assuming heterosexuality simply because he has been married?
7. Might he hold indigenous heritage in his pre-immigration history?
8. What is his national identity (Indian, that of his country of residence, both or neither) and primary language (Hindi, English or other language)?
9. What gender-related information (e.g. regarding roles, expectations, and identity as a whole) is relevant?

It is more and more common to find individuals who hold more than one cultural identity simultaneously. Bi-ethnic, tri-ethnic or multi-ethnic people may identify strongly with the differing minority and majority identities of their parents and grandparents. For example, in Hawaii, the same individual may identify as Indigenous Hawaiian or Aboriginal person and as an American. Similarly, many individuals hold a combination of ethnic and non-ethnic identities.

CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH

The concept of terminology may not sound very interesting, but understanding commonly used concepts is an essential aspect of cross-cultural work. A counsellor's assumptions, knowledge, experience, and reference points are all communicated to clients through the use of language. The majority of therapists in the USA are Euro-American (95% of US psychologists). Research indicates that Euro-Americans commonly do not think of themselves as having a culture (Pack-Brown, 1999), suggesting that therapists' judgments may be affected by influences of which they are unaware. Learning why terms have different meanings for different cultures and even different individuals can help to bring some of these assumptions and biases into awareness. Four of the most frequently used/or confused terms in multicultural literature are culture, race, ethnicity, and minority.

I. Culture

Culture is an inclusive term but also the most general. Definitions of culture abound, but common to most is the idea that culture consists of the "shared elements" involved in "perceiving, believing, evaluation, communicating, and acting" that are passed down from generation to generation with modifications. Shared elements include language, history, and geographic location. Frederick D. Harper contends culture can be defined broadly as the sum of intergenerationally transmitted and cross-culturally acquired lifestyle ways, behaviour patterns, and products of a people that include their language, music, arts and artefacts, beliefs, interpersonal styles, values, habits, history, eating preferences, customs, and social rules (Harper, 2003).

Although culture is often equated with race and ethnicity, the most commonly accepted definitions of culture say nothing about biological links (which the concept of race implies, and as such is broad enough to include people of non-ethnic groups as well). For example, Muslim religious communities within many cities in the US and Canada include people of African and Arab, African-American, Pakistani, East Indian, Indonesian, and Middle Eastern descent. For many Muslims, the mosque functions as a cultural centre, providing social, financial, and spiritual support for its members.

In North America, prejudiced attitudes emanating from the dominant Judeo-Christian society tend to reinforce senses of separateness among many types of Muslims, which in turn increases the latter's sense of themselves as a culture.

In his January, 2005 lecture, "World Views, Contemporary Culture, and Adventist Education," Dr. Humberto M. Rasi delineated four fundamental questions:

- Who Am I? - The nature, meaning, and purpose of humans.
- Where am I? - The nature and extent of reality.
- What is wrong? - The causes of disorder, injustice, suffering, and evil.
- What is the solution? - Ways of overcoming the obstacles to human fulfilment.

God's followers have ceaselessly fought the battles for the mind. Jesus is cognizant of the battle observed: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32 NIV).

The lecturer cited three major worldviews that compete for allegiance in our culture:

1. Theism says the existence of a personal God who is Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign of the Universe, and who is the source of justice and love. Judaism, Christianity and Islam have nurtured theism, with Christianity giving trust to shaping the philosophy, science and social institutions of the modern world.
2. Pantheism: suggests the Deity with the forces and workings of nature.
3. Naturalism explains reality in terms of physical elements, forces and processes.

The Biblical worldview was cited as Ellen White's over arching narrative of the Great Controversy in seven key events that impact human existence:

- Creation in heaven: God creates a perfect habitat and its intelligent and free creatures.
- Rebellion in heaven: An exalted creature rebels and is banished to Earth with his followers.
- Creation: God creates plant and animal life in this planet, including the first pair of humans.

- **Fall:** Tempted by the rebel, they disobey God and the entire web of life suffers the consequences.
- **Redemption:** Christ, the Creator. Comes to earth to rescue fallen humanity and offer salvation.
- **Second Coming:** Christ returns in glory and grants immortality to the redeemed.
- **Consummation:** Christ executes final judgment, eliminates evil and restores the entire creation.

In sum, Christians (Seventh-day Adventists) subscribe to the belief that the Bible provides a comprehensive, complete, coherent and reliable revelation of God on which humans can anchor their trust, convictions, values and behaviour. Additionally, the Holy Bible leads us to know Jesus the Christ, our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Friend and soon coming King.

At the heart of our individual thought processes, there is a worldview or assumptions regarding life, the world in which we base our decisions and establish priorities, that helps us chart our way or destiny to the solution, which is redemption through God's love.

II. Race

Originally race was used by European scientists to classify people on the basis of geography and physical characteristics (skin colour, hair texture, or facial features) into groups of genetically related people.

Over time, many of the schemes assumed that races were hierarchically designed, i.e. light-skinned, Christian Europeans at the top. In the United States, until 1967 a common belief was that "white blood" could be tainted by "black blood." To avoid the danger in presenting race as a biological fact, UNESCO's 1970 statement recommends that the concept of ethnic group replace that of race. Whether or not a person uses a racial identification, it is helpful to remember that a racial identity in itself provides little information about an individual; it says nothing about a person's educational level, cultural context, religious upbringing, or current environment. What is most important with regard to racial identity is an understanding of its meaning for the individual.

III. Ethnicity

In terms of understanding the beliefs, values, and behaviours of both clients and therapists, the concept of ethnicity is usually much more informative than that of race. Ethnicity has complications. The term holds different meanings in different countries. In the USA, where Indian Americans joined together early on with African, Asian, and Latino Americans to call for equal rights, the term ethnic minorities assumed inclusion of people of indigenous or Aboriginal heritage.

The term is often used interchangeably with Aboriginal. In Australia and Canada where Aboriginal people see their situations as separate from all subsequent immigrant groups, the term ethnic minority is used to describe only cultures with a history of immigration. Aboriginal people of Canada are often referred to as Canada's first nations in contrast with the second nations (French and English and the Third Nations all subsequent immigrant groups to Canada).

Another problem with the description of people by ethnicity is that ethnic groups are currently labelled very broadly, as in the use of the term Asian for people of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian and even East Indian and Pakistani heritage. The term Hispanic combines into one ethnicity the diverse cultures of Central American Indians, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans. In this situation you either are Latino or not Latino.

IV. Skills and Guidelines

A. General guidelines

Within cultures, knowledge of a culture changes over time that is, across historical periods and over the life span of each individual.

Although it is possible, with deep knowledge of a culture, to delineate skills and knowledge, nearly all of the trends currently being used for these purposes originate in Euro-American culture and, as such, are culture specific. In addition, they are commonly standardized using "populations that explicitly exclude people with disabilities." This is where the Christian Counsellor who loves everyone as Christ did can make a difference.

Although increasing attention is being given to the need for a representative sampling in the development of norms, in most cases samples are either too small or matched on too few variables that could affect responses. The translation of tests originally developed in English is equally problematic; even if linguistic equivalence can be ensured, conceptual and other forms of cultural equivalence do not necessarily follow.

One solution to biases in testing against minority groups is to create new tests that emanate from the value system specific to minority cultures Christian counsellors can do research in this area. For example, an instrument aimed at assessing intellectual abilities in Samoan children would begin with a definition of intelligence from a Samoan cultural perspective and from there develops items that reflect those abilities. A similar approach could be taken in assessing affective constructs such as depression. A Vietnamese Depression Scale has been developed.

Another approach to biases in testing involves adopting a "fluid approach" to assessing intelligence, personality, and behaviour. This is one in which specific strategies are adopted in addition to standardized procedure for the purpose of eliciting additional qualitative data about the client.

B. Specific guidelines

Dr. Freddy A. Paniagua, in Assessing and Treating Culturally Diverse Clients: a Practical Guide, raises relevant questions in the assessment and treatment of multicultural groups, which include the following:

- What should a practitioner do during the first session with an African American client versus an Asian client?
- Would a practitioner treat an American Indian client with the same therapeutic approach as a Latino client?
- What exactly would a practitioner do to assess or treat these groups differently?
- What are some examples of cross-cultural skills a practitioner should display to minimize biases when assessing clients from different multicultural groups?

These questions are more than just clinically relevant; not to answer them may demonstrate deficits of the practitioner in the area of competence and ethnic principles. The Christian counsellor will go “the second mile” to answer such questions because Jesus took people where they were and moved forward.

Asians

When Asians are exposed to verbal communication, they often look quiet and passive, make a great deal of effort to avoid offending others, sometimes answer all questions affirmatively to be polite when they cannot understand the therapist’s questions, and avoid eye contact (Paniagua, 60).

The counsellors are seen as an authority, hence, licenses, diplomas, books, etc. should be displayed. The counsellor may need to give possible reasons for the cause of the problem. Tangible goals should be presented in the first session. It should not be expected by the counsellor that emotional problems or shameful problems would be openly discussed in the early sessions.

Hispanics/Latino

These terms are sometimes used to cover persons of Spanish ancestry, speakers of Spanish and Spanish surnames in the United States (Paniagua, 1998).

Counsellors during the first session should spend a few minutes alone with the father in the interview, if parents are perceived as the centre of the problem. The counsellor should understand some of the clients’ spiritual interpretation of mental disorders. Counsellors may wish to use clients’ explanatory model to produce positive behaviour changes. Counsellors may need to be “prepared to function within both systems.” In-group sessions a problem-focus approach is recommended (Paniagua, 1998).

Indigenous American Indians

The writer uses this term to distinguish from Asian and Caribbean Indians. If an American Indian wanted to be considered for assistance from federal Indian programs in the U.S., he/she must prove his/her status as an "Indian" in terms of the definition established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior. A sure turn off in the first session is to ask, "Are you sure that you meet the definition of an Indian in this country?" Many Indians consider the blood quantum formula "pseudoscientific... and it is still viewed as racist by many Indians" (Jaimes, 1996).

In the first session several persons may come, namely the tribal leader, friends, relatives, the medicine man or woman, and so on. The counsellor should not show disrespect by taking notes. Indians prefer the counsellor to listen. Do not discuss medication as a treatment for the problem. Remember that with many Indians, the present is more important than the future.

African Americans

A heritage of chattel slavery, segregation, and racial prejudice provides obstacles that have burdened Americans of African descent. In addition to continuous pressures of racism and oppression, Black American families face contemporary threats to family stability. Such threats include poverty, widespread drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, communicable diseases, and violent crimes. Without understanding the experience of the Black family, it's not possible to meet the needs of these families.

Issues for the counsellor to have a worldview on are:

1. Be respectful of their history
2. Be aware of the current and historical social support system
3. Be familiar with the value system
4. Be aware of communication barriers which may hinder trust between a Black client and a non-Black counsellor, and use strategies for providing effective systems-based therapy.

To help prevent attribution, discuss racial differences. Do not try to know about family secrets. Assure the client that the church can be included in the assessment and treatment. Referrals made by schools and social welfare agencies may be seen by the client as a threat to his/her autonomy and making family secrets public. Discuss this feeling with the client. Here again the true Christian Counsellor can tune in to the church relatedness and be sensitive to the anxiety about exposing family secrets. Remember how Jesus did not expose the Samaritan woman's secrets?

C. Cultural identity development

Beginning the journey toward personal, professional and organizational multicultural development or competencies through:

- Study of the scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy
- Seek specific knowledge about various cultures
- ** Know the history, adjustment styles, values and attitudes of the culture
- Know your own culture in relation to other culture
- Develop professional expertise relevant to other cultures (you cannot know them all)
- ** Have information the other culture will regard as valuable
- ** Be sensitive to the non-verbal cues, myths, and stereotypes of the culture
- Develop an appropriate faith/learning style
- ** Have the ability to establish empathic rapport with persons from the other culture
- Be prepared to use creative ability to develop new methods for work in the other culture
- ** Know how rights or responsibilities are defined differently in different cultures
- ** Know how the other culture interprets its own rules
- ** Know how differences and similarities are patterned in the other culture and how priorities are set
- ** Be aware of differences in verbal and non-verbal communication styles
- ** Be aware of significant differences and similarities of practices across different culture
- ** Use the other culture's language appropriately
- ** Be able to function comfortably in the new environment without losing the counsellor's own identity
- Develop mechanisms to cope with stress and manage difficulties in the new culture.

Non-ethnic minority counsellors must analyze their worldviews of both groups their own and those of the ethnic minority they intend to work with.

Implications for clinical practice are couched in the following suggestions:

1. "Accept the fact that racism is a basic and integral part of U.S. life and permeates all aspects of our culture and institutions. Know that as a white person you are socialized into U.S. Society.... In other words, all white Euro-Americans are racist-whether knowingly or unknowingly" (Sue and Sue 2003, 263).
2. Understand that the level of white racial identity development in a cross-cultural encounter affects the process and outcome of an interracial relationship (including counselling/therapy).

3. Work on accepting your own White heritage, but define it in a non-defensive and non-racist manner...
4. Spend time with healthy and strong people from another culture or racial group.
5. Know that becoming culturally aware and competent comes through lived experience and reality. Notify a cultural guide who is willing to help you understand his or her group.
6. Attend cultural events, meetings, and activities led by minority communities. This allows you to hear from church leaders...observe leadership in action....
7. When around persons of colour, pay attention to feelings, thoughts, and assumptions that you have when race-related situations present themselves. Where are your feelings of uneasiness, differentness, or outright fear coming from? Do not dismiss or avoid them, attaching meaning to them. Only if you are willing to confront them directly can you unlearn misinformation and nested emotional fears.
8. Dealing with racism means a personal commitment to action. It means interrupting other White Americans (or other nationalities) when they make racist remarks and jokes.... It means noticing the possibility for direct action against bias and discrimination in your everyday life (Sue and Sue 2003).

Note: ** Indirect Quotes (Pedersen and Corley, 2003, pp.195-197)

Summary and Recommendations

Commit your life to the Lord totally and experience true conversion. Read the Bible and cultural histories of groups to be assessed and/or counselled. Take as many multicultural courses and be open to as many developmental experiences as possible. Study racial/cultural identity development and be aware that ethnicity is not a static category, but a complex, multidimensional, evolving construct. The single most helpful and different ingredient of the Christian perspective on the counselling of multicultural populations is the Agape love factor in its truest sense, emanating through the Christian counsellor. In response to a question posed by the Faith and Learning Seminar, "What is the difference between a Christian Counsellor and a non-Christian Counsellor to the client?," the writer offered the observation that the Christian Counsellor exhibiting the love of God calls upon divine help and inspiration to assist the client (kingdom candidate) to become whole again. Dr John Fowler, commenting on and quoting another renowned Christian Counsellor and the writer paraphrase, "The person opposite me in a counselling session is a broken child of God. Only God can rebuild the broken person. The Christian counsellor in the past usually did his/ her best using the secular tools with which they were trained. It is the hope of this initiative that Christian Counsellors will be pointed back to the need of the Agape love factor and pointed forward to the

current thrusts of sensitivity in the worldview of today's counsellors. Above all else, the Christian Counsellor's worldview on sensitivity and love should be as close as humanly possible to that of Jesus the Christ.

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