

**A proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed
at promoting the multidimensional development of the
biblical counsellor**

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A PROPOSED BIBLICAL COUNSELLING SUPERVISION MODEL AIMED AT
PROMOTING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLICAL
COUNSELLOR

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Abstract

Biblical counselling ministry can be defined as the conversational ministry of God's gracious Word, through which people are renewed. However, due to the difficulty of biblical counselling ministry and the need to develop biblical counsellors into maturity, supervision is a vitally important element. Despite its importance, though, there has been very little work done in this crucial area. In particular, there has been little empirical research into the nature, conceptualisation and praxis of biblical counselling supervision. Furthermore, there has been minimal theological reflection on supervision. The premise of this research project, therefore, explored in chapter one, is that the formulation of a practical and theological supervision model will promote the development of biblical counsellors.

The primary question that this research is seeking to address is: what would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

This study answers that question through four tasks, advocated by Osmer's (2008) practical theology paradigm.

The first task is the descriptive-empirical task. Through a pragmatic qualitative empirical research approach, chapter two presents the supervision methods, models and activities that are currently being used in biblical counselling supervision. The research headlines revealed that no model for BC supervision exists, that it is rarely practised in a multidimensional manner (often only two out of four dimensions are focused on), and that there is widespread agreement that supervision is important.

The second task is the interpretive task. By drawing on the empirical research, church history, theological literature, secular counselling literature and biblical data, chapter three interpreted the situation revealed in chapter two. Specifically, the two-dimensional focus—along with the lack of conceptual work regarding a supervision model—was interpreted through the categories of historical factors, logistical factors and theological factors.

The third task is the normative task. By way of exegesis, chapter four answers the question: What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development? It answers this question through a syllogistic proposition: (a) Supervision is a form of discipleship. (b) Discipleship is multidimensional. (c) Supervision, therefore, ought to be multidimensional. The theology in this chapter underpins the model presented in the next.

The fourth task is the pragmatic task. Chapter five presents the culmination of the research project by proposing the MULTIDIMENSIONAL biblical counselling supervision model. This model provides a practical and theological foundation for biblical counselling supervisors to promote the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.

OPSOMMING

Bybelse beradingsbediening kan omskryf word as die omgangsbediening van God se genadige Woord waardeur mense hernuwe word. Weens die ingewikkeldheid van Bybelse beradingsbediening en die noodsaaklikheid daarvan om Bybelse beraders tot volwassenheid te laat ontwikkel, is supervisie van die allergrootste belang. Tog is daar, ten spyte van die belangrikheid daarvan, weinig werk in hierdie kritieke area gedoen. Daar is in die besonder weinig empiriese navorsing oor die aard, konseptualisering en praksis van Bybelse beradings-supervisie gedoen. Verder is minimale teologiese refleksie oor supervisie gedoen. Die premis van hierdie navorsingsprojek, wat in hoofstuk een ondersoek word, is dus die formulering van 'n praktiese en teologiese supervisiemodel wat die ontwikkeling van Bybelse beraders sal ondersteun.

Die primêre kwessie wat hierdie navorsing onder die loep wil neem, is: Hoe sal 'n voorgestelde Bybelse beradings-supervisie-model, gerig op die bevordering van die multidimensionele ontwikkeling van die Bybelse berader, daar uitsien?

Die studie beantwoord hierdie vraag aan die hand van die vier take wat deur Osmer (2008) se praktiese-teologie-paradigma voorgestaan word.

Die eerste taak is die beskrywend-empiriese taak. Hoofstuk twee bespreek die supervisiemetodes, -modelle en -aktiwiteite wat tans in Bybelse beradingsbediening gebruik word aan die hand van 'n pragmatiese gehalte- empiriese navorsingsbenadering. Die navorsingsopskrifte het onthul dat daar geen model vir Bybelse beradingsbediening bestaan nie, dat dit selde op 'n multidimensionele wyse beoefen word (daar word dikwels slegs op twee van die vier dimensies gefokus), en dat daar wyd verspreide ooreenstemming oor die relevansie van supervisie is.

Die tweede taak is die interpretatiewe taak. Hoofstuk drie ontleed die situasie wat deur hoofstuk twee aan die lig gekom het deur te put uit die empiriese navorsing, kerkgeskiedenis, teologiese literatuur, sekulêre beradingsliteratuur en Bybelse data. Spesifiek die tweedimensionele fokus – saam met die gebrek aan konseptuele werk met betrekking tot 'n supervisiemodel – is deur die kategorieë van geskiedkundige faktore, logistieke faktore en teologiese faktore geïnterpreteer.

Die derde taak is die normatiewe taak. Hoofstuk vier beantwoord die vraag by wyse van eksegeese: Wat is die Bybelse beginsels ten opsigte van Bybelse beradings-supervisie wat gebruik kan word om multidimensionele ontwikkeling te bevorder? Dit beantwoord die vraag

deur 'n sillogistiese stelling: (a) Supervisie is 'n vorm van dissipelskap. (b) Dissipelskap is multidimensioneel. (c) Supervisie behoort dus multidimensioneel te wees. Die teologie in hierdie hoofstuk ondersteun die model wat in die volgende hoofstuk voorgestel word.

Die vierde taak is die pragmatiese taak. Hoofstuk vyf bevat die kulminasie van die navorsingsprojek deur die MULTIDIMENSIONELE Bybelse beradings supervisie-model voor te stel. Hierdie model bied 'n praktiese en teologiese grondslag vir Bybelse beradings supervisors om die multidimensionele ontwikkeling van die Bybelse berader te bevorder.

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“This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.”

Psalms 34:6.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Proposed title and key terms

A proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.

1.1.1 Key terms

Supervision; supervision method(s); supervisor; supervisee; multidimensional development; biblical counselling; church.

1.1.2 List of abbreviations

ACBC Association of Certified Biblical Counselors
BC Biblical Counselling
PC Pastoral Counselling
PT Practical Theology
MP Modern Psychology
4C Four-dimensional (Content, Character, Competence, Community)
BCM Biblical Counselling Movement
BCC Biblical Counseling Coalition
CCEF Christian Counseling and Education Foundation

1.2 Defining key words

Several key words will be used throughout this study. The section below will provide a brief rationale for what they refer to and why they are used as they are.

1.2.1. Supervision

Supervision, as used in this project, is to be understood as a specific form of discipleship that facilitates the multidimensional development of the counsellor. A brief rationale for this definition is provided below and explained in detail in chapter four of this research project.

When used in the context of clinical counselling or therapy, a generally accepted definition of clinical supervision is that proposed by Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth (cited by Tan & Scalise, 2016:136) who describe it as “an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designed to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person.” The helpfulness of this definition is the way in which it highlights the role of the supervisor as one who facilitates the development of skill in the counsellor. Supervision, in this definition, is designed to promote counselling competence. From this widely-regarded definition, it may be inferred that an essential component of supervision is skills training or development in competence.

Nevertheless, as a definition of supervision within the field of biblical counselling, this popular definition is inadequate because it excises the spiritual realities and theological truths that are fundamental to the practice of biblical counselling.

Tan (2009:56) provides a more theologically informed definition when he includes the counsellor’s spiritual formation within his definition of supervision. By highlighting this spiritual dimension, in addition to the dimension of skills development, Tan indicates that development in more than one dimension is important. However, as this study will seek to show, the researcher also considers Tan’s definition of supervision to be incomplete.

Building on the work of Dr Robert Kelleman’s paradigm in *Equipping counselors for your church* (2011), the researcher will argue that the supervisor ought to employ methods that seek the multidimensional development of the supervisee. Details on what this refers to are under multidimensional development (1.2.5) below.

In the absence of a theologically conceptualised definition of biblical counselling (BC) supervision in the available literature, the researcher’s proposed definition is that BC supervision is a specific form of discipleship. Supervision ought to be conceptualised as a form of discipleship because, from a theological perspective, they inhabit many overlapping conceptual realities. Indeed, as Tan and Scalise (2016:144) assert, “good Christian supervision will include some spiritual direction and discipleship training as a crucial component”. The researcher, while partly agreeing with this, is deliberately going beyond Tan and Scalise’s assertion when proposing that supervision itself be considered a form of discipleship.

Further reasons to make this connection between supervision and discipleship will be provided in the chapters to follow. For now, the tabulated summary below highlights some of the similarities between discipleship and supervision:

Discipleship	Biblical Counselling Supervision
<i>Discipleship is primarily a relationship</i> (Mark 1:16-20, 3:13-15) because the Lord Jesus calls his disciples to follow Him, not simply adhere to a theoretical belief system. This assertion of discipleship as relational is supported by Byrley (2014) who argues that “the term <i>mathētēs</i> occurs very frequently in the NT. Its fundamental meaning is one who seeks to learn from another. A disciple is not only a partaker of information, but also one who seeks to become like his or her teacher (Luke 6:40).”	BC Supervision is <i>fundamentally relational</i>, and shares this in common with other forms of counselling or psychotherapeutic supervision. According to Watkins (cited by Johnson, 2007:259) “Supervision takes place in a relational context: It is first and foremost a relationship”.
As Byrley (2014) argues, discipleship is a <i>process</i> of learning and becoming. The disciples left behind their former lives and devoted themselves fully to Jesus. Thus, there is a developmental aspect to discipleship: “a ‘disciple’ is someone who is engaged in transformative learning. This is a kind of learning where the student’s understanding of reality is changed and keeps changing, leading to a transformed experience and life” (Marshall & Payne, 2016:69).	Worthington (1987:72) argues that supervision is also a developmental counsellor <i>process</i>. It therefore seems appropriate to use the term process when describing the developmental progress of a biblical counsellor. R.A Hogan proposed that a counsellor’s supervision process may include distinct stages of development (cited by Tan & Scalise, 2016:140). Other psychologists have built on Hogan’s work to emphasise the developmental approach to supervision (Tan & Scalise, 2016:141).
<i>A mentoring relationship</i>: Approximating one’s teacher, insofar as one’s teacher approximates the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 11:1). This again speaks to the issue of relationship, but also adds the concepts of generativity, imitation and transformation—the individual who	Supervision is also a generative activity in that it seeks to develop emerging counsellors through a relational discipleship process. This happens through <i>mentoring</i>; learning imitatively from one’s supervisor—thus the

becomes a disciple must alter their mind and behaviour into conformity with Christ (Johnson, 2017:98), and then teach others to do the same.	supervisor is a role model to the supervisee (Tan, 2009:54)
<i>Multidimensional:</i> Discipleship involves knowing the commands of Jesus, as well as obeying the commands of Jesus, in the context of community and, finally, bringing others into the same experience (Matt 28:16-20). Thus we can say that being a disciple of Jesus “necessarily involves learning truth and content conveyed in words, but it also must involve the learning of a new way of being and living” (Marshall & Payne, 2016:70). Consequently, it is unsurprising that biblical scholar Michael Wilkins (1992:124) writes that “discipleship in the way that Jesus directed it is... multidimensional. Jesus impacted the whole person in every area of life. When I am helping someone to grow as a disciple, I must also help that person develop in every area of life.” This assertion, that discipleship is multidimensional, will be explored exegetically in the normative task of the research project.	<i>Multidimensional:</i> as Kellemen (2014:17) has argued, the resume of the biblical counsellor involves four dimensions: content, competence, character and community. The corollary to this, of course, is that “the supervisory role is multifaceted” (Kellemen, 2011:270). Multidimensional training implies the need for multifaceted, multidimensional, development—and, correspondingly, multidimensional supervision.
<i>The Word of God and prayer</i> play a central role in making disciples (Acts 6:4). David Peterson (2009:234), commenting on Acts 6:4, argues that the apostles “are presented as a model for those who would lead and inspire such [church]	BC supervision requires the use of the <i>Scriptures and prayer</i>. This is because biblical counselling recognises that “God is man’s basic Environment...God is around us, in us and with us. He knows (and cares) about every word on our lips

communities. The ministry of the word doubtless included the whole pattern of preaching the gospel and teaching about its implications... Even though the word of God is represented in Acts as the powerful means of winning converts and growing churches...prayer was a necessary accompaniment because it expresses dependence on the Lord, to give boldness in speaking the word, to protect its agents, and to provide opportunities for the word to be heard and believed.”	and every thought in our minds” (Adams, 1979:39-40). Therefore, in BC supervision, we must recognise God’s presence and seek to please him in all we do. One of the primary ways we express our dependence upon God in counselling is by consulting his Word and praying for wisdom. Doing this in supervision will also promote the supervisee’s awareness of God’s unseen presence (Campbell, 2007:326).
Discipleship involves <i>spiritual warfare</i> (Eph 6:10-20) as we learn how to stand firm in the Gospel in the midst of persecution, spiritual attack and suffering. This applies to biblical counsellors and BC supervisors because “if you are doing ministry, you’ve got a target on your back” (Emlet, 2017:23).	Supervision involves <i>spiritual warfare</i> (Worthington, 1987:75). In this way, we see that, like discipleship, BC supervision is an expression of pastoral ministry that requires help and protection from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Table 1.1: The conceptual overlap between discipleship and biblical counselling supervision

Because both supervision and discipleship inhabit these overlapping conceptual domains, it is helpful to conceptualise supervision as a form of discipleship. Indeed, it is because of these significant similarities that the researcher agrees with Ed Welch (2016) who states that, “All supervision is a form of discipleship.”

Therefore, activities that traditionally are associated with discipleship, such as the explicit use of Scripture and prayer, accountability, an emphasis on personal holiness, etc., are also valuable—even important—to practice in BC supervision. BC supervision therefore, as a particular form of discipleship, can make use of the spiritual tools associated with discipleship as it seeks the multidimensional development of the supervisee/counsellor.

1.2.2 Supervision method(s)

There are a variety of supervision methods (Dykstra, 1999:1188). These different methods include, amongst others, face-to-face meetings, online (Skype) meetings, written self-reports, audio or video recordings and live observation (Dykstra, 1999:1188). Supervision can be done individually, in pairs, or even in larger group settings (Altmaier, 1999:1219).

Supervision will also vary in frequency and focus, depending on the developmental needs or stages of the supervisee and the supervision relationship (Hill, 2001:76-79; Johnson, 2007:261). For this reason, the developmental aspect to supervision is going to be included when finally proposing a multidimensional model.

Another factor to consider in the selection of supervision methods is the ministry context in which the supervision is taking place. This aspect of context—national, geographic, etc.—is also going to be explored in the research that follows.

Finally, the research project also explores which supervision methods are being used currently, why they have been chosen, and what role they play in promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.

1.2.3 Supervisor

The definition of supervisor will inevitably be influenced by one's conceptualisation of supervision—the role (of supervisor) flows from the concept (of supervision).

With a theological conceptualisation of BC supervision, the researcher's definition of a supervisor is necessarily theological and pastoral. In this theological vision, the supervisor is a disciple who has the opportunity—even the responsibility—to disciple the counsellor/supervisee (Worthington, 1987:75). The BC supervisor is a disciple-making disciple.

This view has a necessary corollary – namely that, as articulated above, supervision ought to be inherently relational (Hill, 2001:70). According to Stevenson, Eck and Hill, an effective supervisor is a genuine mentor (cited in Tan, 2009:59). To be an effective mentor, and to facilitate the development of the counsellor, the BC supervisor must be a model of Christian maturity (Tan & Scalise, 2016:144).

As an effective mentor, a model of maturity, and as a disciple-maker, it is necessary for the BC supervisor to demonstrate the character qualities enumerated in biblical texts that describe the criteria for spiritual leadership (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9).

Furthermore, the BC supervisor ought to have a profound knowledge of the Scriptures, as well as an ability to employ the various spiritual disciplines in supervision (Tan & Scalise, 2016:144). The BC supervisor must also be able to provide meaningful evaluation and feedback on counselling scenarios because of their goal to upskill and develop the novice counsellor (Kellemen, 2011:296-301). The BC supervisor is able to help the supervisee deepen and clarify theological convictions during the supervision process. Finally, the BC supervisor models healthy relationships by being embedded in reciprocal relationships of love and care (Kellemen, 2011:193-195). As Kellemen (2011:197) puts it, “if we are to equip others in the 4Cs, then we have to be growing in the 4Cs.”

The BC supervisor, in other words, models multidimensional maturity.

1.2.4 Supervisee / biblical counsellor

This refers to the biblical counsellor who meets with the BC supervisor for supervision, support, evaluation, training, and ongoing development. The supervisee is thus also a biblical counsellor. They might be a counsellor-in-training, a graduated novice counsellor, or they might be a seasoned biblical counsellor who simply values ongoing supervision.

A biblical counsellor is a person who, having received training, practices the conversational ministry of God’s Word.

It is helpful, for the sake of clarity at this stage in the research project, to contrast biblical counselling with pastoral counselling. Pastoral counselling generally refers to a form of counselling in which psychologically trained religious leaders (whether they be pastors, rabbis, imams or other) provide a therapeutic service. Pamela Cooper-White (2004:131) defines pastoral counselling:

as a distinctive form of counselling in which the full resources, theoretical knowledge, and clinical methods of secular psychology and psychotherapy are brought together with pastoral theological method and practice to provide a holistic approach to psychotherapy that honours and integrates the spiritual dimension of each patient’s life and experience.

Thus, a pastoral counsellor seeks integration when developing their counselling methods. The pastoral counsellor is going to integrate theological and secular resources when seeking to solve a counselling problem, thereby allowing psychological theories to play a constitutive role.

Many who identify as Christian counsellors would make a similar statement. Christian counsellors and pastoral counsellors would generally argue that it is necessary to augment the Scriptures with the knowledge and methods of secular psychology (Lambert, 2016:29).

However, in contrast to this belief regarding integration, a biblical counsellor would insist that the Scriptures provide a sufficient resource for the ministry of counselling. Biblical counsellors believe that Scripture, and the subsequent theological categories it generates, play a primary constitutive role. Heath Lambert (2016:30) quotes David Powlison who describes the biblical counselling position in the following way:

Do secular disciplines have anything to offer to the methodology of biblical counseling? The answer is a flat no. Scripture provides the system for biblical counseling. Other disciplines—history, anthropology, literature, sociology, psychology, biology, business, political science—may be useful in a variety of secondary ways to the pastor and the biblical counselor, but such disciplines can never provide a system for understanding and counseling people.

Therefore, the biblical counsellor is not seeking to integrate theology with the methods of secular psychology. This issue of integration remains an area of ongoing disagreement between pastoral/Christian counsellors and biblical counsellors. The pastoral counsellor seeks to blend the insights of secular psychology with theology, whereas the biblical counsellor seeks to build a system for counselling from their theological framework. Other disciplines may play a valuable secondary role but cannot give the counsellor what is needed for building a counselling framework. Pastoral counsellors seek integration; biblical counsellors do not.

Thus, biblical counsellors are pastoral caregivers who provide a theological perspective on the questions, problems and troubles their counselees face. Biblical counselling ministry, as a subset of pastoral ministry, requires that the practitioner be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel (Henderson, 2008:31). This is because the supervisee's relationship with the Lord is central both in how they counsel, as well as in the supervision relationship. The supervisee's faith is integral due to the fact that an "essential goal of Christian supervision should be the facilitation of the spiritual growth of the supervisee" (Tan & Scalise, 2016:144). This, amongst others, is a key difference

between a Christian conceptualisation of counselling supervision and a secular conceptualisation of counselling supervision.

The biblical counselling supervisor aims to help the supervisee grow in faithful, loving service to the Lord Jesus Christ through pursuing multidimensional development.

1.2.5 Multidimensional (four-dimensional)

In his book, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, Kellemen (2011:179-200) developed the concept of Four-Dimensional Equipping. Throughout this project, the researcher will be using the term *multidimensional* to refer to Kellemen's Four-Dimensional (4C) paradigm. This paradigm is derived from Kellemen's exegesis of Romans 15:14.

In that text, the apostle Paul writes, "I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another."

This verse, Kellemen argues, provides the biblical portrait of what the mature pastoral caregiver—and thus biblical counsellor—looks like. Kellemen (2011:183) helpfully tabulates the four dimensions of the ideal biblical counsellor.

Below is the researcher's adjusted version of Kellemen's table.

Dimension	Textual Reference from Romans 15:14
• Character	"Full of Goodness"
• Content	"Filled with Knowledge"
• Competence	"Competent to Instruct one another"
• Community	"brothers and sisters/one another"

Table 1.2: The four dimensions of the ideal biblical counsellor

In this text, the apostle Paul makes a positive assessment of the Roman Christians. This positive assessment was made because they were characterised by moral excellence, as well as a genuinely comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith (Morris, 1988:509). In addition to their Christlike character and their biblical knowledge, these Christians also had the ability or competence to admonish one another. Morris

(1988:509) says that this verse points to the reciprocal ministry of the members exercising pastoral oversight amongst each other. In other words, to quote the title of Jay Adams' landmark book (1970), the church members in Rome were *competent to counsel* one another. Finally, it must be noted that they were relationally connected: they are brothers and sisters in Christ, and as such, they are both givers and receivers of pastoral care.

In summary, the Roman Christians demonstrated maturity in various dimensions—relationally, they helped “one another,” characterologically, they were “full of goodness,” intellectually they were “complete in knowledge,” and functionally they were “competent to instruct one another.” (Mounce, 1995:266). This verse, then, provides a picture of multidimensional maturity.

Kellemen (2011:193) describes it this way: “Competent biblical counsellors live and grow together in community as they commune with Christ and connect with the body of Christ.” Kellemen highlights how all four components are needed when seeking to identify what the ideal counsellor looks like.

Content, competence, character, and community comprise the four dimensions that the author is referring to when he describes multidimensional development. Biblical counselling supervision ought to result in the multidimensional development of the supervisee so that well-rounded, multidimensional counsellors are developed (Kellemen, 2011:298-299; Tan & Scalise, 2016:152-153).

The inevitable implication of multidimensional development is that “the supervisory role is multifaceted” (Kellemen, 2011:270). The supervisor must be aware of the different facets involved in multidimensional supervision, so that the supervision can be genuinely helpful in promoting development in each dimension.

1.2.6 Biblical counselling

There are a number of scholars, practitioners, and organisations that define biblical counselling. The various definitions are complementary rather than contradictory. Several definitions will be considered below, before the researcher supplies his own. It is also worth noting the similarity and difference between the term supervision and biblical counselling: supervision, in this research project, refers to a specific form of discipleship that facilitates the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor. Biblical counselling, as will be seen below, could also be conceptualised as a specific form of

discipleship—but with an emphasis on sanctification and personal renewal. It is this emphasis on *development* (rather than sanctification) that particularly distinguishes supervision from counselling.

1.2.6.1 Biblical counselling definitions

Different definitions are considered below:

- The Biblical Counseling Coalition: Perhaps the most widely agreed upon definition for Biblical Counselling is the one articulated by the Biblical Counseling Coalition. In their confessional statement, they define biblical counselling in the following way (MacDonald *et al.*, 2013:438):

Biblical counseling occurs whenever and wherever God's people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.

- Biblical Counselling UK (BCUK): Steve Midgley (2017), executive director of BCUK, defines biblical counselling as:
- Ed Welch (1997:2), faculty member at the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF), defines biblical counselling as “a hybrid of discipleship and biblical friendship”.
- John Henderson (2008:31), Executive Director of the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC), defines biblical counselling as a:

fluid event and process, as part of the Great Commission, whereby one or more theologically and relationally qualified persons provide spiritual, emotional, and

behavioural service, comfort, and guidance in love to one or more persons through the truth and power of God's Word under the ministry of His Holy Spirit.

1.2.6.2 Biblical Counselling definition in this research project

From reflecting on the above-mentioned definitions, it is worth highlighting three important features of biblical counselling. Biblical counselling is:

- *Conversational*, not medical. Counselling consists of the impartation of wisdom through conversation, not the treatment of physical symptoms through medicine. The discipline of biblical counselling is fundamentally about having conversations that are about connecting God's truth to people's lives; it is thus distinct from the discipline of medicine.
- *Theological*, not psychological. This makes it somewhat distinct from traditional pastoral counselling, in the sense that biblical counselling is not grounded in the integration of secular psychological theories with theology, but fundamentally in theology. Scripture teaches us how to understand people, and how to help those people change. Biblical counsellors ground their case conceptualisations and counselling conversations in sound theology derived from careful exegesis.
- *Grace-oriented*, not legalistic. God uses his gracious Word to positively change people—to bring them into an understanding of the Gospel, to promote healing and growth, and to foster the development of wisdom and maturity. Wise biblical counsellors seek to use God's Word of grace, the gospel message, to facilitate this positive change. Therefore, when practiced by faith and received by faith, biblical counselling should always involve the application of the gospel and result in the grace-driven transformation of the counselee.

In view of these characteristics, the researcher's personal definition of biblical counselling is: biblical counselling is the conversational ministry of God's gracious Word, through which people are renewed. It is also worth mentioning at this point that the term nouthetic counselling was a term used to describe the biblical counselling approach initially as it developed under Jay Adams in the USA. Nouthetic counselling eventually became more widely known as biblical counselling. The way in which this term (and the movement) developed will be considered as part of the interpretive task in chapter three.

1.2.7 Church

Throughout the research project, and particularly in chapter three, reference will be made to the church. Unless specifically identified, this term does not refer to a particular church but rather to the church in general. Sometimes the church described in this general way is referred to as the universal church. It is in this sense that the researcher refers to the term church.

1.3 Background

This research is being conducted within the discipline of practical theology. More specifically, it is being conducted within the sub-discipline of pastoral care and counselling. Within that sub-discipline, it specifically focuses on the field of biblical counselling. This focus explains why the literature review and research have its particular limits, and why some topics and authors receive detailed exploration and analysis whilst others do not.

According to Lambert (2016:11), biblical counselling is a theological discipline. Adams (1979:15) similarly argued that “the relationship between counselling and theology is organic; counselling cannot be done apart from theological commitments.”

The logic of the argument is this: People seek help through counselling by seeking to gain wisdom for the questions and troubles they face. God’s Word is able to provide the wisdom they need for those questions and troubles—this, therefore, makes counselling inherently theological.

Furthermore, because the application of theology ought to be done in a gentle and wise manner, in the context of loving relationships, the ideal context for biblical counselling is within the local church, operating under duly ordained pastoral leaders (MacDonald *et al.*, 2013:444). These pastoral leaders, due to their leadership role, should oversee those providing biblical counselling to others. Additional reflection on the nature and role of the pastoral office will be provided further on in the research.

In addition to general oversight, though, biblical counsellors would benefit from counselling supervision specifically. This is because, according to Wiley (cited by Tan & Scalise, 2016:137), counsellors will only attain competence through supervised experience. This argument is supported by Johnson (2007:259), who says that “there is broad agreement that good supervision is a prerequisite for competent functioning.”

What makes BC supervision different is that, due to its overtly theological aims, biblical counsellors require four-dimensional (4C) equipping (Kelleman, 2011:181) as it relates to the ministry of biblical counselling specifically. As mentioned above, throughout this research, Kelleman's four-dimensional (4C) paradigm will be referred to as multidimensional. Dr Robert Kelleman (2011:270) recognised the multifaceted role of the BC supervisor but did not specifically propose a BC supervision model that the supervisor could use.

This study, building on Kelleman's work, seeks to explore what such a multifaceted BC supervision model might look like.

The question, therefore, that this research project seeks to answer is: "What supervision model should be proposed for facilitating the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor?"

The research will include theological exegesis, pastoral reflection, and fieldwork research. This combination of elements ensures that the research will truly be a practical theology project.

Finally, this research will be undertaken with contextual awareness of how this might operate within a diverse South African context, even though much – even most – of the fieldwork will be conducted with churches and ministries of other nationalities. The reason for this is that the Biblical Counselling movement is far more established in the USA than it is in South Africa, thus making qualitative research necessarily more focused elsewhere. However, this broad spectrum of qualitative enquiry will result in the development of a supervision model that will aim to be of use in churches and para-church ministries in South Africa and beyond.

1.4 Research problem statement

Kelleman's multidimensional approach to equipping has a clear theological basis as well as an intuitive appeal. Yet how this approach applies to the issue of biblical counselling supervision, particularly within the local church, is unclear. There is a specific gap in the present knowledge on this subject. Therefore, there is a need to propose a practical theology model for multidimensional biblical counselling supervision.

1.5 Literature study

With the help of the North-West University Library resources, the literature study searches were done on the following databases:

- NEXUS
- SAePublications
- SACat
- ProQuest
- EBSCO Host
- Google Scholar

Below is a summary of the results that the author discerned to be most relevant to the research project at hand.

1.5.1 Dissertations and Theses

- Ashby (1999) explored Stoltenberg, McNeill and Delworth's Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) by following two first-year and two second-year counseling psychology doctoral students across an academic year of experience. One of the major conclusions she makes is that it can be very helpful to a supervisor to be aware of expected developmental changes in organising her or his supervisory approach. This research highlights, then, the importance of the developmental aspect when considering a supervision approach. However, no thought is given to how this might operate within a theological or biblical counselling framework.
- Paessler-Chesterton (2009) investigated and analysed the lived experiences of the counselling supervisees and supervisors. Amongst other findings, she concluded that supervision is an essential component to the growth and competency of counsellors. This research further emphasises the need for supervision research within the field of biblical counselling. She also argued that the researcher is better able to grasp the authentic lived experiences associated with supervision within its own context when a qualitative approach to research is selected. This research confirms the importance of supervision as well as the value in the qualitative approach that the researcher is utilising in this project.
- Nixon (1994) examined the nature of supervision in pastoral counselling. Nixon did this by investigating aspects of supervision in the training of pastoral counsellors. The results of the study indicated that when supervisors established good rapport, set clear goals, gave appropriate feedback, and noted differences between trainee's report of sessions and actual behaviour in sessions, the respondents were satisfied with supervision, and thought their supervision experience contributed to improvement in their counselling

ability. However, Nixon did not explore what dimensions this supervision consisted of. Furthermore, he particularly raised some questions regarding what role theological reflection played in the supervision of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) supervisors. He recommended further research be conducted regarding how AAPC supervisors and supervisees define the theological and pastoral aspects of supervision in their practices. This highlights the importance of theology, and of identifying the different dimensions required for effective counselling supervision.

- Barger (2000) aimed to develop a graduate school training model for counsellor education called the “Self-supervision and Empathic Empowerment Model.” The model sought to incorporate biblical principles and theoretical findings from the counsellor education field. The project focused on the development of the model and sought to test its efficacy. The results of the study indicated that the model helped educate counsellors, mainly through a demonstrable increase in counselling skill. While a potentially helpful model to learn from, there is still a need to develop a more robust multidimensional model that can apply to both novice and seasoned biblical counsellors.

1.5.2 Journal articles

- Tan (2009:54-61) argues that supervisors ought to function as mentors who can model to supervisees how to learn integration. Tan convincingly argues that effective supervision that facilitates learning requires a relationship that is authentic, open, caring and meaningful. Unfortunately, Tan only focuses on the one issue of how Christian counsellors learn integration. Therefore, Tan ignores the biblical counsellor entirely—thereby demonstrating the need for further research.
- Hill (2001:69-80) highlights how supervision is a relational and educational process. The resources of the supervisee need to be discovered and utilised, such that second order therapeutic change is facilitated. This helpfully highlights the agency and inherent potentiality of the supervisee. The weakness of this article is that Hill’s conceptualisation of supervision is grounded primarily in attachment theory rather than in biblical exegesis.
- Campbell (2007:321-327) argues that, in Christian supervision, we need to be aware of all the various relationship dynamics in operation. Some relational

aspects are explicit in the sense that they are visual and immediately present (for example, the supervisor-supervisee relationship). Other aspects are implicit (for example, the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee's counselee). Christian supervision, he rightly argues, needs to take all of these into account. Campbell also here highlights what I would put under the 'character' dimension in Kellemen's conceptualisation because it has to do with the counsellor's relationship with God. The limitations of Campbell's article have to do with the lack of practical methodological strategies, and the fact that he is purely writing for the professional Christian counsellor rather than the biblical counsellor.

- Tan (2007:328-335) argues for the value of incorporating the spiritual disciplines when providing supervision, as long as it is done ethically and with consent.
- Worthington (1987:70-77) argues that there is a responsibility to ensure that lay counsellors have adequate supervision. He cites research by Wiley (1982) to assert that mere counselling experience does not enable counsellors to improve their ability. Instead, Worthington (1987:70) argues that "counselors improved most when receiving regular face-to-face supervision." He then discusses a range of issues connected to the task of supervision. This research highlights the importance of supervision in developing counsellor competence. A weakness in this article is that, like a number of these other articles, Worthington grounds little of what he says in theology or exegesis. Additional work thus needs to be done on providing theological reasons as to why supervision is a responsibility that ought to be taken seriously.
- Hull *et al.* (2016:111-126) discuss supervisory tools that promote the spiritual and ethical development of counselling trainees. There are some helpful insights here, particularly around promoting the supervisee's self-awareness, but the lack of biblical exegesis means that there is nothing distinctly Christian about their perspective.
- Johnson (2007:259-267) argues that it is better when supervising psychologists engage supervisees in connected, collaborative and increasingly reciprocal developmental relationships. This article, although not written from a Christian perspective, has particularly useful insights regarding the nature and dynamics of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Johnson particularly emphasises the quality of the relationship when seeking to foster transformational supervision. Some of these dovetail with a biblical

understanding of discipleship and his insights connect particularly with the dimension of community.

- Bernard (1979:60-68) proposed the popular Discrimination Model, which focused both on counsellor/supervisee skills or functions as well as on the supervisor's approach. Bernard emphasised the importance of the supervisor's role and the need for the supervisor to choose (discriminate) regarding which role to assume at which point in supervision. One of the great insights of this model, in the researcher's view, is how there is an awareness of the need for the supervisory approach to adjust to the developmental stages of the supervisee. This sensitivity to developmental stages, is, in the researcher's view, extremely helpful. The research will draw on Bernard's work in later sections.

1.5.3 Books

- Kellemen (2011) lays out a process for churches who desire to start a biblical counselling ministry. In this process, he exegetes Romans 15:14 and (as mentioned above) argues for a multidimensional understanding of what a biblical counsellor should be. In addition to this, he highlights a range of other important and related aspects to building and overseeing a biblical counselling ministry. His section of supervision is brief and focused on issues such as frequency and numbers. This research project seeks to build on Kellemen's work.
- Lambert (2016) has produced an extended but readable theological treatise, in which he is primarily seeking to show that biblical counselling is a theological endeavour. He defines and defends biblical counselling, and also shows how key doctrines in systematic theology relate to the ministry of biblical counselling.
- Hambrick (2014) writes a chapter in *Scripture and Counseling*, highlighting layers of competency that would exist within a biblical counselling ministry. What he doesn't develop, but which is conceptually inherent within such a model, is the need for supervision within the various layers.
- Tan and Scalise (2016) have written a popular text, *Lay Counseling*, and devote a chapter to the topic of supervision. Although the chapter has a number of informative and helpful insights, it is not written from a biblical

counselling perspective and so has limited usefulness to the biblical counselling supervisor.

- Kellemen and Carson (2015) have edited an excellent book entitled *Biblical Counselling and the Church*. Several insights from this text will strengthen this research, although surprisingly the book does not contain an extended reflection on the task of supervision within the church.
- Hawkins and Shohet (2012) have written an extremely popular supervision handbook in the secular field of the helping professions – *Supervision in the Helping Professions*. This handbook is considered a seminal text in supervision and offers a model of supervision applicable to more than one context and profession. “Used by social workers, psychotherapists, nurses, executive coaches, pastoral ministers and psychologists” (2012:xv), this popular and accessible text is now in its fourth edition. Because of its popularity and the influence of the model, it has been carefully reviewed.
- Watson (2018) has produced a resource related to the field of Christian clinical supervision. *Developing Clinicians of Character* is a Christian integrative approach to foster characterological development in supervisees. Although not written from a biblical counselling perspective, it will nonetheless provide valuable insight related to the formation of character in the process of supervision. As far as the researcher is aware, it is one of the only Christian texts with an explicit focus on character formation within the supervisory process. As such, consulting it in the process of proposing a multidimensional supervision model is crucial.
- Osmer’s *Practical Theology* (2008) provides a helpful model for practical theological interpretation. Osmer develops a framework for practical theological interpretation in congregations by focusing on four key questions or tasks. This model is going to be used throughout the research project and will be explain in further detail below.
- Ward (2017) has written a readable and helpful introduction to practical theology. *Introducing Practical Theology* provides the researcher with additional practical-theological perspectives that can augment the research process. Ward’s evangelical convictions are a welcome addition to Osmer’s excellent model.

1.5.4 Conferences

- Biblical Counselling in the Local Church (February 2017)

This was hosted by Biblical Counselling UK. The researcher did not attend this conference personally but listened to the audio resources. The lecture by Steve Midgely was helpful in enabling pastors to identify the nature, function, and context of biblical counselling.

1.6 Research question(s)

1.6.1 Primary research question

What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions

1. 6.2.1 What supervision methods, models, and activities are currently being practised to promote multidimensional counsellor development?
1. 6.2.2 Why are these methods, models, and activities being used?
1. 6.2.3 What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?
1. 6.2.4 What counselling supervision model can be proposed, and what counselling supervision methods can be suggested, that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors?

1.7 Study aim and objectives

1.7.1 Aim

The main aim of this study is to develop a multifaceted BC supervision model with the goal of promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. This would enable supervisors to more effectively serve and develop their supervisees, which would, in turn, increase the quality of care that counselees receive.

1.7.2 Objectives

Through exegesis, pastoral reflection, and drawing on fieldwork research, the researcher is seeking to—

1.7.2.1 Identify the major supervision methods, models and/or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors.

1.7.2.2 Understand why these different BC supervision methods/models are being used.

1.7.2.3 Discern the relevant biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development.

1.7.2.4 Propose a new BC supervision model, which would include suggested supervision methods, which effectively promotes the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

1.8 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that proposing a new multidimensional BC supervision model can assist BC supervisors in promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

1.9 Research methodology

As Breed (2013) has argued, the researcher's meta-theoretical points of departure must be declared openly in practical-theological research. A meta-theoretical perspective, according to Osmer (2008:58), consists of the researcher's assumptions about reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology) and science (philosophy of science). These assumptions transcend particular research projects and should be declared openly because the researcher's meta-theoretical orientation determines the way in which the field of research is approached and interpreted. A brief comment on these three assumptions will follow.

1.9.1 The elements of a metatheoretical perspective

Every researcher has a metatheoretical perspective, and three crucial elements worthy of consideration are the researcher's worldview, the researcher's hermeneutics, and the researcher's philosophy of science. Each will be reflected on below.

1.9.1.1. Worldview

First, the researcher must declare what view of reality he/she embraces—this is commonly known as one's worldview. One's worldview determines how one experiences and observes reality, and thus exerts an enormous influence on doing research. As De Wet and Pieterse (2013) say:

A person's worldview forms the thought construct through which the framework for the coherence of what is experienced as reality is compiled in a pre-scientific manner... The worldview is the big picture that determines every person's daily decisions and actions.

An additional definition that explains the concept of worldview helpfully is that of James Sire (2020:6), who writes that:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.

Therefore, because the researcher's worldview is extremely influential in shaping how he or she thinks about knowledge, it is important for every researcher to be epistemologically self-aware. This epistemological self-awareness aims to help the researcher be thoughtful in how they think about knowledge, and how their research results in new knowledge being produced.

1.9.1.2. Hermeneutics

Secondly, in addition to epistemology, issues of hermeneutics are also important because "every researcher works with an underlying view regarding the way in which the observed

phenomenon can be validly understood” (Breed, 2013). The goal, of course, is that a non-manipulative relationship would exist between the researcher and the field of research. In this research project, the researcher endeavours to have a relationship of integrity with the field of research.

1.9.1.3. Philosophy of science

Thirdly, questions related to the philosophy of science must be considered. This is especially important in the field of Pastoral Care because (unlike the social sciences) the relationship between theory and praxis lies at the heart of theoretical principles involved with practical theological science (Breed, 2013). The researcher identifies a problem or need in the world, explores the relevant biblical principles, and suggests a possible solution to the problem.

The researcher’s awareness of these three elements is important because

when the constitutional determinants of a researcher’s worldview are not taken into consideration and are not brought to the surface and evaluated by means of critical introspection, there is a risk of narrow-mindedness, blindness and ideological limitedness (De Wet and Pieterse, 2013).

Furthermore, De Wet and Pieterse (2013) go on to assert that without this metatheoretical self-awareness, the researcher practices blind science!

However, when the researcher’s metatheory is declared, then he will be able to consistently convey the implications of the research through the investigation and will also be able to answer the questions posed by other approaches to the research field of Practical Theology (Breed, 2013). According to Naugle (cited by De Wet & Pieterse, 2013), this approach avoids the arrogance of modernism and the despair of postmodernism. Rather than falling into either absolutism or relativism, the researcher who is aware of their meta-theoretical points of departure can approach the field of research with both humility and confidence with regard to the gaining of, and reflection on, knowledge (De Wet & Pieterse, 2013).

1.9.2 A reformed metatheoretical perspective

In this investigation, the researcher embraces the worldview based on the perspective of the reformed theological tradition. This reformed approach will undergird the entire research study. In the reformed worldview, Scripture serves as the primary source of interpretation (Wolters, 2005:7). Man can only clearly observe the way God is working in the world, can

only see the world's true condition, and can only see the world's true destiny, once he views reality through the lens of Scripture (Calvin, 2011:70).¹ According to De Wet and Pieterse (2013):

The source of the light that shines through Scripture onto the reality in which we live originates from the fact that God reveals Himself through his Word... Scripture provides the observer with an authoritative source to interpret that which is observed from reality in a trustworthy and sufficient manner.

These reformed metatheoretical commitments will influence the approach to the field of research in the following manner:

- The researcher will have an expectation that Scripture will provide illumination onto the field of research. This means that Scripture interprets, illumines, and even guides the behavioural praxis being researched through employing biblical categories. According to De Wet and Pieterse (2013), "Scripture is important for our interpretation of the praxis when considering the question of whether the praxis is good from our metatheoretical angle."
- There will be an expectation that Scripture will provide the normative understanding and boundary markers when it comes to identifying what renewal of praxis entails. If this is not done, there will be a danger that practical theology turns into mere pragmatism. If this happens, then human reason and experience becomes the criterion for determining what renewal involves, rather than biblical truth leading to renewed action.
- There will be a theocentric emphasis rather than an anthropocentric emphasis. This means that God's redemptive and doxological agenda, as it is revealed in Scripture, will help us place the counselling supervision task within its proper perspective.

1.9.3 Research method

The following methods will be used to answer the various research questions:

- In order to study and evaluate what has been said about biblical counselling supervision, a literature analysis of past and present viewpoints regarding

¹ "Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1.

counselling supervision (particularly within the field of Christian/Pastoral Counselling).

- In order to identify the theological components of this research project, the applicable parts of Scripture are identified and exegeses of them are made. Whilst specific texts will be looked at in some detail, the biblical research will seek to cover a large amount of material. In other words, a biblical theology of discipleship will be explored. The wide scope of this exegetical research will mean that most texts will be reviewed and exegeted succinctly. The method for exegesis is the grammatical-historical method (Ash, 2011:85-113). The hermeneutical rules, according to which Scripture is interpreted, are those articulated by Carson (2015:2633-2636).
- The fieldwork will be comprised of qualitative surveys and interviews conducted with those who are providing biblical counselling, as well as with those who are supervising biblical counsellors. More details regarding this qualitative approach will be provided in the following chapter.
- In drawing final conclusions, the collected data are selected and categorised through analysis, interpretation, and synthesis.

1.9.4 Osmer's model of practical theology

Throughout this study, Osmer's model of practical theological interpretation will be used. As reflected in the secondary research questions above, the study is conducted by engaging in the following four tasks as outlined by Osmer: the *Descriptive-Empirical* Task, the *Interpretive* Task, the *Normative* Task, and the *Pragmatic* Task. Each will be briefly summarised below.

1.9.4.1 The descriptive-empirical task

The descriptive-empirical task seeks to know: what supervision methods/models are currently being used to promote multidimensional counsellor development?

Practical theology begins with carefully observing the world. This task involves paying careful attention to one's own social environment, and the gathering of information to discern patterns and dynamics in certain episodes, situations, and contexts (Osmer, 2008:4). Osmer refers to this task as priestly listening. Priestly listening involves prayerful attentiveness so that the researcher is able to discern what is going on.

In this research, the ethical guidelines of the North-West University will be followed. Qualitative empirical research will be used. Because this research method does not (necessarily) treat people as objects, this type of formal attending is consistent with priestly listening.

The goal in this section of the study is to find out what supervision looks like amongst biblical counsellors. The type of research used will include both questionnaires and personal semi-structured interviews.

The first aspect of the research will focus on biblical counsellors: questionnaires will be emailed to biblical counsellors asking them to reflect on their experience of being supervised. The number of participants in terms of biblical counsellors will aim to be between 20-25.

The second aspect of the research will be focused on supervisors: the semi-structured interviews will focus on biblical counselling supervisors. Due to the nuanced nature of this research, the author thought that a personal interview with supervisors would be most consistent with priestly listening. This is because interviews, compared to the questionnaires, are more detailed and allow the research participant to elaborate. Because it takes longer to obtain these types of interviews, only between 7-12 supervisors will be interviewed. The participants will be initially contacted by an independent person.

The aim of the questionnaires, directed to those practising biblical counselling, would be to gather information on the following:

- Identify the methods used when the biblical counsellors were supervised.
- Identify what they found helpful or unhelpful about the supervision method(s) used.
- Identify what emphasis was placed on each of the 4C's, respectively. This includes the following sub-categories:
 - Content: ongoing theological and counselling education.
 - Character: ongoing awareness of the supervisee's spiritual condition.
 - Competence: the ongoing development of the supervisee's counselling skills.
 - Community: developing a discipleship relationship with the supervisee, and encouraging the supervisee to develop biblical friendships generally.
- Identify how their situational context influenced supervision.
- Identify what they perceive to be the most helpful aspects of supervision.
- Identify what they perceive to be the most unhelpful aspects of supervision.

The aim of the semi-structured interviews, directed to those supervising biblical counsellors, would be to gather information on the following:

- How the supervision task is conceptualised.
- Identify whether a particular supervision model is used.
- Ascertain what their supervision sessions tend to look like.
- Identifying what supervision method(s) are used by these supervisors in supervising biblical counsellors.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the method(s) that they use, as they perceive them.
- How effective they consider their supervision is in promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellors that they are supervising. In this section they will be asked about the 4C's particularly.
- The frequency of supervision.
- What role spiritual resources play in their supervision.
- What role other relational resources play in their supervision.

Together, the aim of these questionnaires and interviews would be to identify the major supervision methods and/or models that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. This would enable the researcher to determine what supervision is currently taking place and how effective those have been in developing multidimensional maturity in biblical counsellors.

This research task helps answers the question: what is going on?

1.9.4.2 The interpretive task

The interpretive task will aim to discern: why are these supervision methods/models currently being used?

In this task, the researcher seeks to identify the reasons for the observed phenomena. Specifically, the researcher also needs to understand why certain phenomena exist within certain contexts. The task here is that of *interpretation*. Osmer (2008:83) asserts that because no one perspective can capture the whole truth, the researcher often needs perspectives drawn from the arts and sciences to help him understand complex phenomena.

In the light of this, the questionnaires and interviews will also seek to ascertain why the current supervision methods, activities, and models are being used. Questions to the biblical counsellors would include how their situational context influenced the supervision they are receiving. The question to the biblical counselling supervisors would seek to identify the relevant situational factors that have shaped how they do supervision.

Asking these questions will enable the researcher to gain an appreciation for how the supervisee's context is a factor when it comes to the methods and/or model of BC supervision. This enables the researcher to understand why supervision might look the way it does in different contexts, including the way it looks in South African churches and ministries. The interpretive task is extremely important, not least because it interprets phenomena with an awareness of the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances. Osmer refers to this interpretive process as sagely wisdom. This task requires the interplay of thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation and wise judgement.

This research task answers the question: why is this going on?

1.9.4.3 The normative task:

The normative task will engage the following question: what are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?

In this task, the researcher looks at the Bible to discern the will of God for present realities. In this study, the researcher needs to go beyond Osmer's perspective on the normative task. Smith (2010:112) argues that Osmer's perspective is insufficient because it is not reliant upon the extensive exegesis of biblical texts.

In this section of the research—the normative task—the researcher will therefore be engaging in exegetical study as well as pastoral reflection when conceptualising supervision from a theological and reformed perspective.

As mentioned previously, the researcher will be building on the framework developed by Kelleman (2011:179-200). Other counselling works will be consulted and exegeses will be done of other biblical texts. Works on discipleship will also be consulted. In doing exegesis, the researcher will make use of the grammatical-historical method as formulated in the book *Hearing the Spirit* by Christopher Ash (2011:67-113). It is as we pay close attention to the Bible itself that discerning the will of God for present realities might be more reliably identified and fruitfully pursued.

This research task enables the researcher to answer the question: what ought to be going on?

1.9.4.4 The pragmatic task:

This task is the culmination of the research project and answers the following question: What counselling supervision model can be proposed, and what counselling supervision methods can be suggested, that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors?

This final aspect of the study involves developing a new multidimensional model for biblical counselling supervision. This task is about helping the church respond appropriately to the challenges it encounters. After answering the previous three questions, the research study seeks to move the situation forward in a positive direction by deciding on new and better strategies. These strategies, inherent in the use of the model, aim to promote renewal in praxis.

In this study, a new biblical counselling supervision model will be proposed, as well as a variety of supervision methods suggested, that will facilitate multidimensional competence in biblical counsellors.

Wise judgement will be critically important at this stage, because the model needs to be widely applicable but the particular selection of method(s) used within that model may be influenced by a variety of factors unique to each supervisor-supervisee relationship and context.

Conclusion regarding Osmer's model

Osmer's (2008) model for Practical Theological interpretation is helpful because of how the different elements are identified and interwoven. The challenge with practical theology is that the researcher is eager to see ministry practices renewed, and yet must patiently seek those renewed practices through engaging in a theological scientific method. Engaging in this method with integrity will enable the researcher to be aware of his or her biases, collate accurate data and propose a way forward that is grounded in the actual realities of their environment. The different tasks that Osmer proposes the practical theologian-and-researcher should engage in seek to ensure that the practical theologian-and-researcher carefully studies God's Word, as well as God's world.

Only when God's Word is grasped rightly, and God's world understood clearly, will genuine renewal occur. Of course, this is the noble goal of practical theology—to see the church renewed.

1.9.5 Research design

1.9.5.1 Research pool

The research pool will consist of those practising biblical counselling and those supervising biblical counsellors. It will include those who have received specialised training in biblical counselling, as well as those who have received less specialised training. It will also include biblical counsellors from different genders, denominations and even countries.

It is hoped that this diversity within the research pool will enhance the value of the findings.

1.9.5.2 Method of data collection

Questionnaires will be used for those who have received counselling supervision, whilst personal interviews will be used for those supervising counsellors. The questionnaires will be completed via Google Forms. The personal interviews will be conducted either in person or through a teleconferencing medium and recorded. The forms with the data will then be securely stored in order to safeguard privacy and confidentiality.

1.10 Ethical considerations

When research is conducted on human beings, “the ethical issues are pervasive and complex, since data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings” (Strydom, 2011:113). It is for this very reason that it is important to consider the various ethical aspects of this particular research project.

The two basic categories of ethical responsibility pertain to the participants in the study, and to the discipline of science—the responsibility to be accurate and honest in the reporting of the research (Gravetter & Forzano, cited in Strydom, 2011:114). Throughout this study, the researcher will make every effort to protect the participants from harm and to ensure integrity in the research procedure.

1.10.1 Definition of ethics

Before the ethical aspects are considered, it would be helpful to have a definition of ethics in view. Strydom (2011:114) defines ethics as:

a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

However, as important as this definition is, it remains vital that the individual researcher internalises ethical principles such that ethically guided decision making and the humane treatment of research participants becomes integrated in his or her normal lifestyle (Bless *et al.*, 2006:140, cited in Strydom, 2011:115).

Ethical researchers, not just a reliable definitions of ethics, are what is required.

1.10.2 Ethical considerations for this study

1.10.2.1 Beneficence / no harm

Beneficence refers to the obligation for a researcher to “maximise possible benefits and minimise possible harm” (Strydom, 2011:116). The researcher must seek to avoid any harm that might come to participants. “The fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to participants” (Babbie, 2007:27).

The ethical risk level for this research is very low—the researcher foresees no harm befalling participants. One way that this research project will seek to minimise any possible harm is to inform participants about the nature of the study. This information enables the participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study beforehand. Additionally, the principle of beneficence will be adhered to throughout the study, and so if participants seek to withdraw from the study, they will be able to do so with immediate effect and without negative consequences.

The researcher is confident that this study will yield valuable data whilst producing no harm. The researcher has received an official ethical approval letter granted by North-West University and it can be viewed at Annexure B on page 270.

1.10.2.2 Voluntary participation

There should be no coercion of participants; participation should at all times be voluntary (Strydom, 2011:116). Participants will be informed that their participation is absolutely voluntary and that they ought to feel no undue obligation towards participating in the study. Furthermore, participants will be informed that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.

Voluntary participation will be aided by the fact that contact will not be made by the researcher but by an independent person.

1.10.2.3 Informed consent

An independent person will be asked to contact the participants, inform them about the study and gain their informed consent. Potential participants will be provided with all the necessary information, “so that subjects will fully comprehend the details of the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their potential participation.” (Strydom, 2011:117). No form of deception will be inflicted on the participants as their informed consent is sought.

The informed consent form has been included in the annexures and can be viewed at Annexure A on page 266.

1.10.2.4 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality

Every individual has the right to privacy, “to keep to oneself that which is normally not intended for others to observe or analyse” (Strydom, 2011:119). Confidentiality, in contradistinction to privacy, refers to information that has been obtained and that then needs to be handled in a confidential manner.

Throughout this study, the identity and privacy of participants will be kept confidential, and the obtained data will be handled in a confidential manner.

1.10.2.5 Debriefing of participants

Due to the absence of potential harm, it is highly unlikely that debriefing will be therapeutically necessary for participants of this study. Nevertheless, opportunities to debrief

either personally, via Skype, or via a newsletter will be available. The newsletter will provide the results of the study to participants. Therefore, the choice of whether they want to Skype, meet, or receive the newsletter communicating the results of the findings will be made available to the participants.

1.10.2.6 Publication of the findings

Participants will be informed about the findings of the study in an objective manner that does not impair confidentiality. The report will be written in clear language that contains sufficient (but not excessive) information, and that avoids bias (Strydom, 2011:126).

The goal here is to make the research available and clear so that others might be able to utilise it. Because the participants are practitioners within the field of biblical counselling, the researcher anticipates that the participants themselves will benefit from the publication of the findings. Consequently, when the research is complete, the researcher intends to make it available to the participants.

1.11 Schematic presentation of the research project.

The table below schematically presents the research project.

Research question	Aim and objectives	Research method
What would a counselling supervision model that promotes the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?	To study the possibility of proposing a multidimensional counselling supervision model, with the aim of promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.	In order to develop this model, use will be made of literature studies, a qualitative research method, and exegeses of different biblical texts. Osmer's model (2008) has been selected as the primary model shaping the research process.

What supervision methods/models are currently being used to promote counsellor development?	What does supervision look like amongst biblical counsellors? • Supervisees will be asked to complete questionnaires • Supervisors will be personally interviewed The objective is to identify the major supervision methods, activities and models that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors.	Questionnaires and Interviews (descriptive-empirical research).
Why are these supervision methods/models currently being used?	Why does supervision look like this amongst biblical counsellors? Both supervisees and supervisors will be asked to consider how their context has shaped or influenced the way in which they have received or practised BC supervision. One of the objectives is to gain an appreciation for how the supervisee's context is a factor when it comes to why specific methods/models have been chosen in BC supervision.	Descriptive-empirical research, church history, theology, secular supervision literature.
What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?	To locate biblical data on counselling supervision, which is closely tied to the biblical concept of discipleship. Therefore, exegesis and a theological survey on the topic of discipleship will be conducted.	In order to establish a biblical perspective on multidimensional counsellor development, scriptural texts will be identified and exegeses of them made.

1.12 Proposed research schedule

Chapter	Heading	Time Frame
Chapter 1	Research Proposal	06/2018
Chapter 2	The Descriptive-Empirical Task: <i>What is going on?</i> Identifying the supervision methods/models/activities that are currently being used to promote the development of the biblical counsellor.	12/2018
Chapter 3	The Interpretive Task: <i>Why is this going on?</i> Understand why these supervision methods/models are currently being used.	06/2019
Chapter 4	The Normative Task: <i>What ought to be going on?</i> Locating the biblical texts and scriptural principles regarding BC supervision/discipleship that can be used to promote multidimensional development.	12/2019
Chapter 5	The Pragmatic Task: <i>What is the solution?</i> Formulating a BC supervision model which can be used to facilitate the multidimensional development of a biblical counsellor.	06/2020
Chapter 6	Summary, conclusions, and recommendations	11/2020

Table 1.3: Proposed research schedule

1.13 Other considerations

- The New International Version (UK) Bible (2011 edition) is used throughout for Scripture references.
- The words “Scripture” and “Bible” are used interchangeably with no difference in emphasis or meaning.
- The research has been conducted following the guidelines required by the Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University. See Annexure B on page 273 for the Ethics Approval Certificate granted by the ethics committee.
- When reference is made to the singular male gender, the female gender will also be included and vice versa. However, as a point of style, the researcher will alternate the male and female singular pronouns from chapter to chapter.

CHAPTER 2

AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY REGARDING THE STATE OF SUPERVISION WITHIN THE BIBLICAL COUNSELLING MOVEMENT

2.1 The descriptive-empirical task

Through empirical research, this chapter will seek to identify the supervision methods, models and/or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. Empirical research plays an essential role in this research project because the researcher follows Osmer's methodological model of practical theology (Osmer 2008:4), which consists of four related tasks:

- The Descriptive-Empirical Task. This task focuses on gathering the information that helps the researcher discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts. This answers the question: what is going on? (The current chapter of this thesis)
- The Interpretive Task. This task seeks to understand why these patterns and dynamics exist. Empirical research, theological reflection and historical analysis will all play a role in helping the author to understand better and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring. This answers the question: why is this going on? (Chapter 3 of this thesis)
- The Normative Task. This task focuses on the exegesis of biblical texts, as well as theological research. Throughout, this research project utilises the Bible as the normative standard. This means that the Bible becomes the basis of assessment, interpretation, and reflection. Furthermore, it also means that the Bible is used to establish principles of good practice. This answers the question: what ought to be going on? (Chapter 4 of this thesis)
- The Pragmatic Task. This final task requires an integration of the situational and normative data. This integration will result in the proposal of a new model for the multidimensional supervision of biblical counsellors. This model will lead to the author proposing specific strategies of action that will influence supervision situations. This answers the question: how might we respond? (Chapter 5 of this thesis)

The four tasks of Osmer's practical theology method (2008:4) are represented in Figure 2.1 below. This chapter focuses on the descriptive-empirical task, which is highlighted in green and consists of an empirical research enquiry into the supervision methods, models and activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors.

The goal of this chapter is to identify and describe what is going on when it comes to the supervision of biblical counsellors. Osmer conceptualises this descriptive-empirical task as one of "priestly listening" (2008:31) and argues that it is broader than that of merely gathering information. Instead, the descriptive-empirical task is about the quality of attentiveness the researcher can provide to those he is seeking to understand (2008:33).

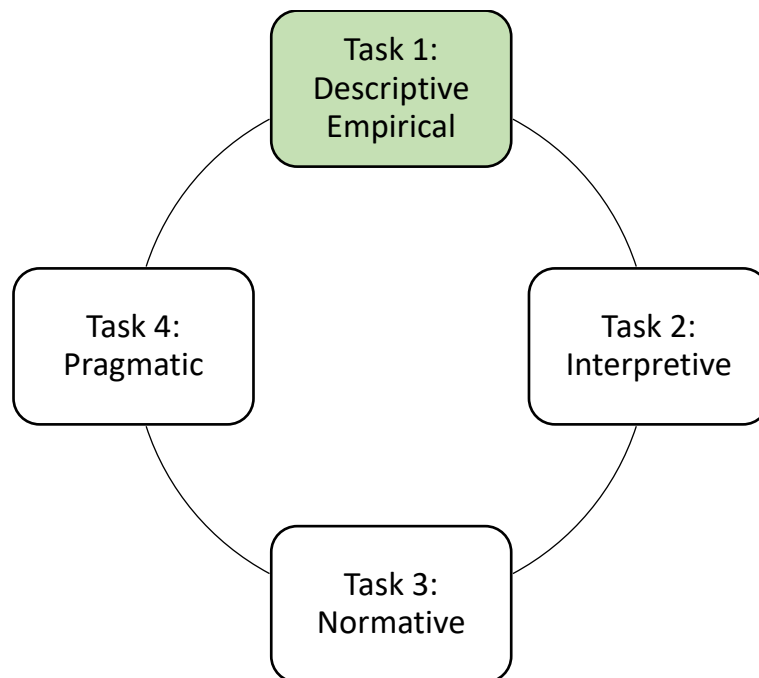


Figure 2.1: Osmer's (2008:4) four tasks of practical theological interpretation

Historically, there have been two approaches to collecting data in empirical research: quantitative and qualitative. There can be conflict amongst researchers about the best way to investigate social phenomena, which some researchers call the paradigm debates (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:3). More recently, many researchers increasingly engage in what is termed mixed-method research (MMR), which employs both qualitative as well as quantitative tools for collecting data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010:9).

In this study, a pragmatic qualitative research approach has been employed (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:170). Specifically, through the conducting of interviews and qualitative survey

questionnaires, the researcher sought to identify the supervision methods, models and/or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. These interviews and survey questionnaires were conducted with those who are receiving biblical counselling supervision, as well as with those who are providing biblical counselling supervision.

Through seeking to engage in “priestly listening” (Osmer 2008:31), the researcher sought to understand not only what was happening within the arena of biblical counselling supervision, but what the critical areas of difficulty, concerns, strengths and weaknesses were.

This chapter is divided into several sections, with two primary emphases:

- The first emphasis focuses on Research Design. This section is an explanation of the research process; it explains, in more detail, the research design mentioned in the previous chapter. Because this chapter is devoted to the descriptive-empirical task, it begins with an overview description of the elements of the research design, as advocated by Osmer (2008:47-48). This overview is then followed with a more focused justification for the particular qualitative research approach adopted.
- The second emphasis focuses on Research Results. This section will detail the results of the research, starting with the survey and then proceeding to the semi-structured interviews. It then moves to a discussion of the research themes and a summary of the research headlines.

2.2 Overview

Osmer argues that the first task of practical theological interpretation is priestly listening, which is an attending to others that is grounded in a spirituality of presence. The critical term, Osmer argues, is “attending,” which he defines as “relating to others with openness, attentiveness, and prayerfulness. Such attending opens up the possibility of an I-Thou relationship in which others are known and encountered in all their uniqueness and otherness” (Osmer, 2008:34). This attentiveness enables the researcher to truly observe and understand the current theological practices that are being lived out all around her.

Other practical theologians have similarly indicated that practical theology must begin with seeking to understand the theology that is currently being lived out in real life: “practical theology is first and primarily the discipline of paying critical attention to lived theology” (Ward, 2017:66). So practical theology must begin with attentiveness to lived theology. Lived theology, according to Ward, “exists as the thread that runs through the multiple layers of expression from the formal and institutional voices to the more implicit and individual kinds of

theology that are carried in actions and gesture” (2017:66-67). Theology, as it is lived out in individual lives and communities, theology as it is expressed in actions, words and gestures, and theology as it is revealed implicitly and explicitly, must be discerned. Lived theology must be defined and understood. So the first thing that the practical theologian and researcher must do is pay attention. Thus, the primary task of the practical theologian is priestly listening; her initial activity is one of observation.

This attentiveness, grounded in prayer, can be directly applied to this research project. Seeking to propose a biblical counselling supervision model must begin with understanding and attending to those already engaged in the task of biblical counselling supervision. Both supervisors and supervisees must be carefully attended to.

Only once the empirical data has been rightly understood, only once the participants have been recognised in their uniqueness and otherness, and only once the lived theology of supervisors and supervisees (counsellors) has been discerned, can a model for biblical counselling supervision be adequately developed.

2.3 Research design

The research design, according to Chenail (2011:1718), enables the researcher to make appropriate choices on how to conduct a study. As was previously explained, Osmer’s practical theology model has been followed throughout this project.

Within that model, Osmer (2008:47-48) further highlights four elements of research design:

- **The Purpose of the Project**—The specific reason(s) for carrying out the research. This may involve a clear statement of what the research questions are designed to answer.
- **The Strategy of Inquiry**—The particular methodology guiding a research project. This methodology connects the methods used to the outcomes desired. In other words, the strategy of inquiry ought to be appropriate, given the nature and goals of the research.
- **The Research Plan**—How the project will actually be carried out. This includes decisions about who will be investigated, and what methods will be used to gather and analyse data, and what the time frame might be.
- **Reflexivity**—Reflection on the metatheoretical assumptions informing the project. This metatheoretical perspective includes the researcher’s assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and science.

Each of these four steps has been taken into account. Chapter One of this research project explored some of these elements. However, for the purposes of clarity and thoroughness, the following sections will expand upon each of them in further detail. This allows the researcher to communicate to his audience both the underlying assumptions as well as why the particular qualitative research method has been selected.

2.3.1 The purpose of the project

What are the specific reasons for carrying out this research? The reason for this research is to develop a biblical counselling supervision model.

The reason for developing such a model would be the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors, which would lead to better supervision. Better supervision would result in developing better biblical counsellors, which would, in turn, lead to better care for counselees. Ultimately, then, it is hoped that the multidimensional model promotes the quality of biblical counselling care that counselees receive.

However, before such a model can be proposed the existing state of affairs needs to be understood. The primary purpose of this current chapter, therefore, is to identify the major supervision methods, models or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. The research questions were designed from this overarching purpose.

Regarding the importance of good research questions, Agee (2009:431) says that “Good questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study.” So while good questions do not automatically translate into proper research, bad questions will negatively impact all the successive tasks of this practical theological study. Given this, the researcher gave much time and thought to the research questions. The research questions were indicated on page 20 at 1.6 above. Further research questions that were asked of participants can be seen in annexures C and D on pages 267 and 277 respectively.

The questions were designed to facilitate “exploration and discovery” (Agee, 2009:434) when it comes to the phenomenon of biblical counselling supervision. These questions enable the researcher to answer the question: what is going on?

2.3.2 The strategy of inquiry

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, a qualitative empirical research approach will be followed. To be more specific, this project uses a pragmatic qualitative research approach (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:170-181).

2.3.2.1 Quantitative or qualitative research?

Empirical research always involves gathering data (Mouton, 2001:53), but, as was mentioned above, this gathering can consist of two broadly different approaches: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative research is “concerned with numbers and percentages” (Smith, 2008:225); in other words, with numerical data. Qualitative research, on the other hand, “is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (Holloway, 1997:2). These interpretations and experiences cannot be articulated numerically.

Osmer (2008:49–50) contrasts the two approaches in the following way:

Quantitative research gathers and analyses numeric data to explore relationships between variables. Qualitative research seeks to understand the actions and practices in which individuals and groups engage in everyday life and the meanings they ascribe to their experience. Quantitative research is especially helpful in discovering broad statistical patterns and relationships. Qualitative research is better suited to studying a small number of individuals, groups, or communities in depth.

Clearly, both approaches have validity. The crucial issue is determining which approach is best suited to the research question (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105). With regards to this research project, the qualitative approach was selected because, in the researcher’s view, it best aligns with the nature and goals of practical theology.

The research is being conducted amongst those in the biblical counselling movement (BCM).² The research pool will consist of those practising biblical counselling and those supervising biblical counsellors. It will include those who have received specialised training

² See the previous chapter for a definition of Biblical Counselling. The biblical counselling movement (BCM) consists of those individuals, churches and organisations that self-consciously align with the approach to soul care that has become known as Biblical Counselling. Further information on the BCM will be provided in Chapter Three of this research project.

in biblical counselling, as well as those who have received less specialised training. It will also include biblical counsellors from different genders, denominations and even countries. It is believed that this diversity of participants will enhance the value of the research.

The beliefs, values, practices, and experiences of the participants, as it relates to the phenomenon that is biblical counselling supervision, will be the object of exploration. The qualitative approach, therefore, has an “emic perspective”—a perspective which seeks to uncover the behaviours and beliefs that are meaningful to the participant (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:12). This further highlights the value of the qualitative approach.

2.3.2.2. Pragmatic qualitative research

Pragmatic qualitative research is “an approach that draws upon the most sensible and practical methods available in order to answer a given research question” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:171). Concerned with practical results, researchers using this approach aim to “discover and understand a phenomenon, a process or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (Merriam, 1998:11).

Furthermore, rather than the goal of the research being a thick description (such as in ethnography) or theory development (such as in grounded theory), pragmatic qualitative research aims for a description of an experience as interpreted by the researcher (Neergaard *et al.*, 2009:52). Pragmatic qualitative research, therefore, naturally integrates the descriptive and interpretive tasks.

The following reasons articulate why this particular qualitative approach was selected:

- First, there is substantial metatheoretical alignment between the researcher’s paradigm and the philosophical paradigm undergirding pragmatic qualitative research. Historically, the pragmatic qualitative approach emerged from a philosophical position (pragmatism), which assumes a realist stance (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:170). Although pragmatism as a philosophy is distinct from pragmatic qualitative research as a research approach, this researcher concurs with Savin-Baden and Major who argue that researchers who adopt this approach align, in some ways, with a pragmatic philosophical paradigm (2013:173). Philosophical pragmatists typically have an “open orientation to what they are studying, and strive for unobtrusive observation in a natural setting” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:173). This qualitative approach assumes that the objective world can be understood—albeit partially and imperfectly. Moreover, although this researcher has a reformational

metatheoretical paradigm, there is some epistemological overlap between paradigms. This epistemological overlap suggests that pragmatic qualitative research best suits the metatheoretical orientation of this researcher. Both paradigms assume that the objective world can be observed and—to a degree—understood.

- Secondly, the pragmatic qualitative approach is methodologically more straightforward. This approach assumes something intuitive: that the objective world can be (imperfectly) understood—even though pragmatic researchers understand that the social world is more subjective than the natural world (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:170). By comparison, some qualitative researchers, in a quest for epistemological credibility, “engage in ‘methodological acrobatics’ (Sandelowski, 2000:334), where they feel obliged to call their work grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology or narrative inquiry, when in fact it is not. Often these studies are in fact pragmatic qualitative research” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:171). Therefore, the pragmatic approach requires less ‘methodological acrobatics’ and allows the researcher to engage in Osmer’s four tasks without loquacious epistemological explanations and justifications. Although pragmatic qualitative research may be viewed as lower down on the hierarchy of research design, this view is arguably owing to the reluctance of researchers to acknowledge their use of a what is considered plainer and ‘less sexy’ method (Sandelowski, 2000:334). In reality, however, pragmatic qualitative research can be very sophisticated: “there is nothing trivial or easy about getting the facts, and the meanings participants give to those facts, right and then conveying them in a coherent and useful manner” (Sandelowski, 2000:336). The pragmatic qualitative research approach is simple then, while retaining rigour and sophistication. It is simple, but not simplistic.
- Thirdly, the pragmatic qualitative approach enjoys methodological flexibility. As Savin-Baden and Major (2013:174) write, “there is no one pragmatic research design that serves as a map for guiding a study. Rather, researchers take an eclectic approach to the research, depending on what is most beneficial to the study.” The particular research design that was developed, which was elucidated in the previous chapter, was selected because both the research pool as well as the method of data collection was judged to be the most effective and relevant in the course of this particular research project. Further details regarding the research plan will be added below.

- Fourthly, the pragmatic qualitative approach was selected because of how description and interpretation connect. Pragmatic qualitative research marks the meeting point of description and interpretation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:172). In other words, the facts, feelings, thoughts, and experiences of the participants are interpreted by the researcher. There is, therefore, a commitment both to the description as well as the interpretation. Consider again Sandelowski's comment above: the researcher aims to ascertain the facts correctly, ascertain the meaning of those facts correctly, and then communicate those descriptive and interpretive concepts usefully and coherently. This comment explains why pragmatic approach correlates with the task of priestly listening and prayerful attending: the researcher seeks to observe and discern what is going on and why. This dual commitment to both the empirical task and the interpretive task thus correlates the pragmatic approach to qualitative research particularly well with Osmer's approach to Practical Theology. However, researchers may choose to adopt an approach that is either more objective or more subjective when it comes to the description and interpretation of the data, as is indicated in figure 2.2 below. The researcher sees this continuum in light of Osmer's four tasks and thus seeks to begin the research with an emphasis on the objective description of the data (the initial task of the practical theologian-researcher) and then moves towards an interpretation of the data (the practical theologian-researcher's second task: the interpretive task).



Figure 2.2 The objective-subjective continuum of pragmatic qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:172)

In summary, then, for these four reasons—meta-theoretical alignment, methodological simplicity, methodological flexibility, and the dual commitment to description and interpretation—this researcher has decided to adopt the pragmatic qualitative research approach.

2.3.3 The research plan

Having determined the strategy of inquiry as pragmatic qualitative research, the third element in Osmer's research design paradigm is the Research Plan—how the project will actually be carried out.

2.3.3.1 The people who will be investigated

Qualitative research requires people who can be investigated; people are the objects of investigation. Thus, one of the first steps in planning the research is identifying “who will participate in the study, how will I gain access and recruit them, and what precautions will I need to take, so that they can be protected from harm throughout the study?” (Chenail, 2011:1718). When it comes to answering that first question—who will participate in the study—the researcher must answer that question by identifying participants “who might best provide an answer to the research question” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:312).

As was articulated in the previous chapter, the participants would comprise those who are providing biblical counselling, as well as with those who are supervising biblical counsellors. This is because the researcher wanted to inquire of participants who were engaged in the phenomena of the study: biblical counselling supervision. Thus, all the research participants were involved in biblical counselling supervision, whether they were providing supervision or receiving supervision. Their involvement with supervision, from both directions, has enabled them to inform the research meaningfully.

To this end, the researcher communicated with the Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC) and, through him as the gatekeeper, invited the Council Board members of the BCC to participate in the study. The goal was to conduct as many interviews as possible (with a maximum of about 12) and to secure as many completed questionnaires as possible (with a maximum of about 25). The Council Board of the BCC consists primarily of Americans but also contains board members from other countries, denominations and cultures, as well as consisting of both genders. The researcher anticipated that this diversity of cultures and genders would add further breadth and credibility to the study. The researcher realised that capturing the biographical details of the participants would be essential if the diversity of the participants was going to be noted (Van Rensburg, 2009:13). This included identifying the different geographic contexts that each participant found themselves in, as that too would have an impact on the participant's responses (Maxwell, 2009:221).

In addition to the Executive Director of the BCC, the researcher also communicated with the Executive Director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), the Executive Director of Biblical Counselling UK (BCUK), and one of the co-founders of ACBC-Africa. These individuals were approached because of their role as gatekeepers who could facilitate entry to a research site. In all cases, they gladly cooperated with the researcher and, if they were able to, facilitated a connection between the researcher and the participants. Lastly, a few participants contacted the researcher because they had become aware of the study and were interested in participating in it.

The reason these particular gatekeepers were approached is that their research sites would confirm the integrity of the research sample. The organisations involved in the research require doctrinal and confessional adherence to definitions of biblical counselling. This ensures that those in the research sample are *bona fide* biblical counsellors and biblical counselling supervisors.

In this way, the research participants constitute purposeful sampling, which is defined as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2005:88). Because the participants would have made a commitment to the biblical counselling approach, and because they are involved in the giving or receiving of supervision, their inclusion in the study achieves an accurate measure of representativeness. This is, indeed, one of the goals of purposeful sampling: that representativeness of the context is achieved (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:314).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the ethical considerations of research play an important role. The researcher followed the guidelines outlined by the Ethics Committee of North-West University regarding qualitative research to ensure that ethical standards were maintained throughout. As has been mentioned, the ethical approval letter can be found at Annexure B on page 267.

2.3.3.2 The methods that will be used to gather and analyse data

As has been articulated previously, the researcher chose to pursue two research methods: questionnaires and personal, semi-structured interviews (the specific details of these questionnaires and personal interviews can be seen in the annexures).

The first method of the research focused on biblical counsellors—these questionnaires were converted into Google Forms, and the link was emailed to the participant. These

questionnaires ask the biblical counsellor to reflect on their experience of being supervised. The number of participants, in terms of supervised biblical counsellors who completed a Google Form questionnaire, was 21.

The second method of the research focused on supervisors: personal, semi-structured interviews that focused on biblical counselling supervisors. In the end, 11 supervisors were interviewed.

The specific questions articulated through both methods were logically drawn from the subsidiary research questions and goals (see above and the previous chapter). Space was also given so that participants could elaborate on their answers or add further unsolicited information related to the phenomena of biblical counselling supervision.

While every effort was made to ensure that these research methods were as helpful as possible, the author heeded the dictum of Robert E. Stake (1995:19), who said that, “Good research is not about good methods as much as it is about good thinking.” These methods seek to be helpful, but cannot be a replacement for careful thought, reflection and the use of logic.

2.3.3.3 Gathering the data

The process that the researcher followed in engaging the participants and gathering the data included:

- Initial contact with a gatekeeper. As mentioned above, this was often someone in the role of Executive Director or another leadership role in a church or biblical counselling organisation. The researcher communicated with the gatekeeper about the study, and included information related to the ethical guidelines, including the informed consent form.
- The gatekeeper would then communicate (typically via email) with potential participants, outlining the nature of the research and requesting their participation. The informed consent form accompanied this email.
- The participant would then contact the researcher, and the researcher would either send the link to the Google Form (in the case of a participant who was receiving supervision) or set up a personal interview (in the case of a participant who was providing supervision).
- The researcher requested that participants sign the consent form as it is essential to have the written permission of all those participating.

One of the challenges with the participants being interviewed was that they are spread across the world—in South Africa, the USA, and Great Britain. Although the researcher's preferred method was face-to-face, and while it was possible in two instances, the majority of the interviews took place via a video conferencing tool (Skype and Zoom).

The interviews were digitally recorded in full, and the researcher also took notes during the interview.

2.3.3.4 Handling and analysing the data

Having conducted 11 interviews with BC supervisors and having surveyed 21 BC supervisees, the next task was to analyse the data.

This involves various phases of handling the data—characterising, coding, categorising, converting and creating (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:419). Each phase will be briefly considered below.

2.3.3.4.1 Characterising

The first step involved the time-consuming but essential task of transcribing the interview-recordings to produce a verbatim record (Babbie, 2011:283). However, despite the laborious nature of transcription, the researcher decided to transcribe manually because data analysis requires familiarity with the data, and the transcription process is a good way for the researcher to become very familiar with the data (Oldewage, 2014:130). This is sometimes known as immersion—when researchers immerse themselves in their data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:420).

A comment must be made regarding the term 'verbatim'—because even transcribing a recording involves interpretation and analysis of the recording. This is because what counts as data may vary from researcher to researcher. For example, is the social talk at the beginning and end of the interview considered data? What about the verbal tics uttered during the interview? Long pauses? Deep sighs? Laughter or tears? When these issues are reflected upon, it becomes clear that the transcription process involves data characterisation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:420). Throughout the transcription process, the researcher endeavoured to strike a reasonable balance—to include features that indicate all of the significant components of the interview (even pauses or laughs when deemed significant) while also seeking to make the transcript usable and readable.

2.3.3.4.2 Coding

When researchers begin examining their data, they generally begin to notice things that stand out—and often, these things are assigned descriptive labels (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:421). Each segment of data is often given a descriptive label (usually, but not always, a noun or adjective), and this process is applied to all of their data until the relevant data has been given a label—this is the process known as coding (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:421). A code, therefore, is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns an attribute for a portion of language-based data (Saldaña, 2013:3).

Coding helps the researcher to describe the data better. It also enables the researcher to search the data, make comparisons, and analyse the data. Coding, therefore, leads to categorising, which promotes analysis. Saldaña (2013:45) argues that:

Qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity – a pattern – they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus, analysis of their connections.

2.3.3.4.3 Categorising

As codes are accumulated, they need to be categorised (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:426). The categorisation phase involves moving particular codes into patterns or themes; it is a process of moving the particular into the general. Coding sequentially leads to categorising. As Saldaña (2013:9) points out, “Coding is thus a method that enables you to organise and group similarly coded data into categories or ‘families’ because they share some characteristic.” These categories may be hierarchical or non-hierarchical (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:426).

Merriam (1998:186) argues that categories must be:

- As sensitive to the data as possible.
- As exhaustive as possible (the categories encompass all the data).
- Mutually exclusive (a unit of data can only be placed in one category).
- Conceptually congruent.

It is worth noting that not all qualitative researchers agree on the precise way to code and categorise data. Nevertheless, the approach outlined in this section captures the

researcher's views on how best to engage in this particular aspect of practical-theological research.

2.3.3.4.4 Converting

Once codes and categories are developed, they, in turn, are converted into themes (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:427). A theme is a unifying idea contained in the data and is at the heart of the data analysis process (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:427). This phase also marks the transition from description to interpretation, as the data that has been gathered and described is now being interpreted.³ In this case, these themes will turn into the “research headlines” (Saldaña, 2013:257) that will be considered at the end of the chapter.

This process of data handling and analysis connects with Osmer's practical research methodology because of the emphasis given to “priestly listening” (2008:31), and the way it leads into “sagely wisdom” (2008:82). It also explains why the empirical research themes will not only be found in this current chapter but also in the interpretive chapter of this research project.

2.3.3.4.5 Creating

Creating refers to the visual display of the data findings, sometimes known as a data display. The most common data displays include comparison tables, pie charts, tables and figures (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012:427). In the research results below, several of the data findings are visually displayed, particularly those related to the supervisees' Google Forms. This is done so that the data might be more readily understood.

2.3.3.5 What the time frame might be

The researcher allowed for a time period of roughly eighteen months to gather and analyse the data. This timeframe enabled the researcher to follow up on participants without pressuring them or rushing the data gathering process. However, it also was not too long that the data gathering process lost momentum or focus.

³ Although, as the author stated above, interpretation is involved even in transcription. However, it is in the coding phase that there is a noticeable transition from seeking merely to understand collected data to actively interpreting it and converting it into themes that enhance the data's analytic utility.

The additional advantage of this timeframe was to allow the researcher to continue other forms of research while the qualitative research phase was underway. The symbiotic relationship between reading, practice, writing and qualitative research proved highly valuable to the researcher.

2.3.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is Osmer's final element in the research design (2008:57). Reflexivity involves the researcher's self-awareness and personal reflection on her metatheoretical assumptions informing the project. This has been done to a large extent already in the previous chapter, where the researcher reflected upon his assumptions regarding the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology) and science. The idiosyncratic nature of these meta-theoretical assumptions is one reason why each research project is unique, and why each research method will be, in some ways, unique. As the well-known methodologist Michael Quinn Patton (2002:433) says, "because each qualitative study is unique, the analytic approach used will be unique."

Reflexivity is vital because of the "unavoidable mutual influence of the research participants and the researcher on each other" (Maxwell 2009:234). This reciprocal influence can result in bias and thus threaten the integrity of the research process. This possible threat to the integrity of the research is why any given researcher ought to critically reflect on how these meta-theoretical assumptions influence her and shape the way she goes about structuring her research.

Having been in various forms of pastoral leadership for 14 years, and being deeply involved in biblical counselling for most of this time, will mean that the researcher has assumptions and beliefs that may influence how he conducts his research. Therefore, it has been valuable for him to reflect on what his metatheoretical assumptions are and how they might unduly characterise the research. However, it must also be said that metatheoretical assumptions are not necessarily harmful. This is because they may also positively serve the researcher-theologian, who comes to the data with theological knowledge and pastoral experience.

2.3.5 Preliminary summary

The preceding section has provided an overview of the project, along with Osmer's four practical theological tasks (2008:4) and his four research design elements (2008:47). The section contained a review of the purpose of the project, the strategy of inquiry, the research plan and the nature and importance of reflexivity.

The research approach that has been selected is that of a pragmatic qualitative approach, conducted through two methods: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

This approach has been selected because of how it facilitates the discovery of rich data and therefore enables the researcher to answer the primary research question of this chapter: what are the supervision methods, models or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors? Answering this primary research question will, in turn, enable the researcher to move through the entire research process—the goal of which is to develop a new model for the supervision of biblical counsellors.

What follows in the second half of this chapter is the results of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

2.4 Research results

The second half of this chapter will examine the research results. Having been gathered and interpreted by the researcher, significant concepts, interesting insights, and major themes will be presented and discussed. Although the focus is still fundamentally on the first task of Osmer's practical-theological model—that is, the task of empirical research—the research results are, in truth, something of a blend of the descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks. While distinct, these two tasks are interrelated. As interrelated tasks, the researcher will, therefore, offer some commentary and reflection on the results.

Nevertheless, despite this interconnectedness, the interpretive task properly belongs in the following chapter (chapter 3). Therefore, where appropriately suited, some of the research results will be presented in the next chapter. This is done so that the chapter structure of the research project will maintain the integrity of Osmer's Practical Theology model.

The researcher was cognisant of breaking new ground with regards to empirical research in the field of biblical counselling supervision. The late Dr David Powlison (quoted in Monroe, 2019), a biblical counselling pioneer, author and thought-leader, expressed that—when it comes to the issue of supervision—there exists “the problem of a serious lack of attention

within biblical counselling circles and education.” Given this severe lack of attention, the researcher therefore pursued as many qualitative research opportunities as possible over an eighteen-month period. This research plan was chosen to discover rich qualitative data that would enable the researcher to then propose a supervision model that is cognisant of the lived theological experiences of those already engaged in the task of biblical counselling supervision.

The goal of this section, then, is to present that qualitative data that contributes to a deeper understanding of what is happening in the realm of biblical counselling supervision.

The results from the Google Form questionnaires will be presented first, followed by the results of the semi-structured interviews.

2.4.1 Results from the Google forms

As mentioned above, the first method of the research focused on biblical counsellors, who were asked about their experience of receiving supervision. Questionnaires were converted into Google Forms, and the link was emailed to the participant. These questionnaires ask the biblical counsellor to reflect on their experience of being supervised.

The number of participants—in this case, the number of supervised biblical counsellors who completed a Google Form questionnaire—was 21. Initially, some biographical details will be shared, followed by more qualitatively rich data results.

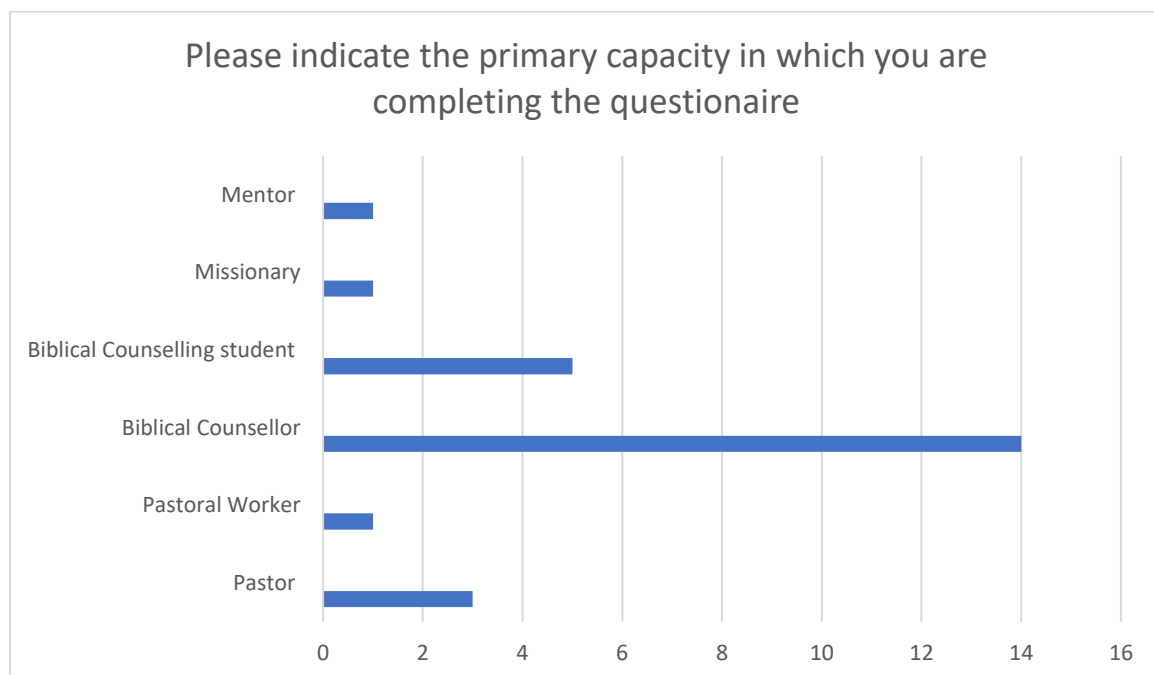


Figure 2.3: The primary capacity/role of participants

The majority of participants (14 out of 21 or 66.7%) have a focused role as a biblical counsellor at their church or para-church organisation. This means that those participating in the research consider the title “biblical counsellor” as an accurate ministry descriptor of what they primarily do and how they understand themselves to be serving God. The second largest group (5 or 23.8%) are biblical counselling students or trainees—as well as one biblical counselling missionary (1 person) and one mentor to biblical counsellors (1 person). This highlights the fact that the overwhelming majority of the research participants are significantly engaged in some form of biblical counselling as their primary ministry activity.

This is a good sign for the research as it means that the research pool comprises those who have a focused role as a biblical counsellor, and have devoted time and energy to thinking, learning, and practising biblical counselling.

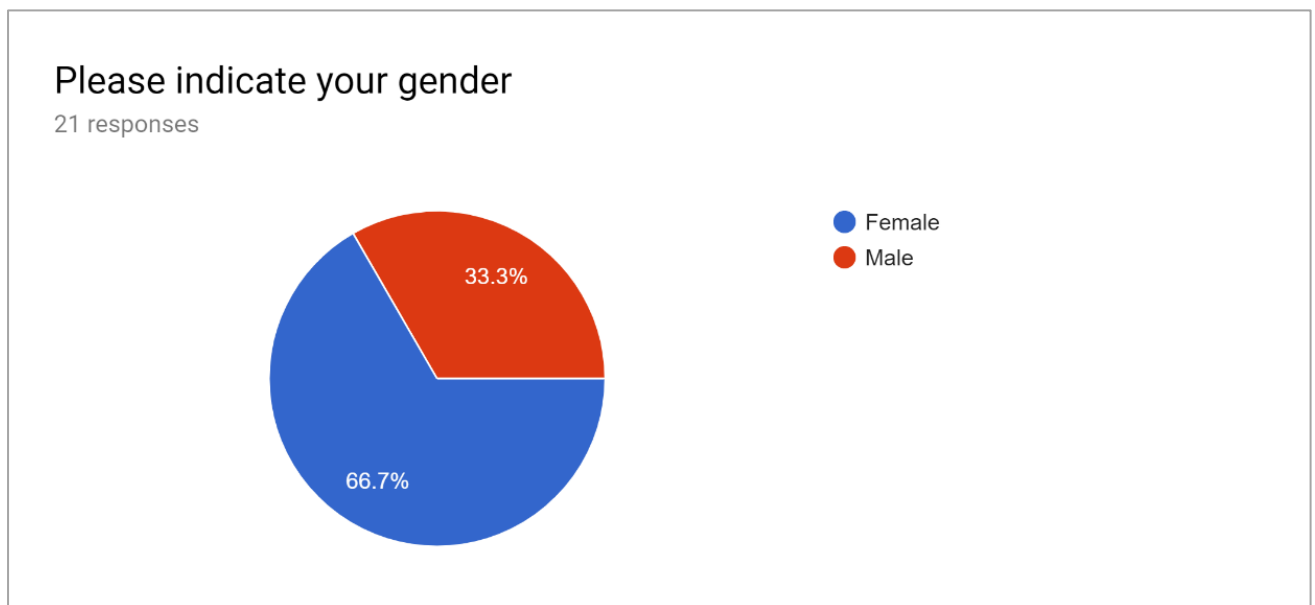


Figure 2.4: Gender of participants

The majority (66.7%) of participants were female. Although female participants were not deliberately chosen by the researcher, and although it is uncertain what conclusions, if any, may be drawn from it, it is nonetheless worth noting.

It is unclear whether this research sample indicates anything about the gender proportions of the broader biblical counselling movement.

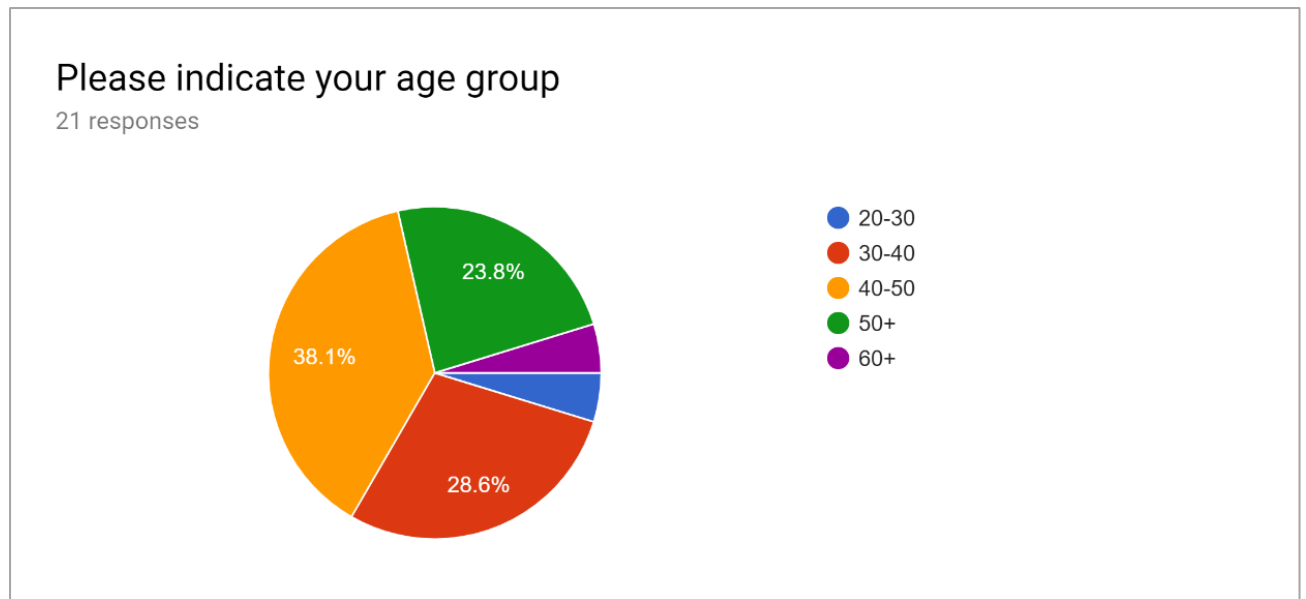


Figure 2.5: Age group of participants

Interestingly, when it comes to the age group, most of the participants (20 out of the 21 or 94,8%) were over the age of 30. Just one participant was between 20-30! Although it is uncertain what, if any, conclusions to draw from this, it reveals that those participating in the research are not typically young, inexperienced, or naïve. They have had various life experiences, and they participate in the study with those life experiences in view.

In the researcher's opinion, therefore, the age range of the participants adds value to the research results.

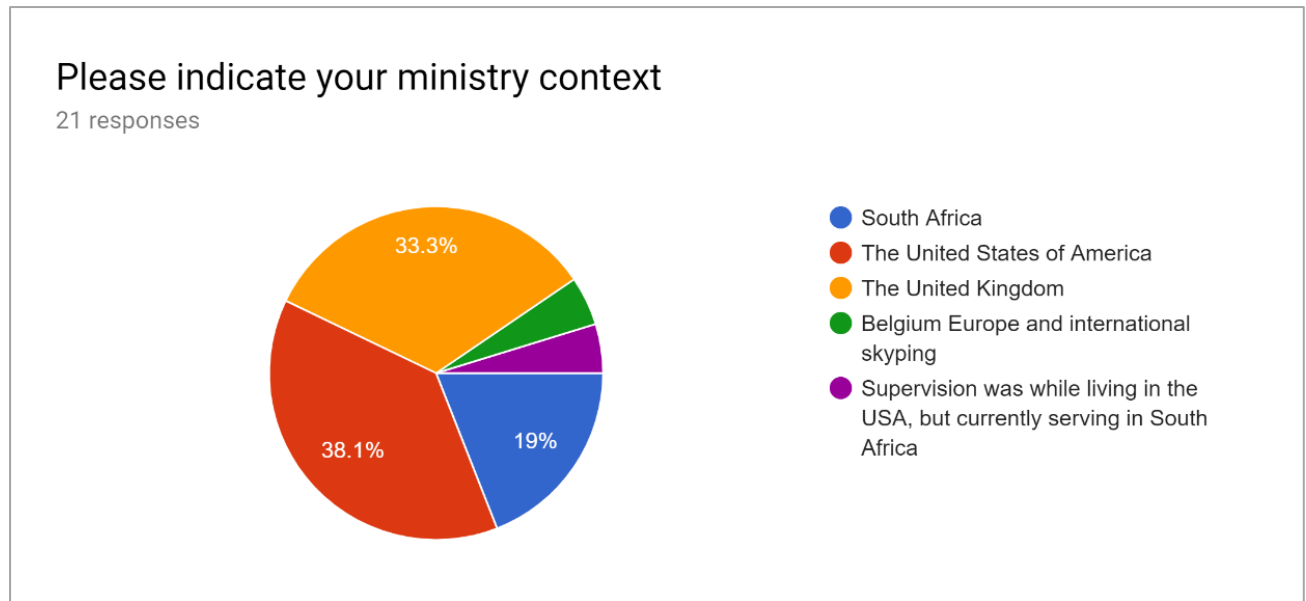


Figure 2.6: Ministry context of participants

The majority of participants were American (38,1%), then British (33,3%), and thirdly, South African (19%). This reflects, in some ways, the dynamics of the BCM globally—it is far more established in the USA, then perhaps next best developed in the UK, and it is still in embryonic stages in other parts of the world.

If anything, from a global perspective, the researcher thinks that South Africa is over-represented. This is because, compared to the USA and the UK, the BCM is still in its infancy in South Africa. The proportionately high number of South Africans who participated in the research reflects the researcher's own network of church-related contacts in South Africa.

This geographic and cultural diversity will also be an aid to the research as the different contexts ensure that the research is not all drawn from a single culture or place.

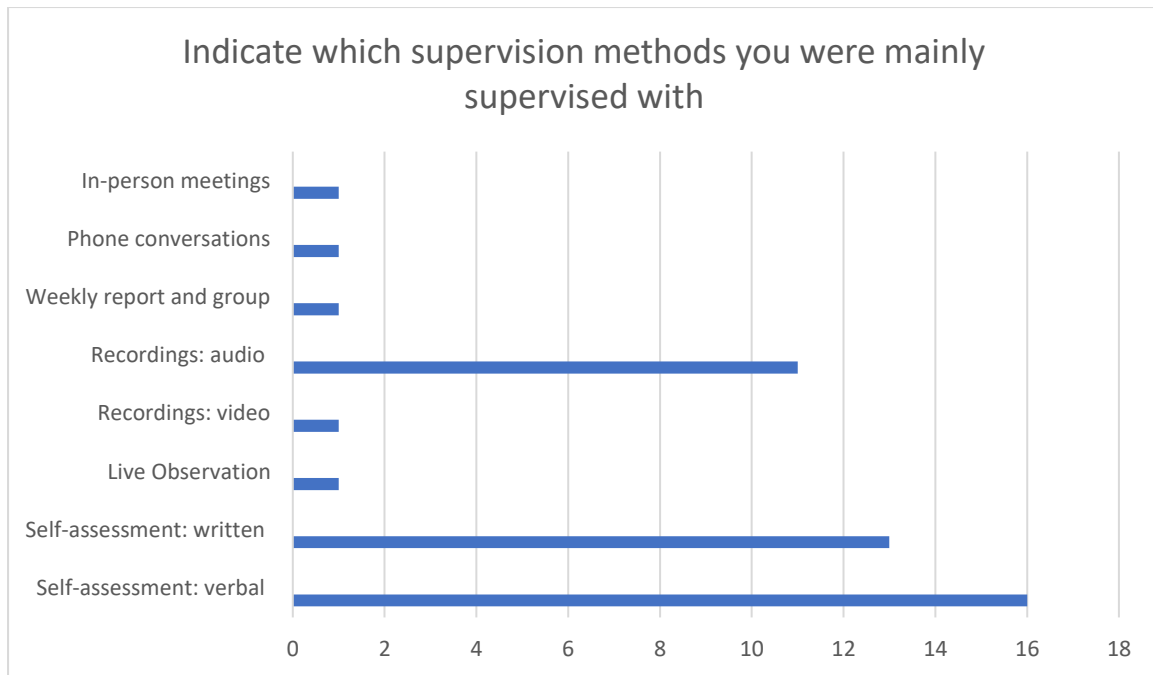


Figure 2.7: Primary supervision methods

As was explained in the previous chapter, a variety of supervision methods exist (Dykstra, 1999:1188). These different methods include, amongst others, face-to-face meetings, online meetings (e-meetings), written self-reports, verbal summaries, audio or video recordings, and live observation (Dykstra, 1999:1188).

According to this survey, self-assessment is by far the most common method of supervision. This is when the supervisee reports back to the supervisor regarding the session—either verbally or through a written report. The reason the researcher has called this method self-assessment is that the supervisee is, even in just presenting the session's details to the supervisor, necessarily providing a self-assessment (and interpretation) of the session.

Of the 21 participants, 16 of them have been supervised through verbally reporting the counselling session to their supervisor.⁴ Of the two types of self-assessment, verbal reporting was the most common (16 out of 21 or 76%), followed by written self-reporting (13 out of 21 or 61%).⁵ Although there are some definite advantages to the verbal method of self-assessment (it can boost a counsellor's reflexivity and self-awareness), there are also

⁴ The three single responses referring to in-person meetings, phone conversations and in-person also seem to indicate a verbal summary of the supervisee's counselling. However, due to the lack of clarity they will be retained in their separate categories.

⁵ This indicates that for several participants, both methods of self-assessment (written and verbal) may have been used.

some clear disadvantages (the supervisor has to rely on what the counsellor is telling him and is unable to verify what he is being informed about).

Furthermore, the fact that verbal reporting was more common than written is, in the researcher's opinion, somewhat concerning. This is because, in the researcher's view, writing out a self-assessment boosts reflexivity more deeply than only verbally reporting what took place in a session. More reflection on these self-assessment methods will be provided in a later chapter.

Only 11 out of 21 (52.4%) of the participants use audio recordings as a supervision method. This is concerning because this particular method—when a supervisee provides an audio recording of the session to his supervisor—is highly recommended by counselling practitioners: “Indeed, Carl Rogers and his colleagues used to do this regularly.” (Lees-Oakes & Kelly, 2019). The researcher is also of the opinion that audio recording is a highly desirable method of supervision, as it allows the supervisor to get a sense of the actual communication dynamics that took place during a session with minimal disruption to the session. It provides a more factual and verifiable account of what took place in the session, which is impossible to discern through the self-assessment methods alone (whether verbal or written).

Self-assessment (primarily) and audio recordings (secondarily) were in the overwhelming majority of supervision methods selected. When asked why their supervisor chose these methods, participants provided the following reasons:

- *“ACBC requirements”*
- *“Tradition – the way it’s always been done”*
- *“Not sure”*
- *“I don’t think it has occurred to her to do anything different”*
- *“The way that BCUK (with whom I do my training through) is set up currently, mean that there is not a formal supervisory method of submitting written reports, audio recordings etc.”*

These answers suggest that supervisees were not always sure why a particular supervision method was selected. There appears to be, from the supervisee's perspective, no clear theological rationale for choosing a specific supervision methodology. Indeed, the reasons behind the supervision methods appear to be more pragmatic than theological.

The concern regarding this data is the lack of live observation as a supervision method. Only 1 participant, out of 21, indicated that they had experienced live observation. If supervision requires feedback on how a counsellor counsels, then it would follow that the supervisor

needs to have some access to what that counselling looks like. The lack of live observation can make it harder not only to provide feedback regarding competence, but it will also make it harder for the supervisor to discern characterological issues in the counsellor that are only revealed in the counselling.

The two practical factors that repeatedly emerged were geographic distance and time or busyness. 7 of the 21 (33%) participants suggested that geographic distance may have played a role in determining the particular method chosen:

- *“We were in two different states”*
- *“Because of distance from me in my observation.”*
- *“Distance may have played a part.”*
- *“She lives quite a distance away from me”*
- *“Geographical distance makes anything live difficult.”*
- *“Geographic distance”*
- *“The physical distance between Belgium and US”*

Regarding time efficiency or busyness, 5 participants (23.8%) cited this as a reason for either why verbal self-reporting was selected or why observations or recordings were not selected:

- *“We are primarily assessed by personal, verbal reporting as this is most time effective way to provide supervision to a larger group of people at one time.”*
- *“Less time consuming”*
- *“It’s time efficient – no real preparation needed.”*
- *“Lack of time to be able to sit in with me or watch recordings”*
- *“Time limitation”*

Again, it’s worth noting that the reasons behind the chosen supervision methods appear to be determined more by practical limitations than theological convictions. Further reflection on the different supervision methods will be provided in later chapters. Most supervision feedback is based on the verbal summary the supervisor receives from the supervisee.

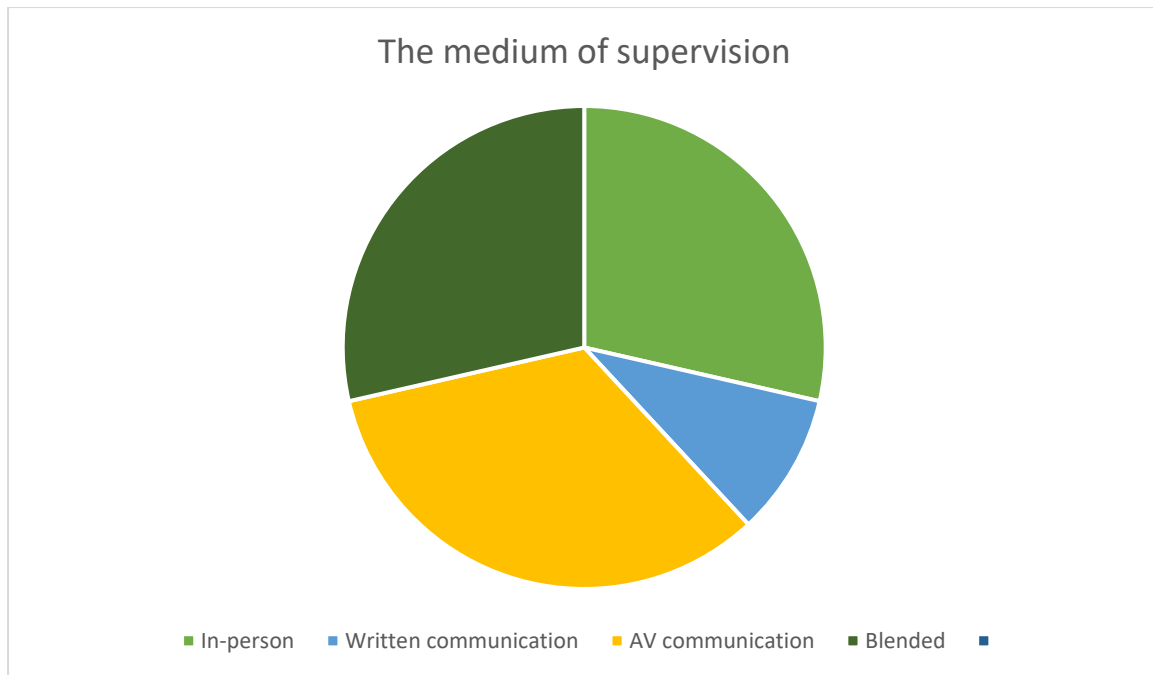


Figure 2.8: The medium of supervision

In this data display, it can be seen that the majority of supervision takes place through three mediums: the in-person medium (6 out of 21 or 29%), audio-visual mediums (7 out of 21 or 33%), and a blend of various mediums (6 out of 21 or 29%). Interestingly, all four South Africans, who are receiving supervision in South Africa, receive it in person (that is, no South African participants received e-supervision at the time the study was conducted). Two participants (10%) are supervised purely through written communication.

For the participants who had proximity to their supervisor, in-person sessions were reported as being very valuable:

- *“It was much easier to interact face to face and the personal contact helped to also build a relationship between me as counsellor and my supervisor. I was able to clarify anything I was uncertain of and she was able to check my responses immediately.”*
- *“I live near to my supervisor and relatively near to my mentor which is a great advantage.”*
- *“A conversation is a give and take that builds on itself, often covering aspects of counselling and personal processing that I wouldn’t have thought to even mention in a written report. There is opportunity for her to observe my personal interacting with her – how do I handle different aspects of our interactions, which can give her very helpful insight into how I may be interacting with a counselee. I have had excellent*

personal care. Because it is face-to-face, she is able to pick up very quickly on how I am doing personally.”

- *“As the relationship develops, understanding grows between supervisor and counsellor, which allows for candid, open interaction and trust. As a counsellor, I feel cared for and part of a whole.”*
- *“The method [referring to in-person supervision] is both personal (one-on-one) and communal, placing a priority on relationship and a deep caring for the counsellor. This models the care that the counsellor is to provide for their counselees. The relational nature of this method also best fits the biblical framework of a relational God who is personally involved with his creation and with his people. The supervisor is also able to help the counsellor work through any heart issues that arise for them personally as a result of the counselling they have been giving.”*

Geographic distance was an issue for many participants when it came to determining whether the actual supervision conversation is in-person or online/telephonic:

- [Geographical distance was] *“Quite critical. We live two hours away and we both are committed to serve local churches. Priority is on our own local churches”*
- *“Geographic distance is a limiting factor.”*
- *“We’re not in the same city, so use online meetings”*
- *“There are very few BC supervisors in the UK generally which means we are all geographically spread out. Closer proximity would have definitely created more options for supervision.”*
- *“Distance prevented live observation.”*
- *“It had a huge bearing. At the time I was supervised, travel wasn’t possible for me or my supervisor to observe my counselling.”*
- *“Given that we were in two different states, written reports were the easiest way to share information.”*
- *“Being on opposite sides of the country, adding audio recordings was, I think, probably the most helpful.”*
- *“Due to the geographical distance other options could not be explored.”*
- *“When undergoing supervision with ACBC, my supervisor lived in a different state so we were limited to written reports (that he could read before our weekly phone calls) and audio recordings. The distance prevented other types of supervision.”*

Given the multidimensional model that is being proposed in this research project, this qualitative data is vital to reflect upon. One of the dimensions is *community*—which highlights the relational nature of supervision. A supervision relationship is precisely that—a relationship. However, this data indicates that many supervisees do not meet with their supervisor in-person. To be precise, less than a third of counsellors see their supervisor in-person. There may be factors that make in-person supervision impossible—or if not impossible, then at least so difficult as not to be viable. More reflection on the issue of e-supervision (supervision through online mediums) will occur in later sections of this research project.

Discerning this reality—that is, the struggle to obtain in-person supervision—is a critical feature in recognising the lived theology of biblical counsellors receiving supervision. It is easy to burden counsellors with the expectation of in-person supervision. Still, if less than a third are doing this, the researcher must seek to understand what factors are preventing this from happening. This is the importance of the first task of practical theology: attending to the lived theological experiences of those being attended to. And for many supervisees, it appears that e-supervision may be their best (in some cases their only) option.

When asked about the impact their medium of supervision had on the supervisee's multidimensional development, the participants made several interesting and helpful comments, especially regarding what was found either to be useful or as having little to no impact.

This first set of comments relates to the written self-assessment (the writing of reports):

- *“By writing records that had to be understood by a third party, and knowing I would be asked about each session during a phone conversation, I was forced to think more thoroughly about the counselling I gave and plan better as well as be very focused during counselling = competence.”*
- *“I think that the written communication has helped to develop my competence.”*
- *“Case study reports were helpful for Supervisor prior to our phone calls.”*
- *“When it's written out, it's more clear and easier to come back to for review.”*

It is worth noting that these comments all speak positively about the role of written counselling session reports.

Secondly, participants also commented on the experience of e-supervision:

- *“It feels secondary to in person. I knew my supervisor from a number of in-person meetings and the like prior to him becoming my supervisor. This has negated many of the issues that AV communication might bring.”*
- *“Skype was good because it enabled us to meet regularly despite the distance. But it also limits the interaction. Since my mentor was very busy person, she did it on the go for a couple of times. So we often focused on one dimension – counselling skills.”*
- *“This helped me feel more connected to a supervisor even though we live far apart.”*
- *“Hugely positive.”* (this participant received a blend of in-person supervision and e-supervision)

These comments speak both to the value of e-counselling as well as its limitations. As mentioned earlier, more will be said about e-counselling in a later chapter.

Thirdly, some participants commented on the value of receiving in-person supervision, mainly because of the relational depth they enjoyed with their supervisor:

- *“I was inspired and encouraged by my supervisor in all the dimensions. My desire to be a better counsellor was fuelled by my observation of the way she supervised and cared for and about me.”*
- *“was helpful to be able to talk face to face since oftentimes it ended up being a counselling session with me, I was to to (sic) glean wisdom in how to conduct a session.”*
- *“I have been able to create a really great relationship with my supervisor – blending personal help and professional help.”*

Finally, below are the comments that indicated that the medium of supervision affected the effectiveness of the supervision:

- *“I think it means that there is a lack in growth all these 4Cs that you have highlighted.”*
- *“my local regular supervision has been disjointed and has focussed on one or two areas you mention, and in doing so has left me feeling a little incompetent and underconfident in a number of areas. One example would be the effective use of Scripture that goes beyond using it as an add on to counselling techniques.”*
- *“Other than helping me be organised, very little impact.”*

The comments of participants here highlight the fact that the medium supervisors choose to use does indeed have an impact on the supervision. The medium is relevant. Furthermore, these comments reveal that it is possible for supervision to have minimal impact, foster little to no growth, or even leave a supervisee feeling incompetent and lacking in confidence.

The fact that supervision can be ineffective correlates with the assertion made by Ladany *et al.* (2013: 29), who write, “the empirical literature has pointed out that supervision, arguably with benevolent intentions, has also proven at times to be problematic, counterproductive, harmful, and unethical.” The fact that supervision is happening does not mean that it is helpful or even useful. Supervision can be damaging. This sober reality must be kept in mind by those who would seek to provide supervision.

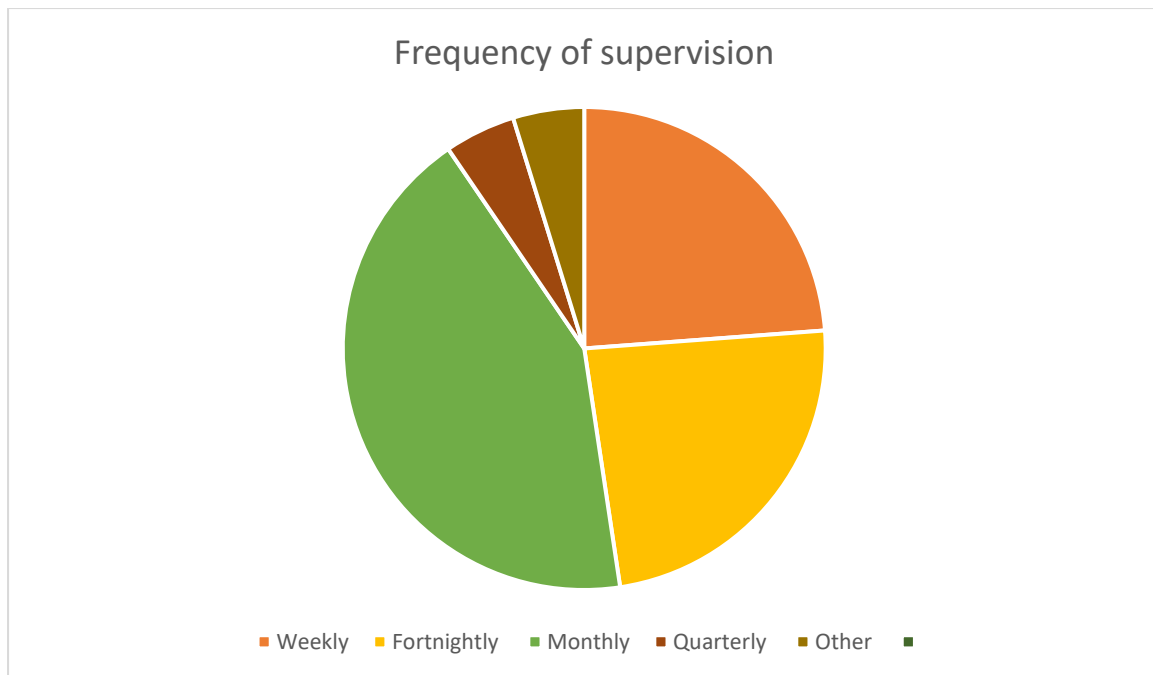


Figure 2.9: The frequency of supervision

The majority of participants receive supervision monthly (9 out of 21 or 43%), although large percentages come in equally at weekly (24%) and fortnightly (24%). This data is also worth reflecting upon, as monthly supervision—according to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP, 2020)—is considered to be the minimum standard when it comes to supervision frequency. Thus, if the “Other” category is taken into account, 95% of participants are currently receiving supervision at—or above—this minimum standard.

Of course, there is no normative frequency requirement, which makes it impossible to argue for an authoritative minimum standard frequency requirement. However, within the proposed multidimensional model, the community/relationship dimension would undoubtedly lead the supervisor towards valuing regularity in a relationship and thus, frequency in supervision

sessions. The researcher's personal view is that at least monthly supervision should be occurring for active biblical counsellors.

This supervision frequency also strengthens the research results as it means that the data given by the participants is borne out of regular experiences of being supervised.

When asked about the impact frequency had the participants consistently articulated the value of regular supervision, as revealed by the following comments:

- *"Once a week has been great, and in fact, I find it restful and look forward to it each week."*
- *"One week (sic) was very helpful."*
- *"I think the frequency... has been a significant factor in my growth. The more often we meet, the more opportunity there has been for growth and development."*
- *"Once a week was perfect."*
- *"every two weeks was fine."*
- *"There seems to be a happy medium between too frequently such that there is no time for development between and too infrequently that it's not really present. I'm happy with 4-6 weekly and it seems to work for us."*
- *"Ideally, the sessions would have been at least monthly (which was the intention) however, health issues have made this difficult to accommodate."*
- *"1 hour a month for Formal Supervision, although this has been shared with 1 or 2 other counsellors so has felt short and lacked depth and did not attend to my character or community."*
- *"The frequency is enough; maybe the time allocated could be increased. It is about an hour."*
- *"Anything less than weekly would be insufficient given the number of counselees I was seeing (we only had fifty-five minutes in which to discuss multiple cases)."*
- *"I think once a month has its own value and strength. If we have more frequency, I think it would become more balanced multidimensional."*

As can be seen from the above comments, other factors to consider when determining frequency have to do with the number of counselees a supervisee is counselling, as well as how long a supervision session lasts. A good rule of thumb seems to be that, the more counselees a counsellor is caring for, the more supervision they require. This supervision may be increased either by frequency or by each session being longer.

In addition to being able to correlate the frequency and amount of supervision with a supervisee's caseload, another relevant factor highlighted by a participant is the availability

of the supervisor. Three participants commented on the value of this availability, especially when the supervisor's help was needed with difficult or urgent counselling situations:

- *"It was good timing except for when I had a particularly difficult case, but then I knew I could have asked for an appointment sooner with my supervisor if I'd needed one."*
- *"He was available as needed."*
- *"I could always just give my supervisor a call if anything was urgent!"*

That supervisees appreciate the availability of their supervisors highlights the importance and value of the community dimension.

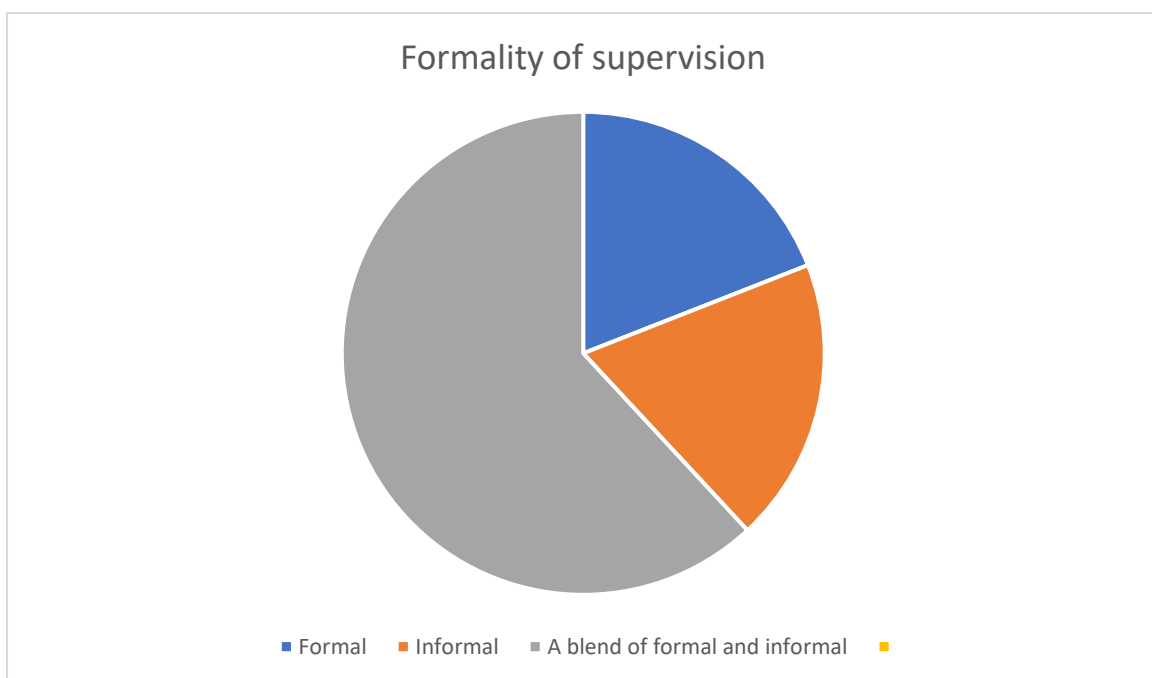


Figure 2.10: The perceived formality of supervision

When asked whether their perception of the supervision they received was formal, informal, or a blend of both, most of the counsellors who participated said that their supervision was a blend (13 out of 21 or 62%), with 19% (4 out of 21) indicating more definitely that their supervision was either formal or informal.

This seems to suggest that for most counsellors receiving supervision (81%), their perception is that their supervisor has some kind of formal, systematic approach to providing supervision. However, for the vast majority, supervision has clearly retained an informal feel to it, such that it is either classified as informal or at least to remain in the blended category.

One reason for this may be that biblical counselling supervision remains an activity that does not occur within a professional environment. The lack of professionalism, and the presence of a ministry-based relationship, perhaps even the presence of prayer and Scripture, might be a factor in keeping supervision somewhat informal. More will be said about this in the subsequent chapters.

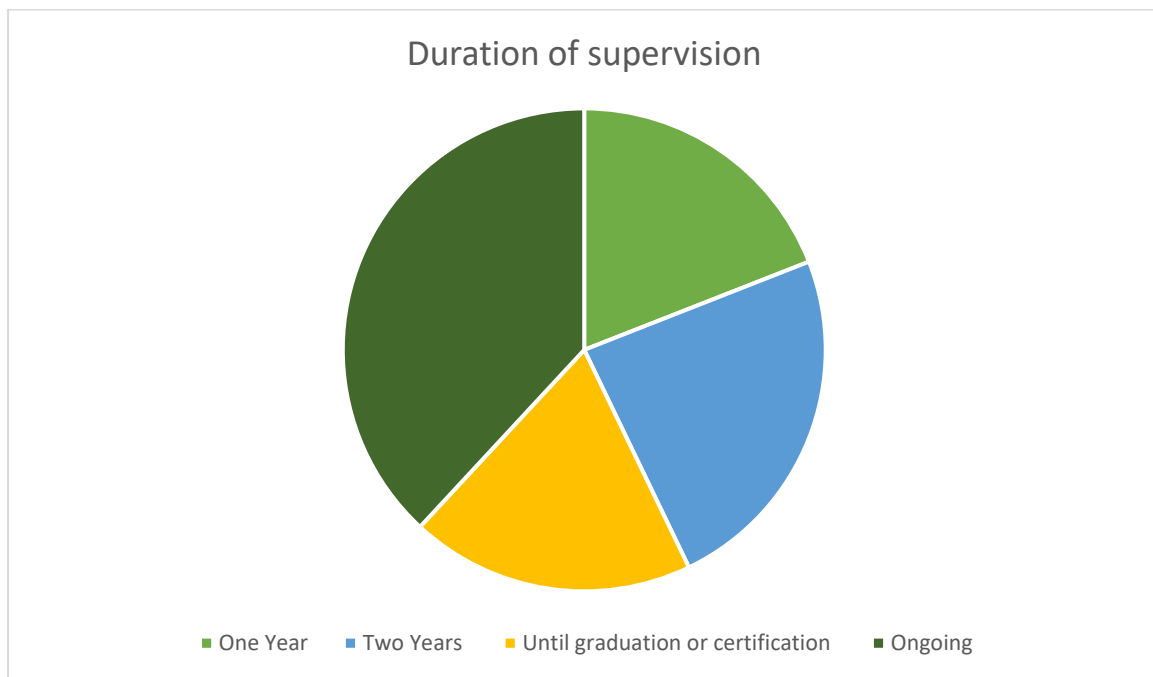


Figure 2.11: The duration of supervision

Many biblical counsellors who participated receive ongoing supervision in one form or another (8 out of 21 responses, or 38%). For many of the participants, their supervision was connected to a time frame of some kind—whether a calendar year(s) (9 out of 21 responses, or 43%), or until the completion of their biblical counselling training, internship or certification (4 out of 21 responses, or 19%).

This raises further questions for the researcher—such as, does this mean that the majority of those who then graduate from their degree or internship, or those that get certified, then continue in counselling ministry without supervision?

In the researcher's opinion, ongoing, continuous supervision is essential for those involved in biblical counselling supervision. The fact that only 38% are receiving ongoing supervision is somewhat concerning.

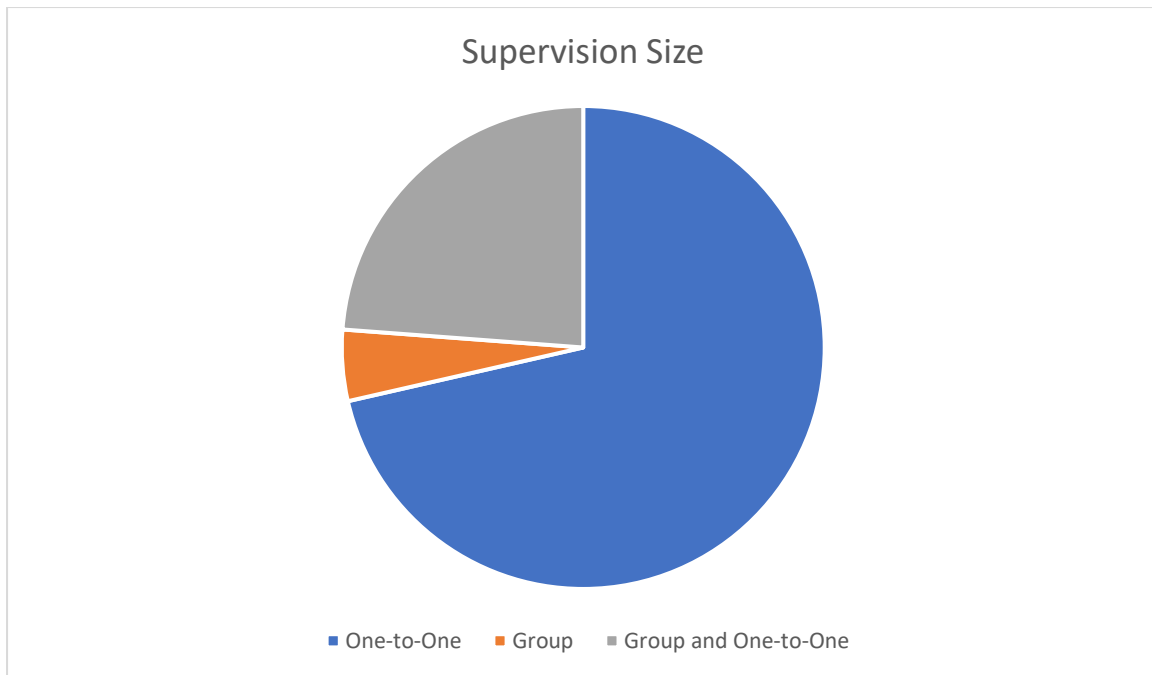


Figure 2.12: Size (individual or group) in supervision

The vast majority of supervision that takes place happens one-to-one. While not the only format that can foster a deep relationship, the researcher does think that one-to-one relationships can typically become more intimate because there is more time for a supervisee to receive individual supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:179). More individual focus will enable the relationship to move from being transactional to transformational, which can enhance the effectiveness of supervision (Johnson, 2007:259-267).

Further reflection on the differences between one-to-one supervision and group supervision will be done further on in this study.

Multidimensional supervision consists of four dimensions: content, character, competence and community. Please rank from 1-4 (with 1 referring to the most frequent, and 4 to the least frequent), what your supervision sessions tend to focus on.

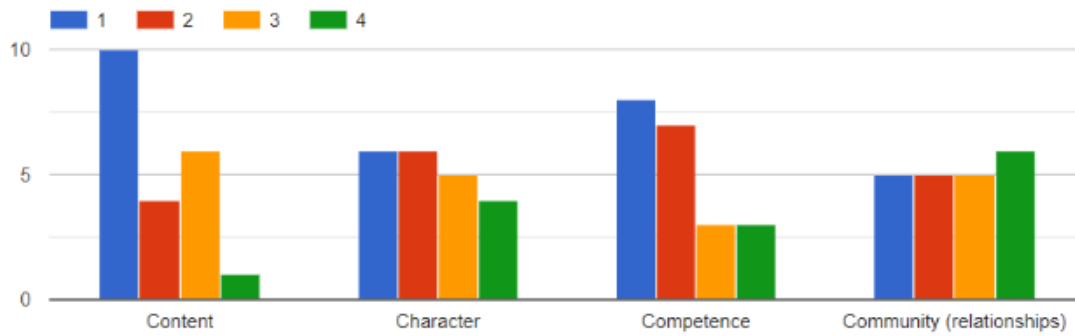


Figure 2.13: The dimensional focus during supervision

According to this graph, most biblical counsellor's supervision sessions focused on issues of content and competence—with content clearly being the most focused item. This means that issues such as theological conceptualisation would be at the forefront of the supervision sessions. This, of course, is valuable. As the comments below indicate, one reason that the focus may emphasise content and competence is that most biblical counsellors are receiving supervision at the beginning stages of their counselling journey—where the developmental focus may be more on establishing their expertise as a new biblical counsellor.

Furthermore, this content-and-competence focus connects with the supervision methods mentioned earlier. If the supervisor is primarily basing their supervision on the verbal summary of the supervisee, it will be harder, in the researcher's opinion, to engage and probe characterological issues. When the supervisee presents a content-focused summary, it seems likely that the supervisor will provide content-focused supervision.

The concern revealed by this data is that characterological issues (such as the counsellor's own thoughts and desires, and their personal walk with the Lord) and relational dynamics (how is their counselee impacting them and vice-versa?) could be being minimised or even

ignored. Is it possible that much supervision is failing to pick up on character issues and relational dynamics?

However, when personal care is being received, it is highly valued, as indicated in this comment:

“The focus on my own heart has allowed me to become more skilled in understanding other peoples’ hearts, and made me more empathic to their struggles as I have become far more in tune with my own. My supervisor’s personal care has enabled me to continue for the long road, and not give up.”

The above comment also highlights the inextricable link between character and competence: as the supervisee becomes more self-aware, they become more empathetic and thus skilful in providing care to another.

When asked about how the supervision focus has helped or hindered their multidimensional development, the participants gave a variety of answers—some indicating that the focus was appropriate, others suggesting that it was unbalanced:

- *“I think the focus is where is (sic) should be in my current supervision context...on counselling competence. Although the other areas are important for overall growth, there are several other outlets where these needs are met in my life. But the main place that I am growing in competence as a counsellor right now is through supervision.”*
- *“The emphasis has been practical and helpful for the cases I am currently working on”*
- *“I think that the focus has been on helping me (as a new counsellor) with content and competence to serve my counselees. We are now only starting to look at the full multidimensional approach and which other dimensions to work on.”*
- *“it helped refine my counselling abilities.”*
- *“a slightly more formal model with more regular sessions would have helped to address all areas more thoroughly”*
- *“It has been unbalanced. It has enabled me to develop a robustness in my work however I have felt unskilled and lacking in biblical counselling competence.”*
- *“I think it has been helpful to focus on character and community. That is good and I am not wanting to go too fast in counselling; but I reckon that there needs to be a shift towards the competency and content.”*
- *“I think that content and character form the bedrock or foundation for growth in competence and community.”*

- *“In my local church setting, supervision on counselling skills was most lacking. In that sense, this particular supervision focus facilitated multidimensional growth on the whole.”*

The issue of focus is complex. There are many factors which impact the decision of a supervisor when deciding what to focus on, or even what can be focused on (especially in the case of e-supervision, where relational dynamics can be even harder to explore). Hawkins and Shohet (2012:107) argue that, “as a general rule supervisees who are new to the work need to start with most of the supervision focusing on the content of the work with the client and the detail of what happened in the session.”

This makes the case that the supervisor should be initially focusing on the content and competence dimensions, and later moving towards the character and community dimensions. However, even that assertion is debatable: would it not be better to provide multidimensional supervision from the very beginning of a counsellor’s counselling?

The issue is further complexified when a counselee may be receiving general pastoral supervision in the context of their local church while also seeking competence-specific supervision through a para-church counselling ministry. As was indicated by a participant above, such a set-up may lead a supervisee to think that a characterological focus in supervision is obviated.

Nevertheless, there may be struggles that notably manifest themselves in that person’s counselling sessions that do not as overtly appear in other parts of their lives. Is it wise, therefore, for the supervisor to delay the focus on character? Or to assume that it is happening elsewhere?

This issue – of how to develop a supervisee characterologically – will receive further reflection in the chapters that follow.

Was there an identified supervision model that your supervisor used?

20 responses

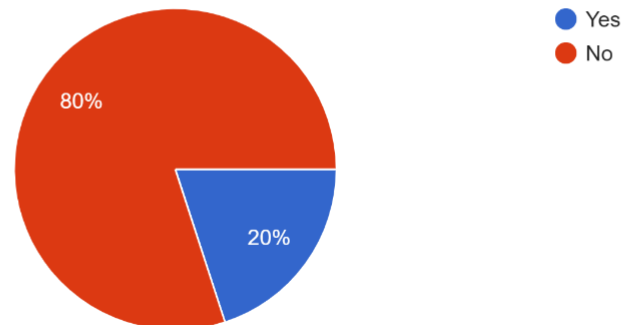


Figure 2.14: Supervision model

This particular graph is revealing: the overwhelming majority of participants who were receiving supervision indicated that there was no identified supervision model being used (80%).

This confirms the researcher's suspicion that, within the field of biblical counselling, insufficient attention has been paid to this critical activity—so that there are no explicit supervision models that supervisors can draw upon. This has a number of consequences—one of them being that it makes it harder for a supervisor to assess their supervision.

Furthermore, with those who answered yes to a model, they failed to identify that model. For example, one participant indicated that it was the ACBC supervision model, which consists of a blend of written self-assessment, audio recordings, and online and/or telephonic supervision sessions. However, while providing a self-assessment method, ACBC does not articulate that they use a specific supervision model.⁶ It is helpful to distinguish methods from models—while they have a connection, they are not the same thing. Other participants who said that a model was used, then failed to identify a supervision model. This makes it impossible to discern what the purported model was.

Some participants indicated no—but that there might be a model being used that they were unaware of:

⁶ The ACBC Case Report Form appears to have been at least influenced by the theological perspective of Jay Adams, as articulated in his book, *Competent to Counsel*. Apart from Adams' theological influence, it does not appear that the Case Report Form was derived from any particular supervision model.

- *“If there was a model, I am not aware of what it was.”*
- *“There wasn’t one that I’m aware of.”*

This reveals that much work is needed in the field of biblical counselling when it comes to the formation and development of a supervision model(s). Again, this highlights the importance of this project, in which a multidimensional biblical counselling supervision model is being proposed.

Please indicate which method(s) you think will best promote development in the different dimensions

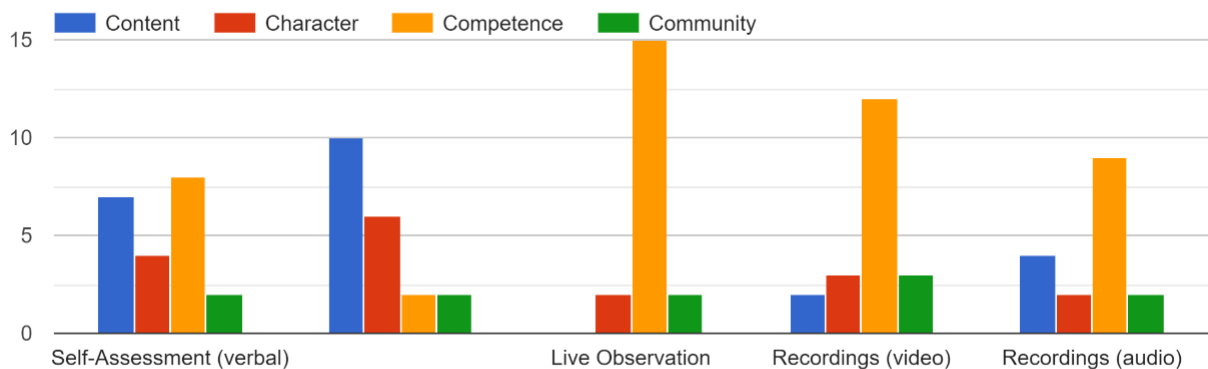


Figure 2.15: Methods that promote development in the different dimensions

Figure 2.15 reveals participants’ views of which methods might be most effective regarding the different dimensions. The five methods, above displayed from left to right, are: self-assessment (verbal), self-assessment (written), live observation, video recordings and audio recordings. Each of these is worth briefly considering.

When it comes to developing competence, the participants indicated that live observation and recordings (whether audio or video) would be most helpful. The researcher suggests that this is because the counsellor’s skills are most evidently on display when these supervision methods are used. When being observed in the actual session, or when being viewed or listened to later through a recording, the counsellor’s actual behaviour and words—and the impact of those behaviours and words—are seen, and can be both verified and analysed by the supervisor. The in-session skill set of the counsellor can be best

evaluated by the supervisor having access to actual in-session data, whether that is a live observation or an (audio or video) recording.

However, while the researcher agrees with what the participants have shared, he also thinks that live observation is also a critical method for focusing on the supervisee's characterological development. This is because it is in the actual relational dynamics and emotional context of live supervision that the characterological strengths and weaknesses are visibly displayed. There is a temptation for the supervisee to minimise these things when they provide a self-assessment to their supervisor.

When it comes to developing conceptual thinking (the content dimension), the method that participants selected was the written self-assessment. As indicated earlier, this aligns with the researcher's own views that written self-evaluation typically promotes deeper reflection because it requires greater reflexivity than only verbally reporting what one has been doing in counselling.

Characterological development was, according to participants, best promoted through written self-assessments. Exactly why this is the case is unclear, although perhaps (as indicated by a participant above) the issue of deepened reflexivity plays a role.

While the researcher values the role of reflexivity in the construction of written self-assessments, he is concerned about these written self-assessments being used as alternatives to live-or-audio supervision. A self-assessment (written or verbal) is, in the researcher's opinion, best used in conjunction with audio-or-live observation. This enables the supervisor to compare what they observed with the supervisee's reflection on how the session went. This then enables the supervisor to discern how accurate and mature the supervisees reflexivity and self-assessment is.

Lastly, the promotion and awareness of the community dimension were linked to video recordings. This was surprising to the researcher because he would have anticipated live observation to be a far more productive supervision method when it comes to relational development. This answer raises a variety of questions in the researcher: how are the participants thinking about relational dynamics in the counselling sessions? How do they view the link between competence, community and character? How adequately do they think they can assess themselves?

Below are some selected comments from participants explaining their choice of linking specific methods to specific dimensions:

- *"Recordings will help my supervisor to see me actually counselling and is probably the best way to assess competence. Written reports would help with competence and*

content as my supervisor can see my thinking, planning and application to the counselee. Verbal communication would be the most appropriate for character and community development as it provides a context for me to engage with my supervisor.”

- *“I actually think that each method used appropriately and well, facilitates the development of each area but in nuanced ways.”*
- *“The assessments show the content of the counselling to the supervisor so that he can help improve it. The recordings show the supervisor the method and competence, again being an aid to improvement.”*
- *“Character is incredibly hard to help develop without being more intimately involved in someones (sic) life than counselling supervision can (should?) offer. Similarly with community, unless the counselling supervision is happening within primarily within the context of your church then this would seem to be more appropriately the role of church family.”*
- *“I would say that the best way to help some to grow in all dimensions is through live observation and then having them write a self-evaluation. But some of these other methods can be helpful as well.”*
- *“Written self-assessment may require me to reflect and examine my heart more than the other method. Verbal self-assessment may let me focus on what has been said and done (content), I think. Live observation and recordings will be most helpful for the development of content and competence objectively, at least for me.”*

What strikes the researcher as an interesting irony is that the overwhelming majority of supervisees use a self-assessment method (whether written or verbal), yet they have a general consensus that some form of observation is important in the development of their competence. Thus, there seems to be a disconnect from what supervisees think will be effective at developing competence, and what methods they actually use in developing competence. Live observation as a supervision method is theoretically valued but functionally under-represented.

Nevertheless, this awareness of which method may most helpfully develop which dimension may prove to be useful to both supervisees and supervisors when seeking to grow in specific areas.

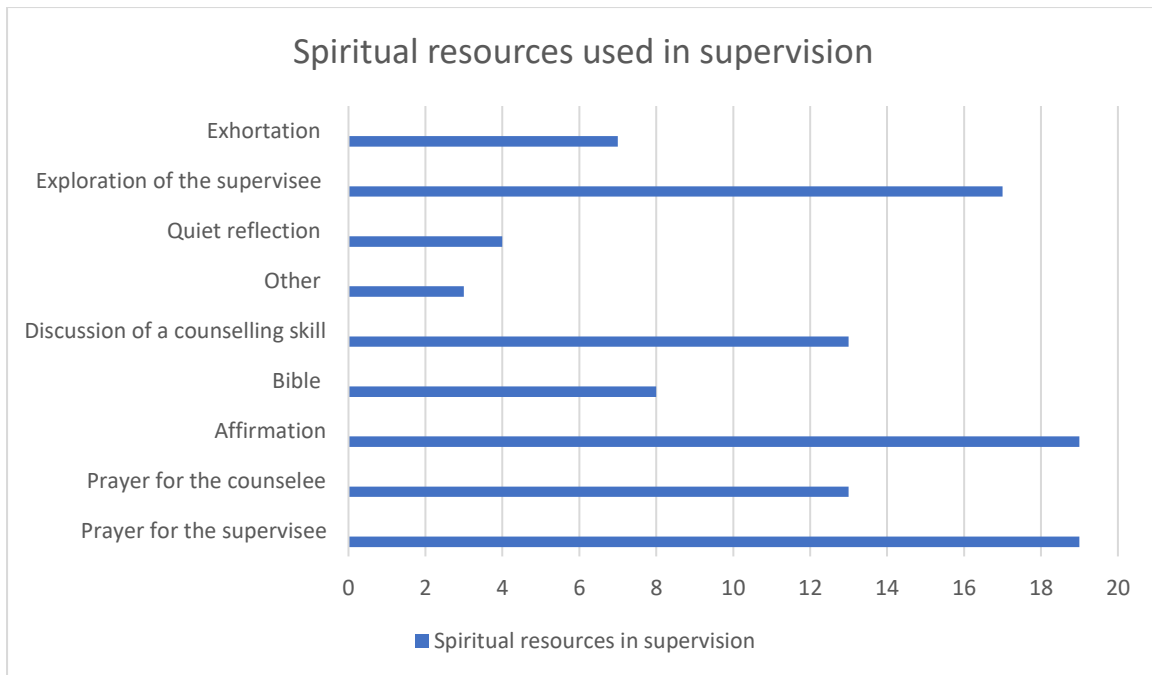


Figure 2.16: Spiritual resources used in supervision

Prayer and affirmation were the two most significant spiritual resources used in supervision, with both receiving 90.5% from participants. This is unsurprising but also encouraging—because biblical counselling is, at heart, about the relational ministry of the Word. This makes biblical counselling dependent upon God, and thus, prayer would need to remain a vital component of this ministry. Similarly, encouragement and affirmation play a crucial role in pastoral ministry, and so to hear that it featured highly is also a positive sign.

Another interesting datum is that 17 out of 21 or 81% indicated exploration – this refers to the supervisor seeking to explore and understand the supervisee’s heart. This datum reveals that biblical counselling supervision is firmly within the realm of pastoral care, where wise mentors help and care for others. This also connects well to the character dimension and highlights the characterological value that a supervisor can add to the supervision experience for the supervisee. While encouraging, this also seems to be at odds somewhat with the earlier data indicating that supervision tends to focus on content and competence. Does this indicate that the exploration refers to how the supervisor explores how the participant is conceptualising the counselling?

Another feature which might be worth further reflection is the category of Bible – this refers to both Bible reading as well as Bible study. How a biblical counsellor handles Scripture is critically important, and yet it seems to receive little focus in supervision (only 8 out of 21 or 38% of counsellors are being supervised in this area). The researcher is also wondering,

then, how so much time is spent on content when a relatively small focus is on Bible reading and study. Because conceptualisation issues are theologically determined in biblical counselling, one would perhaps expect to see more of a focus on this in the supervision sessions.

When asked whether they would like more or less explicitly spiritual resources used in their supervision, the participants responded with the following comments:

- *“In some ways, yes. It seems the farther into the degree I have gotten, the more practical it has gotten, which is good and bad. I need that piece, but I also need to be reminded that I can do nothing apart from God.”*
- *“Given the time, we had the right balance of each.”*
- *“No.”*
- *“My Supervisor was exceptional in this area!”*
- *“It has been right; the conversations are in the context of pastoral care; we pray for each other; we share what is good and hard.”*

Of the 20 responses to this particular question, only one indicated that they wanted more explicitly spiritual resources used—all the others stated that there was a sufficiently spiritual emphasis in the supervision they received. This is very encouraging because biblical counselling ministry is to be conceptualised as a pastoral ministry—a ministry that is dependent upon the Word of God and prayer. Thus, to hear that biblical counselling supervision was engaged with spiritual activities is encouraging indeed.

A recurring comment was that more help in actually using the Scriptures in counselling would be appreciated:

- *“More focus on my use of Scripture.”*
- *“I would value continuing to look at which passages might be helpful to use in particular situations.”*
- *“I would like more ideas of scriptures to use, how to use them and more ideas of ways to use the bible in a session.”*

These comments highlight the need for supervisors to be good not only at counselling but also at the disciplines of biblical theology and hermeneutics.

Finally, participants were invited to make final concluding comments. This could be about anything that they thought might be relevant to their experience of being supervised. A few comments related to the importance of supervision, including ongoing supervision:

- *“I think supervision is really vital for the counsellor’s multidimensional development.”*
- *“Critical importance and great privilege of having the support of someone who can be trusted, who is humble and who speaks from experience and whose godly life and character are apparent.”*
- *“I am very glad that I am having ongoing supervision. I can only gain from it.”*
- *“I would say that it would be helpful to have a supervisor follow up with their supervisee a few times over the course the first few years after being certified.”*

Another commented on some of the challenges facing biblical counselling supervision, particularly in their context:

there is no network of either Biblical Counsellors or Biblical Counselling Supervisors in the UK. The CCEF or BCUK Certificate doesn’t qualify anyone to practice professionally and therefore it is difficult to coordinate and legislate for Supervision. Most counselling development happens at BCUK/CCEF courses, conferences and Intensives or through the Intern Scheme (the most ‘professional’ formal Supervision I have received has been through this Scheme) and this is limited because of it’s current size and funding. I trained as a professional secular counsellor and had excellent (for that particular counselling model) supervision in order to continue to develop and practice, but I am now a lay pastoral counsellor at a church, working with another lay pastoral counsellor at church who also supervises me informally. I have been grateful for the, albeit disjointed, input I have received as together they have addressed each dimension that you have put forward here, but I remain concerned as to how and others like me will continue to receive supervision and the development it provides in counselling whether that is formal or informal counselling.

Reflecting upon the research results from the Google Forms has been very helpful. There have been both encouragements as well as concerns. In the final section of this chapter, the research headlines will be presented.

2.4.2 Results from the interviews

This section will examine the results of the empirical research related to the interviews conducted with biblical counselling supervisors. This research reflects, in some ways, the

other side of the research just considered—having reflected upon what supervisees have shared, what do supervisors think, do and say? What are their methods and activities? It must be noted, however, that the supervisees and supervisors who are the research participants are not necessarily in a supervision relationship with each other.

Major themes will be presented and discussed. The process of analysis followed the discussion on handling and analysing the data above [2.3.3.4]. As each interview was transcribed, the researcher highlighted significant words and phrases that then determined a code. Coding then led to the development of thematic categorisation.

The nature of semi-structured interviews meant that participants would sometimes provide tangential answers that related to other questions in the interview or issues in the research. Furthermore, participants sometimes added additional thoughts or reflections as the interview unfolded. Often these tangential comments and unsolicited reflections proved insightful and offered meaningful data.

Table 2.17 provides an overview of the themes that emerged from the coding process. Each of these themes will be elucidated in the following section.

Themes	Sub-themes
The nature of supervision	• Accountability • Discipling • Mutuality • Experience
The practice of supervision	• Methods • Focus • Frequency
The challenges of supervision	• Model • Resources and logistics • Distance
The importance of supervision	• Quality • Care

Table 2.17 Themes and sub-themes determined from the interviews

What follows is a summary of the themes and sub-themes (as presented in Table 2.17) that emerged during the interviews with the sample group. The goal is not to provide an

exhaustive explanation of the data but rather to provide a description of the key themes that emerged. These descriptions will include direct quotes (presented in italics) from the participants while conforming to the confidentiality requirements of the research. The combination of confidentiality with verbatim quotes aids in presenting rich data.

The purpose of this section is to answer the question: What supervision methods, models, and activities are currently being practised to promote multidimensional counsellor development?

2.4.2.1 Theme 1: The nature of supervision

The participants all had a particular view regarding the nature of biblical counselling supervision. Some participants had reflected on this issue in far more detail than others, but as each participant discussed this, some clear themes regarding the nature of supervision emerged. Four themes, in particular, emerged.

2.4.2.1.1 Accountability

A few participants highlighted the fact that counselling supervision provided accountability for the counsellor. One participant said: *“there’s some accountability... the person is actually being accountable for what they’re doing.”* Another stated, *“my purpose is to check them out. Are you really competent to counsel?”* While yet another said that *“Supervision is... good for holding up the ethical standards in the church and in the field.”* A fourth participant again highlighted the way supervision involves accountability when defining supervision in the following way: *“Supervision is the process whereby counsellors are able to receive oversight, accountability, feedback and development for the work of counselling that they are engaged in.”*

These comments reveal that the participants value the ethical role supervision can play in promoting accountability in biblical counselling ministry. Supervision, in this sense, promotes the ethical quality of this aspect of the church’s ministry. Finally, in justifying why accountability is appropriate when it comes to biblical counselling, one participant added: *“it’s normal to be accountable. We get that in the Bible with Elijah and Elisha, you’ve got Moses and Joshua, you got Paul and John Mark, you got Paul and the Elders, besides all Jesus. So there is accountability all the way through the Bible.”* In this sense, the accountability provided by supervision helps biblical counselling be biblical in its praxis.

2.4.2.1.2 Discipling

Another aspect to supervision, according to some of the participants, is discipleship. Supervision, one said, *“would come under the general banner of discipling. Training one another up. Encouraging one another. So just all the normal one-anotherings but... with a specific focus.”*

Another participant highlighted the teaching-and-learning dynamic that characterises discipleship: *“I want them to learn something along the way. I want to talk about all aspects of the counselling process with them. And I find generally that there’s two or three major areas where counsellors need work and more experience.”*

Yet another blended the elements of mentoring, caring and teaching:

“the mentoring is more, how do I pass on my experience and skill to you so that you’ve got that? There’s a caring in that, and how do I also role model for you what caring in a one-on-one conversation looks like in the way I deal with you so that there’s a consistency with what we’re doing all the way through—from the person that we’re caring for through the relationship in the supervision, through the one-on-one mentoring. So it’s always about consistent truth and love thread, if you like, all the way through... when you’re caring for a child you’re also teaching them. It’s—I don’t love you if I don’t teach you what to do the right way.”

As will be demonstrated in chapter four, discipleship includes both relational connection and teaching-and-learning, and this theme certainly emerged in the data. This means that, according to one participant, supervision has a holistic focus on the well-being of the counsellor:

“good supervision should be paying attention to who the intern is outside of their particular ministry role that supervision is being provided for. You know, so how are they responding to... whatever’s going on in their ministry? But also, you know, what are the relationships going on in their family like? Or how are they responding to that health issue that they have at a personal level?”

In this view, good supervision would actually have positive benefits that then shape their life outside of supervision:

“So my hope would be that as our supervision tries to help them grow in sort of character and competency that you’d be seeing that flow out into the rest of

their lives as well. So good supervision should help them be better friends and spouses and all that.”

Comments like this connect well with the multidimensional perspective being advocated for in this research project.

What is interesting for the researcher to reflect upon is how this sub-theme of discipleship from the supervisors does not see a strong corollary in the data from the supervisees. In the previous data from the Google Forms, the participants indicated that the focus tends to be more on content-and-competence. However, surprisingly, the supervisors appear to have—at least conceptually—a richer relational understanding of what supervision should be and do. The supervisors’ vision does not appear to line up with the supervisees’ reality.

It is worth mentioning that one of the participants had a markedly narrower view of the supervision task—seeing it less as discipleship as a more focused, consultative task. Supervision, according to this participant, is

“what I might call instrumental... a means to an end. So what is my role as supervisor? What am I trying to do? I am trying to support this person in their counselling so they are equipped and have what they need to do the job; they can understand what about themselves gets in the way of their work; I can supply resources; and it’s kind of a focal relationship... it’s a focal relationship. I am not, broadly, caring for their souls... I am consulting with them to do a task... it’s like ministry consultation more than it is ownership oversight... it’s a focal relationship of a consultative nature.”

2.4.2.1.3 Mutuality

Another sub-theme that emerged when it came to considering the nature of supervision was the concept of a reciprocal relationship. The supervisor-supervisee relationship, it was averred by the participants, was one of mutuality. In the words of one participant, *“supervision is a joint endeavour, not a hierarchical thing. It’s to encourage the quality of the counsellor’s work.”* Again, another interviewee said, *“I think there’s also a sense of we’re also co-labourers in the Gospel, and we’re also friends, and there’s a mutuality to that as well...there’s this...mutuality to”* supervision. Another participant, again emphasising the mutuality of supervision, said flatly: *“we are not in a hierarchy.”*

One of the reasons there is mutuality is because of how, in God’s providence, the supervisor and supervisee have different life experiences that enable them to share perspectives:

“the providence of God means that different people have different experiences. He’s placed people in situations or in front of people that even someone who is, you know, X amount of years older than me has not had or different demographics or different situations and so there is, in that sense, a lot to be gained by interacting with other people, discussing cases or situations with other people. Because the providence of God means that they have either experienced similar things or different things that could actually then round out or put nuance on that thinking. And I guess that also sort of pushes back against that sort of it always has to be older-to-younger.”

These comments emphasise the agency of the supervisee, and – in the researcher’s opinion – place appropriate responsibility on both supervisor and supervisee. Again, there appears to be a disconnect between the two sets of research results. While supervisees appear to be reporting a less relational experience of supervision, supervisors are articulating a richer relational view of how they understand supervision to unfold.

2.4.2.1.4 Experience

The final major sub-theme that emerged when it came to considering the nature of supervision was the vital role that experience played. One of the metaphors that resonated with the researcher was the metaphor of the supervisor being an experienced mountain guide who comes to help the novice climber:

“the role of supervision... it’s kind of like the experienced mountain guide then going along with them as they actually climb the mountain. Yes, they may have lots of head knowledge, they might have a lot of the equipment that they need, but they don’t have the experience, they don’t actually have the know-how.”

The supervisor has the experience and thus case-wise practical know-how that they can offer to the supervisee.

Again, another participant said that a supervisor is *“someone with more experience helping someone with less experience... Coming alongside someone, to support them, encourage them, help them grow.”* This was reinforced by yet another participant, who said that supervision is:

“a more experienced person coming alongside of a less experienced person— so whether that’s Paul to Timothy, Barnabas to Paul. It can be just about any

area—be it ministerial to secular, there is that baseline common practice that those who have more experience come alongside those who have less.”

2.4.2.2 Theme 2: The practice of supervision

The participants who comprised the research sample group were all involved in the praxis of biblical counselling supervision. What was noteworthy is that their practice of how they actually do supervision differed amongst them. This theme of practice can be sub-developed into the areas of methods, focus and frequency.

2.4.2.2.1 Methods

Supervision methods typically include self-assessment (which can either be verbally summarised or documented in written form), audio recordings, video-recordings and live observation. These are the standard methods supervisors use to supervise counsellors.

Most of the supervisors interviewed indicated that their supervisees provide a verbal self-assessment and summary of the case to them. This correlates with the data provided earlier from supervisees. Thus, this again confirms the researcher’s concerns—why are so few supervisors engaged in live counselling observation? In the words of the supervisors: *“I’m mostly doing supervision by their own summary of what they are doing in counselling.”* Another says, *“I get them to talk me through what they have been doing.”*

Why is the verbal summary method popular? One participant says that it helps them do an accurate supervision assessment:

“If you say, so tell me about this person, and then they start talking, you pick up so much in the way that they present it to you. And then you say, and so then what did you do and they tell you this and then what happened after that? And what did she say and what did you say? You see what they think is important. And they will put things in a way—you’re listening to what they’re saying. And you very quickly pick up on what they think...I’m doing an assessment... they’re telling me this is what’s happening to the person, I’m listening to how they tell me that and what happened. So there’s the...the thing that happened when the counselling happened. That’s one thread. But the other thread is how they talk about what happened and how they interpret what happened. So it’s kind of like the meta-conversation if you like, about that. So you’re seeing those two things, and they tell you so much more.”

This comment reveals how the verbal self-assessment can provide the supervisor with a number of insights that may not be gleaned in any other way.

For others, the verbal self-assessment was selected for pragmatic and pastoral reasons:

“they just pitch up! Often it’s something that they need to spill out, and that’s what we’ll catch for the day... I wouldn’t like to put some kind of structure in place where they feel like they’ve got to answer questions and then I go through it with them or something meanwhile they are sitting with this heavy thing that they are carrying around with no opportunity to talk about it. So I very much try to be driven by them, which 99% of the time is what happens.”

Another pragmatic reason is that having the counsellor provide a verbal summary is time efficient: how does a busy supervisor get through 12-15 counsellors? A verbal summary is *“what I can do!”* Another simply said: *“Time.”*

When asked about audio recordings, different views emerged, summarised by these divergent quotes: *“I hate the idea of having to listen to those recordings... the thought of it just makes me feel sick.”*

Others differed, viewing audio recordings positively, saying that:

“I gotta at least listen to some of the sessions to see how he’s doing. And then I make the trainee listen to his own session, his own recording. I’m not sure if you’ve taken homiletics or not, but if your teacher makes you preach a sermon and then watch yourself preach, it is a humbling experience. And so I’ll ask the trainee to listen to the taped session and then ask him, ‘Well, what did you hear?’ and oftentimes they’re very perceptive: ‘Oh, I messed that up. Or I didn’t get to that or I could have said that better.’ So that’s a valuable learning tool.”

When it came to the method of live observation, the vast majority of supervisors did not use it. The lack of live observation was, in fact, one of the big surprises of the qualitative research.

However, for those that did engage in live observation, their comments were very positive regarding using live observation as a supervision method:

“I would say that our number one positive point of feedback that I get from our counsellors is the benefit of doing live observation. Live observation, or seeing counselling actually happen, is infinitely better than like, doing a case study or reading a book. Being able to see it in real time is really helpful, I think, for supervision.”

Another supervisor, speaking of the strengths of live observation, says that it gives him the opportunity to “*see it all*” as the supervisee learns to counsel biblically.

2.4.2.2.2 Focus

Another sub-theme regarding the practice of supervision is where the supervisor places his or her focus. What is it that the supervisor is looking to provide accountability for? Where are they seeking to help the counsellor make progress?

The researcher used the multidimensional ‘4C’ operational definitions – content, competence, character, and community – to help the participants select a dimension that they thought best matched their typical supervision focus.

The majority of the supervisors focused on two areas – content and competence. Interestingly, this correlates with the data from supervisees in the previous section. It is worth noting the contrast between the empirical results and the proposed multidimensional model.

One of the ways content is focused on is by emphasising case conceptualisation in the supervision sessions: “*I think a lot of the way that we do supervision is focused on case conceptualisation.*” Another said that they focus on “*the content and the competence, because I want them to counsel well.*” Referring to the supervision session itself, another participant said: “*in expressly supervision, then it’s probably content. We’re discussing case conceptualisation and the content of what’s going on.*”

It may be worth noting that there appeared to be a link between those who saw supervision more narrowly, or for contextual reasons had to focus on supervision sessions outside of the local church context, and those who tended to focus primarily on content and competence. The narrower view of supervision tended to result in a focus on content and competence. When it came to those providing supervision within a local church environment, the focus tended to be more holistic. This wasn’t always the case, but it occurred sufficiently for the researcher to make a note of.

For example, one participant who supervises for a para-church organisation described that, although he desires to ascertain the spiritual maturity of the supervisee, the format of the supervision prevents it:

I also want to know, is this guy just himself spiritually mature enough to handle such things? You know, lay hands on no man suddenly. You don’t ordain someone to a ministry quickly. So does this guys have the maturity? Does he

have enough evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit in his life? Because you're talking to people about very intimate personal things and if you're not mature enough to handle listening to that stuff. And don't have enough character that you're not going to share that with others and so on, then you're going to have a disaster on your hands. So we want to explore those things as well. That's very difficult to do in the ACBC process, at least for me. Now hopefully others have checked that out. In the application process, we've had other people weigh-in on this guy. But as the supervisor through the 50 hours, I don't have much of a way that I can evaluate that.

Even though this supervisor desires to evaluate character, the ACBC supervision process—at least in his experience—makes that impracticable. Another supervisor, also speaking of his role in supervising at a para-church organisation, said that his supervisees “*don't get live observation*” and receive less of his time than those at his church do.

Contrastingly, the holistic perspective was articulated in some detail by one of the participants who provide supervision in their local church:

“that's how you care for people, it's the right way to care for people because you've got... it's in their best interest. It's in the best interest of the counselee, it's in the best interest of the counsellor, that they have this broad way of being cared for and growing, and it's in the best interest of the church. You can't compartmentalise things, you have to see them as a whole being... I think often people are seen as volunteers for the ministry. And the ministry becomes the thing and everybody sacrifices themselves for the ministry. And when I'm involved with people I don't like that. I think each person needs to know that they are seen... So every person is an individual, I think that's critical—not to see them as a ministry pawn.”

It, therefore, seems appropriate to note—tentatively—the connection between the context of supervision and the focus of supervision. The para-church context seems to limit the dimensional focus, whereas the local church context seems to lend itself naturally towards a more multidimensional focus. However, the researcher realises that there is more complexity to this, as well as additional factors—such as how well resourced the para-church organisation or church is. Because multidimensional, holistic supervision is more time-consuming and labour intensive, there is a practical trade-off that any church or organisation needs to make in this regard.

The concern of the researcher is that this trade-off is currently being determined more by pragmatic realities than clear theological convictions.

2.4.2.2.3 Frequency

All the participants reported that the frequency of supervision was anywhere from weekly to monthly. No-one did more frequently than weekly, and no-one seemed to do less than monthly.

What are some of the factors that might increase or decrease frequency? First, the number of counselees a counsellor is seeing: *“So for people who are seeing one or two people, every week or every two weeks... If you’re seeing ten people, then you need more frequent supervision. So, I would like to see people who are seeing ten people, I’d like to see them every two weeks.”* Another factor informing the frequency decision might be the way supervision is practised within secular counselling circles. Another participant, referring the context in Britain, said:

“The gold standard in secular counselling supervision is once every four weeks per hour-and-a-half supervision session, and that is mean to cover 8-10 hours of counselling. If somebody is seeing more clients or doing more time than that, the expectation is that you would have supervision more frequently or for longer. So the norm is: once every four weeks for an hour and a half.”

Another factor would be sustainability: *“it feels the most sustainable.”*

Some supervisors provided a blend of personal and group supervision. In that case, the frequency was: *“once a month one individual hour and then every week one hour in a group.”*

One supervisor eloquently explained why anything less than once a month was, in their opinion, relationally unhelpful:

“there’s a process between them and me. And I don’t want that to be too interrupted. Cos they, even if they don’t have counselees, they’re...we’re developing a relationship of, a mentoring / supervision relationship. And it’s really in that relationship that a lot is happening.”

In this comment, the link between frequency and relationship is highlighted.

2.4.2.3 Theme 3: The challenges of supervision

In the course of the interviews, the challenges facing supervisors and their task of supervision became apparent. These challenges include a lack of theological reflection in terms of having no model, a lack of resources and logistical challenges, and the challenge of geographical proximity.

2.4.2.3.1 Model

Not a single participant referred to a biblical counselling supervision model that they consciously used. This does appear to confirm the researcher's view that no such model exists, at least not in any widely known way. When asked if they used a model, here are several of the answers:

- “No. Not at all.”
- “No.”
- “Most supervisors I know, they follow the contours of the supervision they themselves received.”
- “I don’t know if there are types or models...”
- “My honest answer is no I don’t think I have.”

For most of the supervisors, the way they currently supervise is directly connected to the supervision they received: *“I think the way I’ve set things up here with the intern scheme is probably largely borne out of my own experience of just receiving supervision.”*

It’s worth noting that this doesn’t necessarily mean that no adequate supervision is happening. Nevertheless, it does raise a number of concerns: how is best practice determined? How is supervision to be assessed—and therefore improved? How are faults in supervision corrected? This data confirms Powlison’s comment cited above that there exists a profound lack of attention in biblical counselling circles regarding the task of supervision.

2.4.2.3.2 Resources and logistics

Many of the participants indicated that a number of the challenges when it comes to providing effective supervision are resource-oriented and logistical.

First, a number of supervisors are extremely busy and have limited time to provide supervision. One participant, who connects supervisors with counsellors said that supervisors (referred to as mentors):

“are just really busy people... everyone is really busy. For the most part, the mentors are doing this on the side. You know, after they are working fulltime or doing whatever, which I think is quite different from CCEF where Alasdair Groves was my supervisor, like that was part of his role, to be giving me supervision. So it was part of his workweek, whereas our mentors just don’t have that.”

Another participant bluntly said: *“there’s never enough time.”*

Secondly, there are various interlocking logistical problems:

“The weaknesses are logistical weaknesses. And the seminary where I teach we have the same problem. We have seminary students, they’re either online students or they are resident students. Just getting them the practical sitting-in on counselling sessions, you send them home toward the church they grew up in, just sit in and listen to what their pastor does, their pastor may not do counselling or have no idea what he’s doing. So finding competent counsellors to send people to is just hard. Again, if I had all sorts of money, I would establish a counselling training centre at the seminary where counselling people from the community. The counselling teachers would do the counselling and their students, from very early on in the process, would be sitting in on the counselling cases so that their studies aren’t just all academic. But again, that’s a logistical problem, and that’s a financial problem.”

Again, it was said: *“My major concerns right now are all logistical concerns. I wish we didn’t have to do it the way that we do it in the ACBC context—but I don’t know how to fix it.”*

2.4.2.3.3 Distance

Finally, the challenge of geography came up repeatedly. One participant commented on how this affects relationships and communication: *“none of us are geographically in the same place and so communication takes that much more effort and so sometimes it can feel a bit disjointed.”*

Another lamented:

“Some of these guys I never do meet face-to-face. The last ACBC conference I met two of my guys for the first time – after they’d been through the whole process. I’m working with a guy right now, I’ve been working with him about 20 hours into the process and he happened to be travelling through and he stopped and we had lunch together and I got to meet him. But other than that, I would never get to meet some of these people because of the distances involved. But I don’t like that.”

One participant even went so far as to describe e-supervision as a weakness in her supervision: *“Skype is, as much as it’s a good thing, it’s also a weakness. Because the supervisee is in the middle of telling you something and the connection goes and the moment is lost.”* This view, of e-supervision as a weakness, was affirmed by another participant: *“ideally, I wish we could be in-person but it’s just not doable. One of the primary reasons is that we are geographically spread out... So that [e-supervision] would be a weakness.”*

Another participant mentioned how even having more than one office location for their ministry had a negative impact on the relational connection with those being supervised: *“we have two offices so I don’t actually see the counsellors in person very often. So we don’t get to do like those little small conversations in between our sessions that I think would be useful.”*

This challenge of geographic proximity is real and must be honestly grappled with. However, the researcher does wonder if there is a way in which it can be overcome—or at least minimised—through a more robust and systematic use of the various technologies that are increasingly available.

2.4.2.4 Theme 4: The importance of supervision

Again and again, participants highlighted the importance of supervision. This struck the researcher because although there was an absence of conceptual agreement as to the nature of supervision, and although there was diversity (and weaknesses) in the practice of supervision, there remained widespread agreement regarding the importance of supervision.

Even though the participants differed slightly on what it is, or how to do it, there was widespread agreement that it should be done, and that it was important: *“I think it’s really, really important... I think supervision is essential.”*

Considering the data, the two sub-themes that emerged here had to do with the manner in which supervision promoted the quality of the counselling work, as well as the way in which it provides care for the counsellor.

2.4.2.4.1 Quality

Supervision, according to one participant, is important because it has as its aim *“to encourage the quality of the counsellor’s work.”* Another says: *“what is my role as supervisor? What am I trying to do? I am trying to support this person in their counselling so they are equipped and have what they need to do the job; they can understand what about themselves gets in the way of their work.”* Again, supervision is essential because of its focus on the counsellor’s work of counselling – it aims to help the counsellor with the *“counselling process, care planning, conceptualization and assessment, and what you might call personal wellbeing, spiritual wellbeing.”*

The following quote was shared earlier but is being repeated because of the way in which it reveals the purpose of supervision—to aid the work of the counsellor: *“Supervision is the process whereby counsellors are able to receive oversight, accountability, feedback and development for the work of counselling.”* The point being made here is that supervision seeks to improve the work of counselling.

Again, another participant says that supervision provides *“a way of speaking into those places or even just the blind spots that we all have, or biases, or prejudices, or things like that. I think it’s just really key to keep that in mind. You know, we need people to point that stuff out to us.”*

Finally, a participant made a comment about the effectiveness of lay counselling: *“most of the data about lay counselling being very effective, suggests some level of training and suggests supervision, as part of it.”* One participant stated that supervision helped her take her theoretical knowledge and turn it into actual counselling know-how: *“so even having done courses... so what does that look like in this moment? It was that... I think that’s where I learnt three trees. It was in supervision.”*

2.4.2.4.2 Care

One participant emphasised the importance of receiving supervision by linking it directly to her own perseverance in the counselling endeavour: Supervision, she said, is *“the reason*

I'm still counselling. I don't know if I would have stuck out...I don't know if I would have had the confidence and the perseverance."

Another pointed out how supervision keeps in view the fact that the counsellor is a sinner, saint and sufferer: *"We are sinners—you know, doctrine of the fall. We are saints, like the Lord is at work as well. But, we know, we are also sufferers, and you mentioned limitations and weaknesses, and I think that's also a really key part of supervision too."*

The role that care plays in supervision was poignantly shared by one participant when they compared it to how they received physical care from the matron during her days as a nurse:

"We had this matron when I was a student nurse. And ...and when I was first a student nurse this the nursing home was really great. We had lovely food, and there was always tea, and sandwiches, and we were spoilt. And she used to say, 'look after the nurses and the nurses will look after the patients.' And I just, even then, said: yes! That's the thing. And when she left, and the next one came along, she didn't have that same attitude and we all felt it."

The comparison being made is clear: just as the matrons cared for the nurses so that the nurses could care for the patients, so too the supervisor is to care for the counsellor so that the counsellor can care for the counselees. A culture of care should flow from the supervisor to the counselee. This is why supervision is so important.

2.5 Research headlines

Having reflected on the results in some detail, there is value in also presenting the research headlines (Saldaña, 2013:257). It may also be helpful to repeat the key empirical research question: What supervision methods, models, or activities are currently being practised to promote multidimensional counsellor development?

In view of this question and the results discussed above, three research headlines appear noteworthy.

Determining these four headlines is difficult because the data is so intricately interwoven. Furthermore, "the numeric frequency of data related to a code, category, theme or concept is not necessarily a reliable indicator of its importance or significance" (Saldaña, 2013:257). Having said that, though, the four major research headlines—particularly relevant issues in view of both the research question and the emerging data—will be presented below.

2.5.1 No widely known biblical counselling supervision model is being used

Throughout the qualitative data collection process, whether through the online Google Forms or the interviews, it became clear that there is no widely recognised biblical counselling supervision model. To be sure, supervision was happening, but there was usually a lack of theological reflection behind it. In many cases, it seemed that supervisors simply supervised in the way that they had been supervised. They may have made some adjustments, but there seemed to be little to no theological development or reflexive practice.

This became clearer throughout the course of doing interviews and reflecting on the Google Forms. This became clear not only because of what was said but also because of what was not said—there was often an absence of theological reflection relating to the nature and praxis of biblical counselling supervision. Supervisees did not know if a model was being used to supervise them—and supervisors are typically giving a form of supervision to others what they had received themselves.

The organisation that seemed most likely to have a model was ACBC. However, while they have a method (a combination of written self-assessments, audio recordings and e-supervision) they do not appear to have an underlying theological model or vision.

The lack of an explicit model does not mean, of course, that there is not any theological reflection happening when supervision is happening. It is the researcher's view that there is an implicit theology—or a “lived theology” (Ward, 2017:64) – that is being carried out in the way that supervision happens. Nevertheless, this theological vision has not been articulated or applied in a systematic manner. This can have—and, in the researcher's view, has had—deleterious effects on the praxis of biblical counselling supervision.

2.5.2 The practice of biblical counselling supervision differs widely but tends to focus on content and competence (it is rarely 4C-multidimensional)

The second research headline is the fact that biblical counselling supervision is being practised very differently from supervisor to supervisor. Furthermore, it tends to focus on the content and competence dimensions. By focusing on two out of the four dimensions, it can be said that supervision is rarely 4C-multidimensional.

Although each supervisor is free to have a particular emphasis, and each supervisee might require a particular focus, the problem is that these supervision practices do not proceed from a clear theological vision. Concerningly, a lack of theological reflection and accountability can result in a low quality of supervision being given. Furthermore, a lack of

theological reflection also limits the ability to evaluate and correct harmful supervision practices. This diversity of practice—and lack of multidimensional development—can not only reduce the quality of supervision but also mean that where ineffective or unhelpful supervision exists, there is no way for that to be assessed and corrected.

This can be seen particularly regarding the issue of supervision methods: the most common supervision method was verbal self-reporting. While enjoying a number of advantages, if the weakness of a verbal summary is never considered, and if another method is never employed, supervision could never take place with an awareness of the actual dynamics going on in the reported counselling sessions. This, in the researcher's opinion, is a significant weakness in the biblical counselling world at the moment.

Likewise, the majority of supervisees shared that their supervision consisted primarily in self-assessment. However, several of those supervisees shared that their competence would be best developed through some kind of observation—whether live observation or a recording. This is worth noting. If counselling competence is something that supervision is interested in, then what steps can be taken to ensure that more effective methods are used to facilitate the development of competence in biblical counsellors?

2.5.3 Biblical counselling supervision is important

An encouraging and recurring theme throughout collecting the qualitative data was how participants view supervision – that it was important. Again and again, participants expressed their views on the importance of supervision. Sometimes this was done positively, through sharing how supervision had kept them going as a counsellor. Sometimes it was shared more negatively, as when their awareness of a lack of supervision in biblical counselling circles was a concern, or when their personal experience of supervision had been negative.

At no point in the research did anyone express the view that supervision was unimportant. Instead, there was a widespread agreement over the fact that supervision matters. Supervision, it was said, is often where the biblical counsellor learns how to counsel. To draw on the metaphor that was shared above, the supervisor is like an experienced mountain guide. The counselling student is like the novice climber—and they get all the mountaineering information when taking classes. They get their maps, their compasses, and a whole array of tips and techniques. However, at some point, the mountaineering student needs to climb the mountain.

Moreover, if they can learn to climb with an experienced guide, it makes the climb safer, more efficient, and a lot less dangerous and stressful. Supervision enables the inexperienced counsellor to translate counselling knowledge into counselling wisdom. It turns the student into a practitioner. Biblical counselling supervision is very important.

This importance makes the lack of attention to supervision even more concerning. If supervision is as crucial as the participants have indicated, then further theological development is an urgent and vital task.

2.6 Conclusion

Through empirical research, this chapter sought to identify the supervision methods, models and/or activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. The descriptive-empirical task was employed in order to describe the current supervision practices within the biblical counselling movement.

The first half of the chapter explained the research design and the specific qualitative data methodology the researcher followed in seeking to address the primary purpose of the research. The primary goal of this research was to identify and describe what is going on when it comes to the supervision of biblical counsellors.

The second half of the chapter presented the results of the research and the research headlines, including rich descriptions of the themes that emerged from the interviews.

In the process of researching how to engage in qualitative research, the author came across a phrase that resonated with the experience of seeking to understand and code the qualitative data that had been collected. Cited appreciatively by Johnny Saldaña in his textbook, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Lindof and Taylor (2011:242) assert that the analytic endeavour of the qualitative researcher is a “blend of strategic mindfulness and unexpected discovery.”

The research results above (as well as in the following chapter) do certainly reflect this blend. There has been a strategic mindfulness to the collection and analysis of data. A specific research design has been followed, ethical considerations heeded, and diligent attentiveness given. At the same time, there have been moments of unanticipated discovery—whether that has taken place during an unplanned digression in an interview or in the long and strenuous hours of data analysis and reflection.

More of these discoveries, conclusions, and explanations will be offered in the following chapter, where the focus moves from the descriptive-empirical task to the interpretative task. It is there, in the task of interpretation, that the researcher will seek to provide reasons why the present situation exists. It is to that task that the research project now turns.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETING THE STATE OF SUPERVISION WITHIN THE BIBLICAL COUNSELLING MOVEMENT

3.1 The interpretive task

This chapter of the research project will seek to explain why biblical counselling (BC) supervision is currently being practised in the way that it is. Within Osmer's model of practical theology (2008:4), this is known as the Interpretive Task.

This task seeks to understand why the particular patterns and dynamics that have been identified through empirical research exist. This task, therefore, moves from the question of what is going on? (chapter two of this thesis) to the question: why is this going on?

In the context of BC supervision, this chapter seeks to answer the question: Why are these supervision methods, models, and activities being used? Having answered the first question, we now need to answer the second—the question that the descriptive empirical task raised. This chapter moves from the first task to the second task. The four tasks of Osmer's practical theology method (2008:4) are represented in Figure 3.1 below.

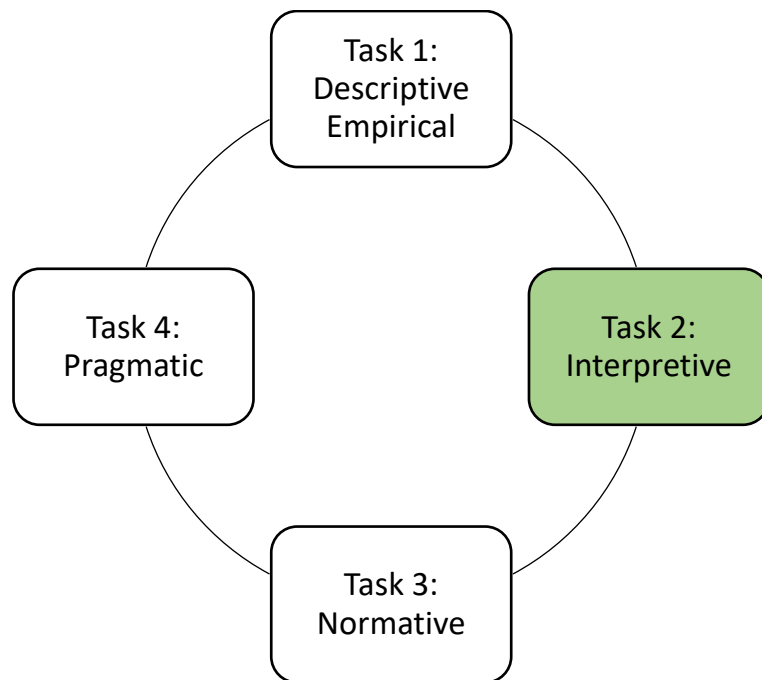


Figure 3.1: Osmer's (2008:4) four tasks of practical theological interpretation

This chapter's focus is on the interpretive task (highlighted in green in Figure 3.1 above). This task seeks to explain the descriptive empirical data by drawing on theological categories, relevant supervision literature, and church history. Empirical research, supervision literature, theological reflection and historical analysis will all play a role in helping the researcher to understand better why the patterns and dynamics identified in the previous chapter are occurring. This chapter aims to explain the previous chapter.

3.1.1 The connection between the interpretive task and the other tasks

It needs to be mentioned that although the focus in this chapter is fundamentally on the second task of Osmer's practical-theological model—that is, the task of interpretation—the chapter will inevitably be something of a blend of the descriptive-empirical, interpretive and normative tasks.

This is because the researcher will be seeking to interpret and reflect upon the particular issues raised in the empirical data within his meta-theoretical perspective, which is informed by a reformed theological worldview. Such a worldview is infused with normative theological categories. Thus, while distinct, these three tasks are connected, and so there will be points of contact throughout the research project.

Therefore, in this chapter, there will be references to comments made by participants⁷ as well as theological references—even though, strictly speaking, those elements belong in the first and third task respectively.

3.1.2 An American focus?

A comment regarding geographic focus is also needed at the beginning of this chapter. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the research participants came from different countries—the largest component being American. There is, therefore, an American-orientation in the descriptive-empirical task, as well as in the interpretive task. The researcher is cognisant of this and thinks that this is a reflection of where the Biblical Counselling Movement (BCM) has developed geographically, and where most of the

⁷ As in the previous chapter, the quotations by participants will be italicized.

intellectual and practical development takes place. Simply put, most biblical counselling ministry, training, and supervision takes place in the United States of America (USA).

Whilst the BCM has been growing internationally, the reasons for why things are the way they are (the essence of the interpretive task) have to do with the writings and influence of the American biblical counsellors and BC organisations. Thus, this task has what might appear to be an unbalanced focus on developments within the USA. The reason for that is, simply, that almost all of the developments have occurred in the USA. Nevertheless, the researcher does think that many of the participants' comments will have application in broader settings, including South Africa.

Thus, while the first two tasks have a focus on the USA, the research findings are by no means exclusively applicable to the USA.

3.1.3 A summary of the previous chapter's findings

Finally, before focusing on the details of this chapter, it will be helpful to summarise some of the themes and research headlines of the previous chapter.

The four themes that emerged from the empirical data were:

- The nature of supervision: the supervisory relationship was not widely agreed upon as participants had different views as to how precisely it should be conceptualised. Nevertheless, despite these differences, some commonalities emerged. These commonalities became sub-themes—and these indicated that the participants considered the supervisory relationship to be one which involved accountability, discipleship or mentoring, and mutuality.
- The practice of supervision: supervision was practised differently by the different participants, but the commonality—at least to a degree—was that it tended to focus on the dimensions of content and competence. This two-dimensional focus is in contrast to the four-dimensional model being proposed in this research project. In particular, the research results indicated a lack of attention when it comes to the characterological development and relational processes and dynamics of the supervisees. In addition to discerning this two-dimensional focus in supervision, the most common method in supervision appeared to be verbal summaries provided by the supervisee to the supervisor. This descriptive empirical data raises concerns because of the lack of access supervisors are getting to the actual communication

dynamics that are playing out in counselling sessions. In the researcher's opinion, supervisors are far too dependent on the supervisees self-assessment and summary of counselling.

- The challenges of supervision: these include a lack of a supervision model, a lack of resources and other logistical challenges, and geographic distance.
- The importance of supervision: participants agreed that supervision was an important task. When it worked well, participants were deeply grateful. When it was ineffective, the researcher sensed the participants' frustration.

Lastly, the research headlines were:

- No model: No widely known model for BC supervision exists or is being used. The empirical data confirmed the researcher's intuitive concerns in this regard, and probably reveals a lack of theological reflection on the task of supervision within the BCM.
- Two-dimensional practice: The practice of BC supervision differs widely, but tends to focus on content and competence (it is rarely multidimensional).
- Important: BC supervision is considered to be essential by those engaged in the task. Not a single participant undermined its value; instead, a repeated theme was the importance of BC supervision.

In light of the descriptive-empirical task, the focus of the interpretive task then seeks to understand why BC supervision is underdeveloped—and, particularly, why it specifically lacks focus on the dimensions of character and community.

3.2 Overview of the task and chapter

This chapter's focus is on the interpretive task and begins with an overview of both the task and the chapter. Osmer conceptualises this task as one of "sagely wisdom" (2008:82)

whereby the spiritual leader and/or practical theologian⁸ helps others make sense of the circumstances of their lives and world.

The sagely wisdom of such leaders, Osmer writes, "is characterised by three qualities: thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment, which may be viewed along the lines of a continuum." (See Figure 3.2 below). Each quality will be considered in turn.

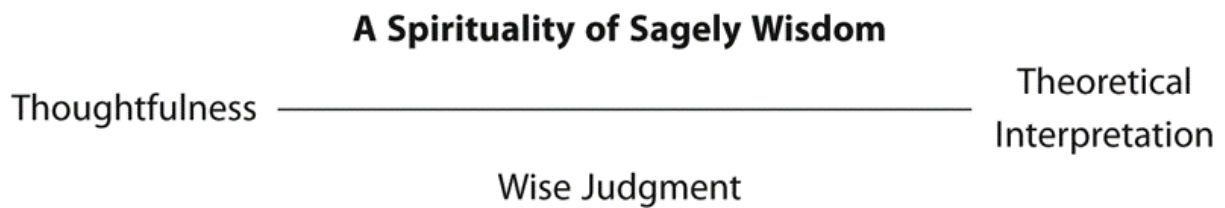


Figure 3.2: Osmer's (2008:82) spirituality of sagely wisdom

3.2.1 Thoughtfulness

Thoughtfulness, as Osmer articulates it, is two-fold. Firstly, leaders ought to be considerate (thoughtful) in the ways they treat others. They ought to be attentive to people within their circumstances and struggles; they need to recognise the person in their uniqueness and otherness. Secondly, thoughtfulness means that leaders ought to be insightful about matters in everyday life. Osmer (2008:82) argues that when it comes to consideration and insight:

both qualities are important to leaders' interactions with others. Treating others with consideration and kindness often involves pausing to reflect on their circumstances. This is especially necessary when we are dealing with people who are difficult. Our normal reaction is one of impatience and irritation. Thoughtfulness, in contrast, strives for insight into the particular circumstances of such people, which may even lead to kindness on our part.

⁸ These two terms—spiritual leader and practical theologian—will be used interchangeably in this chapter, such that the spiritual leader is also a practical theologian.

This type of thoughtfulness is essential in a research project like this—participants have engaged with vulnerability and sincerity. While engaging in the evaluation of the data, the practical theologian also needs to be attentive, kind and patient. It is all too easy to attend superficially and critique how people have been engaging in supervision in a cold, harsh, and judgemental manner. It could be easy to ignore the contextual difficulties and constraints both supervisors and supervisees find themselves in. However, to be harsh and superficial about the lived theology of participants would lack the quality of thoughtfulness. Throughout this chapter, whenever participants or authors have been cited, it has been the researcher's aim to do so with thoughtfulness.

3.2.2 Theoretical interpretation

On the other side of the sagely wisdom continuum is theoretical interpretation. By this Osmer (2008:83) refers to the ability of practical theologians to "draw on theories of the arts and sciences to understand and respond to particular episodes, situations, or contexts."

In this particular research project—and in this chapter specifically—the author will be drawing primarily on three areas of theoretical interpretation: literature regarding the practice of supervision (more broadly practised than within the church), literature that details the history of pastoral care generally and biblical counselling specifically, with a particular focus on the history of the American-oriented BCM, and theological literature such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries.

Why focus on secular clinical supervision? The reason for drawing on secular supervision literature is because of the enormous amount of work that has gone into understanding and developing the practice of supervision within the helping professions. To ignore this vast literature and the different theories of supervision would be to ignore how clinical supervision operates and is popularly understood. Furthermore, it would also deprive the research project of material related to the broader conceptual discussion regarding supervision. These theories are very influential, and they provide the intellectual context in which BC supervision must develop. Furthermore, an awareness of these theories and models enables the practical theologian to understand how a biblical theory and model may have continuities with such theories and models, as well as discontinuities.

Why the focus on the BCM? The reason for the focus on the BCM is because of the influence of the American biblical counsellors on the BCM globally. Again, it is important to recognise the socio-cultural background of the modern BCM. To ignore this would be to de-contextualise the theological analysis. However, "theology is contextual" (Höschele

2009:142), and therefore an examination of the socio-cultural context which has shaped the BCM will be important. Additionally, because the author is proposing a BC supervision model, it will be important to reflect on the nature, origins and developments within the BCM.

Throughout this chapter, then, the author will be quoting and commenting on excerpts from the literature of these two disciplines. By drawing from these theories, theology, and literature, the author hopes to offer a thorough, contextually-aware and thoughtful interpretation of why supervision currently looks the way that it does.

3.2.3 Wise judgement

Thirdly, Osmer (2008:84) advocates for the importance of wise judgement, which he defines as:

the capacity to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts in three interrelated ways: (1) recognition of the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances; (2) discernment of the moral ends at stake; (3) determination of the most effective means to achieve these ends in light of the constraints and possibilities of a particular time and place.

Wise judgement, conceived in this way, is a complex intellectual and moral activity. It involves attentiveness to contextual specifics, moral sensitivity to the issues involved, and practical wisdom regarding the most effective strategy to be employed. It is this coalescence of specificity, morality, and strategy that enables the practical theologian to make wise judgements. The practical theologian would fail in his task if he prescribed overly rigid interpretations that lack awareness of contextual realities and ignored the ethical and moral issues at play. A lack of spiritual and strategic nous would be detrimental to the task of the practical theologian. Therefore, issues and questions related to logistics, ethics, history, and resources as they intersect with the task of counselling supervision will be considered in the course of this chapter. What were the relevant particulars and moral issues at stake in the BCM? What constraints and possibilities exist within the BCM, and how have these shaped the praxis of supervision?

These issues appear both in the literature as well as in the qualitative data and will be duly reflected upon.

Sagely wisdom is undoubtedly required to reflect on BC supervision and to try to interpret and explain why it currently looks the way it does: Why is supervision underdeveloped? Why

does no model exist, even though participants agreed on its importance? Furthermore, why are the dimensions of character and community often not focused on or even ignored?

Throughout this chapter, therefore, as the researcher seeks to interpret the phenomenon of BC supervision, the goal is that the interpretation would be characterised by thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgement.

Finally, to aid with clarity in the interpretation, the chapter has been divided into three sections. BC supervision currently looks the way it does because of historical factors, logistical factors, and theological factors. Each will be considered in turn.

3.3 Historical factors

When seeking to understand the present, it is essential to consider the past. This is certainly true when we reflect on the phenomenon of BC supervision. There are three historical factors worth considering, in particular: the fact that the clergy usually did Soul Care, the fact that Soul Care was displaced from the Church by the modern psychological movement, and the fact that the relatively young BCM was an anti-psychiatry movement driven by theological convictions.

Each of these plays a role when it comes to the interpretive task, and each will be considered below.

3.3.1 The cure and care of souls⁹ was the domain of the clergy (not the laity)

As Powlison (2010:300) points out, the

‘cure of souls’ refers to the transformation of individual lives and communal life into the image of Jesus Christ. ‘Care of souls’ refers to the pastoral processes aiming to bring about such changes in others. The former is the goal, the latter is the method.

So the cure and care of souls have to do with the transformation and renewal of lives. In chapter one, the researcher reflected on biblical counselling's nature, defining it as the conversational ministry of God's gracious Word, through which lives are renewed. Therefore,

⁹ The ‘soul,’ as it is being used in this research project, should be understood in the orthodox Christian view. Namely, that the soul “is the life-force of the person... and it is the seat of desires, emotions, and the will. The soul can be in intimate relationship with God or be under God’s judgment” (Hamme, 2014).

it is apparent that there is a link between contemporary biblical counselling and historic soul care. The researcher would see these two terms almost overlapping. For, in the researcher's opinion, biblical counselling is very much about the cure and care of souls. Identifying this link enables one to situate biblical counselling appropriately with the classic pastoral care tradition.

In this sense, pastors can be seen as biblical counsellors or soul-care providers, because "since the fourth century pastors have been called spiritual physicians, or physicians of the soul" (Senkbeil, 2019:62). The pastoral office, historically understood, is about the cure and care of the soul (Oden, 1987:40-54).

Therefore, the first historical factor that is important to recognise is that ordained clergy typically oversaw and engaged in both the cure of souls and the care of souls. Historically, then, the work of the biblical counsellor was the work of the pastor. Senkbeil (2019:65) articulates it this way:

In that they are chronic sinners, all of God's people need the ordinary care they receive in the divine service (public worship) where the word of God is preached and the sacrament is administered and where they in turn respond with prayer and praise. But in instances of acute need, these same people need the extraordinary care that provides a cure applied to their most pressing needs. Pastors offer both: care in public worship and cure in private pastoral care as needed.

Although historically, a pastor or minister was never given the title biblical counsellor – he typically provided the interventions that many contemporary biblical counsellors would. The pastor or minister was "the Shepherd of souls" (Oden, 1987:41). The multiple pastoral processes and activities, as well as the private care interventions, were the responsibility of the pastor: "The jurisdiction of counseling is and has historically been a work of the church, primarily of pastors" (Welch, 2018). This conviction of the pastor as the counsellor, and counselling as a pastoral-theological enterprise, has also been well documented in books such as McNeil's *A History of the Cure of Souls*, Clebsch and Jaeckle's *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, and Oden's four-volume series *Classical Pastoral Care*.

However, this emphasis on the responsibility of the pastor to provide spiritual care and guidance had a corollary: the cure and care of souls was so tied to pastoral identity that it seems as though the laity engaged in pastoral care exceptionally rarely. There were, therefore, very few (if any) church members—or, in contemporary terminology, lay biblical counsellors—who provided soul care. And because there was very little (if any) delegated

soul care, there was no need for soul care (BC) supervision. The pastor didn't delegate soul care, and so there simply was no-one for the pastor to supervise.¹⁰

One of the reasons, then, for the underdeveloped state of BC supervision in the church today, is historical: supervision was never needed. It is only when pastoral care gets delegated from the pastor to members in his church that a need for supervision arises. And so if there is no lay pastoral care ministry or no lay biblical counselling ministry, then there is no need for supervision—and thus no supervision is given. And thus no theological reflection is provided, and theological development is made. And so the status quo is perpetuated.

Related to this point, Gembola (2020) made the following comment regarding the history of pastoral care within Protestantism:

outside of the episcopal/bishop oversight structures in Anglicanism, I don't think we see represented in Protestant church history the kind of high-level counseling care delegated by the pastor to lay members and then supervised..." and again, "Church historian Clair Davis did say, perhaps slightly as overstatement, that he felt lay ministry (Eph 4) was a discovery of the 20th century (he said this positively). Prior to this I don't think we see much appreciation for lay ministry (and therefore much supervision of lay ministry) outside the monastics and anabaptists. I'm sure there are exceptions (e.g., missionary societies and activist unions in UK and USA esp. in the late 19th century), but it may be fair to say as a general rule. As G. R. Evans said, 'The model of equals, companions on a journey, is less common in Christian History.'

Of course, this is a broad generalisation. There would undoubtedly have been many unrecorded instances in the last two thousand years where the Christian laity would have provided basic spiritual care and discipleship for one another. Nevertheless, this is a generalisation that is generally valid. Historically, supervision was neither needed nor provided because the care and cure of souls was the domain of the clergy.

A few examples, representatively selected from different eras in church history, will confirm this view.

¹⁰ This, of course, raises the question of whether or how pastors historically received supervision. It is a question worth exploring, but beyond the scope of this research project. In the final chapter, the researcher suggests recommended areas of future research.

3.3.1.1 Richard Baxter

The first example worth considering is Richard Baxter—a pastor renowned for his careful pastoral oversight. Writing about the nature of the pastoral task and who was to perform it, Baxter clearly had ordained pastors in mind—not the laity, and not non-ordained itinerant ministers. Note how Baxter differentiates ordained pastors from others who have a legitimate role in the ministry: It is pastors who “are the stated, ordinary teachers of ... a church; by which they are differenced, both from private men, who do occasionally teach, and from the aforesaid itinerant ministers” (Baxter, 1830: 52–53).

Furthermore, when it came to defining the nature of the pastor’s work, Baxter was clear to include not just preaching but also counselling. Baxter (1830:96–97) writes the following regarding the duty of a pastor:

A minister is not only for public preaching, but to be a known counsellor for their souls, as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician for their bodies: so that each man that is in doubts and straits, should bring his case to him and desire resolution... And because the people are grown unacquainted with the office of the Ministry, and their own necessity and duty herein, it belongeth to us to acquaint them herewith, and to press them publicly to come to us for advice in such cases of great concernment to their souls. We must not only be willing of the trouble, but draw it upon ourselves by inviting them hereto. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring our people to this! And doubtless much might be done in it, if we did our duty. How few have I ever heard that heartily pressed their people to their duty in this! A sad case, that people’s souls should be so injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so great a duty, and ministers scarcely ever tell them of it, and awaken them to it; were they but duly sensible of the need and weight of this, you would have them more frequently knocking at your doors, opening their cases to you, making their sad complaints, and begging your advice. I beseech you put them more on this for the future, and perform it carefully when they seek your help. To this end it is very necessary that we be acquainted with practical cases, and especially that we be acquainted with the nature of true grace, and able to assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question that concerns their everlasting life or death. One word of seasonable and prudent advice given by a minister to persons in necessity, hath done that good that many sermons would not have done.

Pastoral care and counselling, as well as general oversight, were the task of the elder or pastor, not the church member. It's not that Baxter forbade the laity to do so; instead, his comments reveal an emphasis—when it comes to soul care, the pastor is to do it. The person who is a “counsellor for their souls” is the pastor.

3.3.1.2 St. Bernard of Clairvaux

A second example will add further confirmation of this. Going back in time, to 1135, St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached through the Song of Songs. In one of these sermons, entitled *On the glory of Christ in heaven, and on the qualities requisite in a faithful pastor of souls*, St Bernard of Clairvaux (1920:407-408) describes the role of the pastor:

Who, my brethren, are these watchmen? They are doubtless the same whom the Saviour in the Gospel pronounces blessed if, when He comes, He shall find them watching. And what good watchmen they are who keep guard over us whilst we slumber, as being obliged to render an account of our soul's welfare! What good keepers, who with vigilant minds spend their nights in prayer, who prudently find out the enemy's ambuscades, forestall the schemes of the malignant, discover their wiles, expose their snares, break their nets, and foil their cunning machinations!

Note how St Bernard of Clairvaux describes the pastor's task: vigilant attention to the welfare of their congregation's souls. That is the responsibility of the pastor.

Later in the same address, St Bernard of Clairvaux (1920:410) charges pastors directly:

Attend to yourselves, therefore, all you who have been called to the labour of the ministry, attend to yourselves, I say, and to the precious charge entrusted to your care. It is a city: be vigilant therefore to defend it from enemies without and to preserve its peace within. It is a Spouse: see to her adornment. It is also a flock: take care to provide it with suitable pasture.

Pastors are to attend to themselves and their flock—they are the person, above others, who is to provide the care and cure of souls.

3.3.1.3 John Calvin

John Calvin provides the third historical example that reveals this emphasis of the pastor being the provider of soul care. Calvin would make a similar comment regarding the

responsibility of the ordained pastor to provide care to his people. Calvin writes: “The office of a true and faithful minister is not only publicly to teach the people for whom he is ordained pastor, but also, as much as he is able, to admonish, exhort, reprove, and console each one individually” (Calvin, quoted in McKee, 2001:292). Here again, the cure and care of souls is an activity Calvin ascribes to the office of the minister. Note both the directive as well as the therapeutic nature of the task: ministers are to both admonish and console.

3.3.1.4 Clementina

Finally, going back even further into church history, the fourth example is from the Ante-Nicene group of writings known as Clementina (quoted in Oden, 1987:85), in which we find the following metaphor:

The church is like a great ship carrying through a violent storm those from many places, who seek to live in the city of the good kingdom. Think of God as the shipmaster. Think of Christ as the pilot. If so, then imagine that the episcopal officer is like a mate, the deacons like sailors, the teacher like a midshipman. The passengers are the laity. The world is the sea. Temptations, persecutions, and dangers toss the ship about like cyclonic winds.

In this metaphor, the active role of the clergy is evident, as is the more passive role of the laity. Although, of course, the Christian laity had a duty to love God and neighbour, the task of soul care lay firmly with the clergy.

Examples could be multiplied, but that would be beyond the scope of this research project. This brief sample confirms the comments made by the participant: namely, that – from a historical perspective at least – soul care was firmly within the domain of the pastor. It was his responsibility.

Some might object to this and argue that pastoral care and counselling has always existed amongst the laity. Passages like Colossians 3:16¹¹ certainly can argue in favour of this view. Therefore, if lay ministry existed, then at some level it must have been supervised.

The following comment by a participant addresses this objection:

“The church... we’d say we’ve been doing something like this for forever, we just never called it counselling, we called it one-another ministry, burden-bearing. Now, historically, that was much more connected to the role of the

¹¹ “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another”

pastor... Which is, essentially, who has oversight of the care of souls in the church? Pastors, right? And that's very clearly, pretty well defined theologically, it has a breadth to it. Now, the idea of lay counselling ministry is the minority in the church's history. That's not the main picture of care of souls."

The point is simple but worth reflecting on: an absence of lay pastoral care ministry means that there is no need for the supervision of that lay pastoral care ministry. And this lack of delegated pastoral care, historically, means that there has not been much reflection on how to do it—and this, in turn, is one reason why it continues to remain underdeveloped today.

Again, in the words of one of the participants, there has historically been no supervision for soul care: *"when you're talking about supervision, you're talking about mental health structures, so that's where [supervision] exists. Because in the church, historically, there is nothing truly quite like supervision, in the church."*

Because of this historical lack of delegated pastoral care, counselling supervision – as it is commonly understood and practised today – has its origins in the mental health field.

The secular genesis of counselling supervision was another point mentioned by a participant: *"when you ask, how do you define it [supervision]? In a sense, what we're asking is how to define something that's a borrowed structure, from the mental health world, and bring it into the church."*

In conclusion, the first historical factor that explains why the methods, models, and activities being used for BC supervision are underdeveloped is that soul care is something that has historically been done by the pastor. There has been very little (if any) delegated soul care and thus, very little (if any) supervision. This historical lack of supervision partly explains the underdevelopment of contemporary BC supervision in general. This historical lack may also explain, more particularly, why there is very little in the way of a supervision model.

Historically, there has been very little conceptual thinking regarding supervision from an overtly theological perspective.

3.3.2 The modern psychology movement displaced soul care (and therefore supervision) from the realm of the church to the realm of psychiatry.

The second historical factor that plays a role in explaining the current underdeveloped theory and practice of BC supervision is the fact that soul care has been displaced from the church. This displacement took place between around 1860-1960, in large part because of the secular psychological revolution (Lambert, 2011:26-32).

Speaking of this gradual displacement of pastoral jurisdiction, Powlison (2010:22) writes:

Professional jurisdiction over Americans' problems in living gradually passed from the religious pastorate to various medical and quasi-medical professions: psychiatry, neurology, social work, and clinical psychology. Pastoral retreat and subordination mirrored the advancing authority of those secular professions offering and administering psychotherapy, psychotropic medication, and psychiatric institutions. The 'therapeutic' was triumphant. Psychiatry and psychotherapy displaced the cure of souls, reifying the medical metaphor and so ordaining 'secular pastoral workers' to take up the task.

Speaking of this pastoral retreat, Lambert (2011:26) adds, "Christians neglected a robustly biblical approach to counselling for more than a century." This neglect, combined with the advancing authority of these emerging secular professions, led to the displacement of soul care from the church.

It is important to note that the psychology movement self-consciously removed the task of soul care from the church. Although historically, the task of counselling was under the purview of the church, "Freud thought the church had failed in this task" (Lambert, 2011:32). His intent was to remove the task from the church: Freud's goal was to "remove counselling from the ministerial context and place it in a secular one" (Lambert, 2011:32).

Modern inheritors of this psychotherapeutic worldview have loyally perpetuated Freud's call in seeking to replace the religious priest with the secular psychotherapist. One example of this is in the writings of the modern intellectual Alain De Botton. For example, in his article entitled *New priesthood: Psychotherapy and the care of the soul*, De Botton (2012) writes, "It is to psychotherapists that we bring the same kind of problems as we would previously have directed at a priest: emotional confusion, loss of meaning, temptations of one kind or another and, of course, anxiety about mortality."

Due to the success of the psychological revolution, secular psychotherapy has almost replaced historic pastoral care. Correspondingly, society has witnessed the almost total replacement of the priest by the psychotherapist when it comes to problems in living. Ironically, De Botton would agree with Calvin that the ordained minister previously provided these services to erstwhile parishioners. The link between priest and psychotherapist is agreed upon—it's just that De Botton thinks that priests need to be replaced by psychotherapists in modern society.

This secular displacement happened for a variety of reasons, which cannot be explored in detail in this project.¹² However, as it relates to the particular focus in this research, three factors are worth highlighting: the difficulty of biblical counselling, the success of the psychological movement, and the dominance of secular supervision.

3.3.2.1 Displacement because of the difficulty of biblical counselling

The ministry of biblical counselling is hard to do and hard to see (Lambert, 2011:27-32). Public ministry – such as preaching – is visible and thus readily appreciated (if done well) or critiqued (if poorly done). Many young folks are drawn to ministry as a vocation because they have witnessed and been edified by the public ministry of the Word. This is perhaps especially true of the public preaching of God's Word—in fact, the researcher was drawn to vocational ministry in large part because of the public exposition of God's Word.

Furthermore, the public ministry is, of course, one of the primary means through which local churches seek numerical growth. Public ministry, therefore, receives a high amount of investment and attention. Consequently, pastors receive much training and regular feedback in honing their public ministry skills and oratorical abilities. In time, the more gifted preachers may be amongst the more persuasive public speakers that one encounters.

By contrast, interpersonal ministry – such as biblical counselling – is far less visible. In large part, this is because confidentiality is an important value, and thus many people are not aware of biblical counselling as a ministry in the way that they are aware of preaching as a ministry. Ordinarily, one would never get to witness a pastoral counselling session, except as a counselee or perhaps as a trainee. This has the practical effect of giving the biblical counselling ministry a lower profile in the ministries of the typical church. Biblical counselling is hard to see. This lower profile makes counselling ministry less likely to receive attention, discussion and reflection.

But biblical counselling isn't only difficult to see – it is difficult to do. As one participant put it: *"It's very complex work."* This participant was echoing a sentiment famously expressed by Gregory Nazianzen (1894:208), who wrote:

the guiding of man, the most variable and manifold of creatures, seems to me in very deed to be the art of arts and science of sciences. Anyone may recognise this, by comparing the work of the physician of souls with the

¹² For further detail on this, see *A History of Pastoral Care in America* by E. Brooks Holifield (Abingdon, 1983), and *The Biblical Counseling Movement* by David Powlison (New Growth Press, 2010).

treatment of the body; and noticing that, laborious as the latter is, ours is more laborious, and of more consequence, from the nature of its subject matter, the power of its science, and the object of its exercise.

Yet another participant, partly referring to the quote by Nazianzen above, reaffirmed the challenging nature of biblical counselling ministry. They said the following:

“The first two documents on how to be a pastor – Gregory of Nazianzus, In Defense of His Flight to Pontus, and John Chrysostom, Six Books on the Priesthood – both of those are structured as explanations for why they did not want to be pastors. Because they viewed the care of souls as such a difficult thing that you should never do it unless you absolutely had to. Because it’s so complicated to apply the medicine of the Word of God to the problems of life; it’s such a hard thing; that it requires, that that skill is the art of arts, it’s the hardest thing.”

Biblical counselling can be challenging work, requiring great skill. It is, according to this participant, the most challenging thing.

Again, the difficulty of wisely applying God’s Word to the challenges of human life is reflected in these words from John Chrysostom. He writes:

the shepherd needs great wisdom and a thousand eyes to examine the soul’s condition from every angle.... The priest, therefore, must not overlook any of these considerations, but examine them all with care and apply all his remedies appropriately (Chrysostom – quoted in Oden, 1987:50).

Thus, it may be said that, from both a historic and contemporary perspective, interpersonal ministry is acknowledged to be very difficult. However, this difficulty is exacerbated by two additional factors in the contemporary world.

First, many pastors receive little to no training in biblical counselling or historic soul care (Kellemen, 2012:4). Whilst they may receive significant input in the area of preaching and leadership, counselling – by contrast – is often not a training emphasis in generic theological training. A well-documented consequence is that pastors then lack the skill they need to practice this “art of arts” – indeed, “Typical seminary M.Div. graduates believe that their training leaves them inadequately prepared for the personal ministry of the Word—pastoral counselling” (Kellemen, 2012:2-3).

Secondly, against the backdrop of underdeveloped pastors, Western culture has produced a highly competent secular soul care professional: the psychotherapist. Compared to the

average pastor, this trained professional may be much more skilful – albeit from a secular perspective – at helping the client find remedies to the issues that plague them.

Biblical counselling ministry is difficult to see, difficult to do, and may well be often under-profiled, under-trained, and under-appreciated. For these reasons, counselling ministry can be harder to discuss and harder to reflect upon.

A consequence of this difficulty is that there is not only underdevelopment in the practice of biblical counselling, but corresponding underdevelopment in the training and oversight of biblical counsellors. As Kellemen (2012:1) explains, many pastors think that “their seminary insufficiently trained them as pastoral counselors in the local church” and, as a result, feel that “they are unprepared to function in the role of a pastoral counseling generalist in a local church setting.” If pastors are ill-equipped to counsel, then surely they will be ill-equipped to provide pastoral counselling supervision.

Thus this lack of counselling emphasis in generic theological training has an ongoing reinforcing consequence: further underdevelopment in how to reflect on and engage in the task of BC supervision. This helps explain why theoretical models and multidimensional approaches may be lacking in contemporary supervision praxis.

The difficulty of biblical counselling is, therefore, at least one factor behind why soul care was displaced in the late modern world from the realm of the church to the field of psychology and psychiatry. It is hard work, but, as will be demonstrated below, others were very willing to step in and do it.

3.3.2.2 Displacement because of the success of the psychological movement

A second reason for the displacement of soul care from the church is because of the success of the psychological movement. There are various reasons for this—the advent of the secular age is a significant one. However, a critical reason relevant to this research project is the growing skill of practising psychologists.

Psychologists, produced through the remarkable growth in interest in psychology, have become those who now ostensibly—and professionally—care for the soul (psyche). And the popularity of the psychological movement which has produced this shift is clear, as Meier *et al.* (1991:17):

Psychology has had an almost exponential growth... A plethora of books on psychology, both technical and popular, has poured from publishers. Psychology courses are among the most popular in colleges and universities. Enrollment of

graduate students in psychology programs has been increasing at a tremendous rate. Essentially every school of higher education on the North American continent devotes at least some aspects of its curriculum to the study of human behavior

The psychological movement has been remarkably successful—both in producing skilled practitioners and in shaping public opinion when it comes to identifying jurisdictional authority for the care of the soul.

However, the success of the movement has a number of consequences, one of which is the overt secularism it promotes (and upon which it was built). Because psychology has been defined in secular terms and because psychotherapy has been practised on secular terms (Lambert 2011:32), the counselling task has itself become secularised.

In his work *The Question of Lay Analysis*, this is precisely what Sigmund Freud aimed to establish when he argued for a whole new class of ‘secular pastoral workers’. Freud argued that the descriptor “‘secular pastoral worker’ might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst, whether he is a doctor or a layman, has to perform in his relation to the public” (Freud, 1989: 682). The secularity of psychological soul care has been produced intentionally.

Another inextricably linked consequence to reflect on has to do with issues of theology, epistemology and ontology—issues related to one’s worldview. The removal of the priest in this new psychotherapeutic endeavour is intertwined with the removal of biblical truth. Speaking of the shift in psychology towards a more explicitly secular mode, Jones (2016) says:

Whereas in the past, it [psychology] was recognised as the study of the soul, it’s now come to mean the study of human behavior... the spiritual and transcendent becomes separated out. The argument is that science ends up being the arbiter of truth and the arbiter of knowledge. And since science can’t study such a thing as a soul or a spirit, it must, therefore, not exist. That, of course, is an illogical argument, and yet that seems to be the basis upon which modern psychology rests. It presumes—it assumes—that there is no spiritual dimension.

The modern psychological movement makes an atheistic *a priori* assumption—that God and the care of the human soul have no inherent connection. Powlison (2012:25) elaborates:

Religion is recognised as a factor that might be individually compelling for some clients, either a comforting resource or an aspect of pathology. But “God” has

no objective significance or necessary relevance either in explanation or treatment of dysfunctional emotions, behaviors and thoughts.

The modern psychological movement excises God from its presuppositional assumptions and subsequent enquiries. It, therefore, also excises the moral-spiritual framework that provides the intellectual framework for theologically interpreting the modern psychological pathologies. And yet, despite this massive intellectual and moral-spiritual error, the psychological movement has enjoyed remarkable success. This success, which has resulted in a counselling takeover, has also had an impact in the area of counselling supervision. Like the counselling task it oversees, supervision “operates in a different universe from the pastoral conception” (Powlison, 2012:25).

This secular approach to the care and cure of souls has resulted in nothing less than a psychological revolution. If ‘revolution’ seems too strong a word, consider the following assertion, made in 1964, by historians Jaeckle and Clebsch (1964:viii):

It is at the point of the patients’ sense of the nature of their troubles that the most profound changes are occurring. Increasingly, men and women bring to therapy ailments that do not easily fit the nosology of classical psychiatry...when new forms of hurting—much more, when new forms of human personhood, present themselves—the very exploration of them suggests that new means of helping are needed and are clued by the patient as much as, maybe more than, by the healer. In our day the florid growth of new and sometimes bizarre therapies is a social index of the hunger for variety and individuality that pervade contemporary life.

The shift regarding the conception of personhood, and the idea that the means of helping might be clued by the patient rather than external, objective reality, indicate a profound change in the social thought of the Western mind. This change in how many folks in our secular age conceptualise the human condition is both a promoter for, and a product of, the psychological revolution. As De Botton mentioned above, the priest has been replaced by the psychotherapist.

A final aspect regarding the consequences of the psychological revolution is worth highlighting. And it has to do with the bifurcation that now exists between the conceptual realms of psychology and theology—again, in the researcher’s opinion, because of the secular worldview.

This bifurcation is now the widespread assumption that psychology and theology have nothing to do with one another. Speaking of this secularism, the church historian John

McNeil (1951:319), writing almost 70 years ago, asserts that the “dissociation of psychotherapy from the theological...traditions is...complete.”

Sadly, even ostensibly Christian counsellors have been affected by this dissociation. The result is that these Christian counsellors are often ignorant about the profound psychological works produced by the church over the years: “Across the board, Christians who serve in counseling roles are often unaware of the Christian history of understanding human psychology” (Gembola, 2017: 78). This ignorance is more than sad—it is concerning. It is concerning because ancient Christian writers and theologians—Gregory the Great, Evagrius of Pontus, John Cassian, Richard Baxter, and many others—have much to offer Christian counsellors today. In both “theory and conceptualisation, in methodology and manner, they offer a powerful vision of Christian growth and change” (Gembola, 2017: 79). Yet, because of how psychology is generally understood, there appears to be little interest in even Christian counsellors to understand and explore their historic psychological forebears. Why is there a massive divide between Christian counsellors and their ancient Christian psychological roots? Surely the success—and secularity—of the modern psychological movement is a factor in this.

This successful institutionalisation of the secular psychological worldview then leads to a cyclical reinforcing effect. As soul care gets outsourced from the church to psychologists, the church does less work in soul care. Ministers and church workers focus their attention on preaching and the sacraments, administration, finances, volunteer management, and the endless list of clerical tasks. Thus, when complex pastoral needs arise, they get often outsourced to the soul care professionals, who have the time and apparent wisdom to get into the details of the soul care struggle. This outsourcing enables the minister and other pastoral staff to focus on these other ‘spiritual’ responsibilities. Whilst a generalisation, the existence of a whole class of soul care professionals testifies to the reality of this practice. This cycle – outsourcing pastoral care which diminishes the church’s commitment to providing robust care – is understandable, but concerning. If anything, in this scenario, the church strengthens and serves the broader psychological movement that is simultaneously depriving the church of one of her core functions. The church has been displaced in this area and has submissively retreated.

And because there is a lack of wise soul care—a lack of biblical counselling—it means that there is a corresponding lack of wise supervision. For counselling supervision will only take place when counselling is happening. And the success of the psychological movement has meant that very little counselling is happening. These realities feed into the current underdevelopment in the realm of BC supervision.

3.3.2.3 Displacement because of the dominance of secular supervision

The third aspect of the church's displacement in the area of soul care, at least for the purposes of this particular research project, is related to the task of supervision. The activity of clinical supervision, like the practice of psychology and counselling it supervises, has grown enormously in the recent past.

In fact, supervision has “become a subdiscipline in its own right with a growing body of research, diverse theoretical models, ethical guidelines, and credentialing processes” (Watson, 2018:10). The reason for this growth is because of its importance: supervision is “at the heart of the development, education, and training of mental health professionals” (Watson, 2018:4) and the “cornerstone in education and training” (Falender & Shafranske, 2004:3). In the mental health profession, therefore, supervision plays a critical role in both the initial stages of one's education and practice as a counsellor, as well as subsequent stages of development and training. Organisations and journals are dedicated to the task of supervision (see, for example, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision at <https://acesonline.net/>)

In the previous chapter, participants indicated that they believed supervision was important. In this sense, there is agreement amongst those in the BCM and those involved in secular counselling supervision—both fields agree that supervision is an essential activity.

Hawkins and Shohet (2012:5) provide a typical view of this value regarding supervision when they write:

We believe that, if the values and experience of good supervision are realised at the beginning of one's professional career, then the ‘habit’ of receiving good supervision will become an integral part of the work life and the continuing development of the worker.

The inverse, they argue (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:6), is also true, namely, that a:

lack of supervision can contribute to feelings of staleness, rigidity, and defensiveness which can very easily occur in professions that require us to give so much of ourselves. In extremes, the staleness and defensiveness contribute to the syndrome that many writers have termed ‘burnout’.

It is because supervision is considered so important that literature regarding it has grown. And it is worth noting that the literature is decidedly secular. Contrast this “growing body of literature, theoretical models, and research support” (Watson, 2018:4) with what was

discovered through the empirical research in the previous chapter—an almost total lack of attention given to supervision within the field of biblical counselling. As a result, when counselling supervision is reviewed in the wider academic world, it is typically secular models and theories that are the ones under discussion. This is because secular supervision models are part of the warp and woof of the mental health field, but also because of the absence of distinctively biblical models and Christian reflections on these things.

Three brief examples of secular supervision theories and models show their dominance in the field, namely:

- One of the more widely-known textbooks on Clinical Supervision is *The New Handbook of Counseling Supervision* (2005). This popular handbook—"a "best principles" and "best practices" overview of the counseling supervision process" (Borders & Brown, 2005:8)—has no mention of specific theological contributions or perspectives. Thus, it is reasonable for the observer to conclude that when issues of counselling supervision are discussed, it seems as though the church has no interest in the task, and theology has little—if anything—to offer. Whilst some of these theories may be of interest to the proactive pastor who may occasionally integrate some of the secular theories and models to the tasks involved in ministry, it does not appear that pastors or biblical counsellors would have anything to contribute towards the field of research.
- Another example of the absence of Christian perspective in the field of supervision literature would be *Supervision in the Helping Professions* – by Hawkins and Shohet (2012). This popular book, soon to be released in its 5th edition, advocates a model that has become widely used—the seven-eyed model. Although this helpful supervision model can be utilised by ministers and pastoral counsellors, it is by no means inherently Christian. In fact, the way that ministers and pastoral counsellors have used the seven-eyed model (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:xv) reveals how the pastorate has been a consumer of secular supervision models, rather than a producer of a distinctively Christian model.
- The third example is from a Christian psychologist in her excellent book *Developing Clinicians of Character* (2018). When commenting on a literature review of religious and spiritual issues in Christian clinical supervision, Wheaton professor and Christian psychologist Terri Watson (2018:14-15) writes:

There is very little in the way of comprehensive models or frameworks for Christian integration in clinical supervision, particularly given the central role that clinical supervision plays in the training and development of mental health professionals. As it stands, our supervision efforts are left without a foundational theological framework and guiding pedagogy.

The phrase – “our supervision efforts are left without a foundational theological framework” (Watson, 2018:15) – is worth reflecting on. This confirms the research obtained in the previous chapter regarding the lack of a theological model. Furthermore, when commenting on the ethical guidelines for Christian integrative practice upheld by the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), and the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), Watson (2018:14) states that “minimal explicit attention is given...to proposing guidelines for a distinctively Christian supervision...process.” An example of this would be the fact that the CAPS ethical guidelines parallel the APA’s (Watson, 2018:13). Whilst there is nothing inherently wrong with learning from others, it does reveal that the church tends to be a borrower rather than a producer of conceptual work in this field. Thus, despite the growing literature in the field of Christian psychology and practice, there remains a lack of theological reflection on the nature and practice of supervision. As Watson stated, supervision efforts lack a foundational theological framework.

The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC) also provide supervision to trainee biblical counsellors as part of their certification process. However, neither organisation provides a particular supervision model grounded in a theological framework.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that many of the supervisors had not engaged in theological reflection when conceptualising the task and praxis of BC supervision. The supervisees collectively testified to the lack of theoretical models that might have been used in their supervision. The first chapter’s literature review, as well as further reflection in this chapter, have confirmed that view.

The previous sub-points (3.3.2.1, 3.3.2.2 and 3.3.2.3) will now be drawn together. In conclusion, it can be said that the church’s theological work in the area of supervision is underdeveloped because the modern psychology movement has displaced soul care from the realm of the church to the realm of psychology. This has had enormous practical

consequences when it comes to funding, resourcing and institutionalising the practice of supervision. The church, as a consequence of this displacement, now lacks the knowledge, training and resources to do supervision wisely. This ultimately means that the church doesn't typically do supervision, at least not with the same thoroughness that is seen in the secular mental health establishment. Instead, the church has an underdeveloped theology and practice of supervision (as revealed in the empirical data of the previous chapter). Even worse, in some cases, the church outsources supervision (both intellectually and practically) to the professional secular mental health establishment—further weakening their ability to provide it, and so the cycle continues.

Furthermore, in the light of this research project's primary research question, this general conceptual underdevelopment in BC supervision helps explain why the dimensions of character and relationship might be under-emphasised, in comparison with content and competence.

One further historic factor merits consideration regarding the current underdeveloped state of multidimensional BC supervision: biblical counselling was an anti-psychiatry movement.

3.3.3 The BCM was an anti-psychiatry movement

That the BCM was an anti-psychiatry movement might seem obvious to some and confusing to others. To describe the BCM as an anti-psychiatry movement is to use a technical term to describe how the BCM originated in opposition to both the ideological underpinnings as well as the institutional delivery mechanisms of the psychiatric field.

Anti-psychiatry movement “describes a well-known genre...Historically, biblical counselling is one of many proposals to reconfigure psychiatric thought and practice (and it is one of the few that generated a significant social movement)” (Powlison 2010:xi). Pioneered by Jay Adams, the BCM – which was initially known as nouthetic counselling – sought to reclaim the historical practice of soul care. Writing of Adams' agenda specifically, Powlison (2010:149) notes that he attempted to reclaim “counseling for the pastorate, while delegating scientific research to psychologists and strictly medical practice to psychiatrists.” Adams, therefore, advocated a rearrangement of professional jurisdictions, which included a significant delimiting of the role of psychology and psychologists.

But while he initially critiqued secular psychology, what later ended up happening was that Jay Adams focused on critiquing the evangelicals who had started to embrace psychology, rather than the secularists who had done so. These evangelicals, who were both

conservative Protestants as well as trained psychotherapists, eventually developed into what became known as the Christian psychology integration movement.

This evangelical-psychological movement developed alongside Adams's BCM—and often in a fierce debate with it. Adams made repeated challenges to the incursion of psychological theory into the church:

Adams had almost nothing good to say about the various psychology movements within the Protestant churches. He attacked both the pastoral counselling movement (established in mainline churches) and the evangelical psychotherapists (emerging in conservative churches) (Powlison, 2010:159).

Whether the new pastoral caregivers were liberal or conservative, Adams sought to challenge any embracing of psychological theory by Protestants.

In what follows, a brief reflection of this history – as well as the response to it and the legacy of it – will be provided. This will, in turn, help us to place BC in historical context, and so help us understand why BC supervision is in its current underdeveloped state.

3.3.3.1 The scope of the challenge

To launch an anti-psychiatry movement is an ambitious undertaking that requires several components: theological reconceptualisation, institutional development, and apologetic and polemical engagement. Each will be considered briefly.

3.3.3.1.1 Theological reconceptualisation

Firstly, a theologically-driven anti-psychiatry movement requires theological work, contextualisation and development. This is because, when seeking to reclaim and reclassify the prevailing secular mental health diagnostic categories, Adams had to demonstrate how classic reformed theological categories could re-interpret and re-explain symptoms that were being understood as ostensibly psychological. This placed the importance of theological truth at the core of Adams's project.

The heart of Adams's analysis of the defects in modern psychological theory and practice lay in his assertion that any and all approaches to interpreting problems in living and to redressing them entailed theological commitments that were subject to theological scrutiny and evaluation... Adams's hearers

would come to understand the psychologists specifically as heretical theologians, as well as ersatz pastors (Powlison, 2010:156).

This theological reclassification of ‘problems in living’ Adams began to do through his many books, pamphlets and lectures. There are multiple examples of this which cannot be explored here—but a famous one is Adams’s reconceptualisation of schizophrenia from a Christian perspective (see Adams, *The Christian Approach to Schizophrenia* – quoted in Lambert, 2011:107).

It is also worth noting—particularly in the light of the descriptive-empirical research findings on how content is focused on in BC supervision—how Adams’s focus lay on content. Adams, and those he persuaded, appeared to be focused primarily on issues of theological conceptualisation.

This task of reconceptualisation has continued—and improved—over the many years since Adams’s pioneering work began. Recent examples, amongst many, of such work, include Ed Welch’s *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, Robert Kelleman’s *Gospel-Centred Counseling*, Robert Jones’s *Uprooting Anger* and Heath Lambert’s *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry*. What has remained constant, though, is the focus of the BCM on conceptualising counselling matters in a theologically accurate way.

It is important to note, however, that Adams did not only attempt to reconceptualise specific problems in living, he also sought to reconfigure the entire system – the methodological paradigms and institutional contexts in which counselling occurred. This was how far-reaching the concomitants of Adams’s theological vision went, and they revealed just how widely and deeply Adams sought to challenge the status quo: “Adams would bar evangelicals from the ranks of the mental health professions, as if it were an immoral profession” (Powlison, 2010:182).

This leads to the second element—the need for alternative institutional development. If Adams rejected psychiatry and its delivery mechanisms, then he needed to create something to replace it with.

3.3.3.1.2 Institutional development

An anti-psychiatry movement also involves the creation of new institutional delivery and oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, this institutional development often happens in the same general environment in which alternative movements are also building and strengthening their institutions. In this case, these different movements—the pastoral

counselling movement, the integration movement of the evangelical psychotherapists, and the nouthetic counselling movement—were all engaged in institutional development in the USA throughout the 1970s-1990s. And in this institutional task, it must be said, Adams largely lost the battle—particularly in comparison with the evangelical psychotherapists.

Although there was a time in the 1970s and 1980s when nouthetic counselling appeared to be extremely popular—even *the* form of Christian counselling popular in its day (Jones, quoted in Powlison, 2010:167)—in the end, Powlison (2010:167) notes, Adams’s

institutional impact proved negligible...Indeed, by the late 1980s, Adams’s pastoral anti-psychotherapy was, to most observers, only a small disagreeable voice on the periphery of an institutional development that produced a burgeoning evangelical mental health establishment.

Part of the reason for this failure was Adams’s ecclesiasticism: if ordained ministers were the ones trained and authorised to counsel, then counselling belonged in the church, and the psychotherapy professions were an “illegitimate secular pastorate” (Powlison, 2010:184). The implication, from Adam’s perspective, was that institutional structure was already in place. The solution to the loss of church-based counselling, it seemed, was relatively straightforward: the pastor needed to repent of his abandonment of this task—perhaps seek additional training in nouthetic counselling—and then obey God to do his duty of providing soul care to his flock.

However, the practical difficulties of pastors taking up the role of a generalist biblical counsellor were significant. Moreover, the plausibility of this pastor-counsellor hybrid—particularly given the developing institutional alternatives created by the evangelical psychotherapists and the secular culture—was increasingly challenged. Against the backdrop of significant psychotherapeutic institutional development, the local church increasingly appeared to be an implausible option for soul (psyche) care.

3.3.3.1.3 Apologetic and polemical engagement

Thirdly, the BCM has, from the beginning, critiqued other forms of counselling and psychotherapy. As has been mentioned, this was primarily directed towards the integration movement championed by the evangelicals who sought to integrate theology and psychology. However, Jay Adams engaged bombastically, choosing to adopt the role of revolutionary rather than dispassionate analyst: “He would not grant the psychotherapists even a modicum of professional respect; they were interlopers, a pseudoprofession”

(Powlison, 2010:186). This, from the multidimensional perspective, reveals an emphasis in Adams – once again – on the content dimension.

Since Adams, most of the BCM authors and leaders have taken a more irenic tone (Lambert 2011:114) although the Adamsian bombastic style occasionally resurfaces from some quarters! An unfortunate consequence of Adams's rhetorical strategy was the alienation of the more extensive and growing Christian mental health establishment, and it took many years for constructive dialogue to re-emerge.

A significant development in this regard took place in 2001 when David Powlison contributed to a multi-authored work, *Care for the Soul*, which explored the intersection of psychology and theology. In his chapter, Powlison “does something that had never before been done in the counselling movement—he provides priorities for engagement” (Lambert, 2011:115). Since the early days of the BCM and Jay Adams, there has been a substantial improvement in how engagement and mutual critique take place. However, there is still much work to be done (Lambert, 2011:120).

3.3.3.2 The response to the challenge

Adams “intended the demolition of the evangelical psychotherapy profession in the interests of his counselling revolution among pastors” (Powlison, 2010:162). Unsurprisingly, the response of evangelical psychotherapists was immediate and unrelenting. While some tried to articulate some appreciation for Adams's critique, the response was overwhelmingly negative. Powlison (2010:169-188) lists the seven primary counter-critiques that emerged from the evangelical psychologists:

- Adams's view of and use of Scripture was faulty: he was biblicistic, not biblical, in his misconstruing of epistemology to exclude legitimate sources of information.
- Adams's view of human nature was superficial and constricted: Adams typically failed to attend to the issue of internal motivation and chose instead to focus on sinful behaviours.
- Adams ignored the effects of interpersonal suffering: the confrontational emphasis in nouthetic counselling underplayed the significant influence suffering exerts over the lives of counselees, and the importance of compassion and patience.
- Adams's approach to change was legalistic, not gracious: again and again, from across the conservative-liberal spectrum of Christian psychologists, Adams was accused of prioritising changed behaviours over the grace of Christ.

- Adams's insistence on the primacy of the preacher-as-authoritative-counsellor was problematic: "Pastors could not possibly meet counselling needs, given the magnitude and diversity of other demands on their time, and given the built-in limitations of their generalist education" (Powlison, 2010:181).
- Though Adams made telling criticisms, his interaction with the secular psychologies was uninformed, tendentious, and perhaps even duplicitous.
- Adams's manner was obstreperous. In this regard, even when Adams had a valid point, the tone of its delivery effectively alienated the intended audience.

Thus, the BCM was an anti-psychiatry movement that had a 'Christian neighbour'—the integration movement that would eventually become the Christian mental health establishment. This alternative evangelical response—and the development of what would become the evangelical psychotherapist—proved far more successful in the end. The result was that, despite creating controversy and garnering attention, nouthetic counselling:

would become increasingly isolated from the cultural centers: seminaries, colleges, universities, professional associations, book publishing, and journals where counselling ideas were debated and became influential. It became a movement largely confined within some Reformed and moderate fundamentalist churches, missionary agencies, seminaries, and Bible colleges (Powlison, 2010:193).

The response to Jay Adams's challenge was, essentially, successful. Naturally, this had institutional and educational consequences that certainly have played a role in how the practice of BC supervision has developed – or, more precisely, failed to develop.

3.3.3.3 The institutional legacy

Compared with the Christian integration movement, the BCM has a weaker and underdeveloped institutional presence. The 1980s saw the popularity of nouthetic counselling plateau as the evangelical psychotherapists mounted a successful defence of their professional identity and legitimacy.

In fact, the evangelical psychotherapists not only defended their legitimacy, but they enjoyed "spectacular success in capturing the mind, the respect, and the institutions of conservative Protestantism" (Powlison 2010:202). It had, even in the 1980s, "created a professional and institutional network to educate and carry into practice a professedly evangelical psychotherapeutic...Evangelicals trained in the modern psychologies could train their own. A

counselling revolution had occurred” (Powlison, 2010:205), and the evangelical psychologists—at least by the end of the 1980s—had gained more recognition.

However, as Powlison notes (2010:219-223), this situation started to change from the 1990s onwards. Biblical counselling programs began at several new seminaries and colleges. Biblical counselling authors started writing more books. Although the growth of biblical counselling was slow, it steadily increased over time (more about this will be reflected under 3.4.1 below). Furthermore, the secular psychologies that had been embraced by evangelicals received more focused and severe criticisms from leading evangelical theologians. Additionally, Powlison (2010:222) points out:

the secular psychological field was also increasingly disunified; professional issues and conflicts were growing in importance as confidence to pursue a coherent knowledge system waned, and post-modern skepticism and power relations increasingly claimed the field.

All of this combined to play a role in diminishing the dominance of the evangelical psychotherapists.

The 1990s was also the period of time when the first-generation of biblical counsellors gave way to the second-generation of biblical counsellors (Lambert, 2011:44-46). This second-generation is represented by people such as Paul Tripp, David Powlison, Elyse Fitzpatrick, and Ed Welch. Lambert (2011:45) explains how these counsellors advanced the movement in several ways: conceptually (how biblical counsellors *think* about counselling), methodologically (how biblical counsellors *do* counselling) and apologetically (how biblical counsellors *talk* about counselling). Keeping the multidimensional framework in mind, these second-generation biblical counsellors moved from the content dimension to also include the competence dimension. In the researcher’s opinion, this is, in all likelihood, a factor in explaining why these two dimensions are best represented in the empirical research reflected in the previous chapter.

This second-generation further popularised biblical counselling, and it started to make inroads into mainstream evangelicalism. However, even with greater popularity, it is essential to note that “the second generation of biblical counselors advanced the beliefs of the first generation” (Lambert, 2011:47). That is to say, although there might be occasional disagreements they have with Jay Adams and his early work, they fundamentally agreed with his vision. They sought to build upon his foundational insights. In that sense, this second-generation truly advanced the BCM.

3.3.4 Historical factors: conclusion

There are some tentative conclusions to draw after the consideration of these historical factors and drawing on church history, particularly the history of the American-oriented BCM.

Firstly, due to a lack of pastoral care delegation, BC supervision has not been historically practised and is one reason why there is a lack of theoretical development regarding it.

Secondly, the BCM was initially rooted in a theologically-driven critique of secular psychology and thus focused primarily on the content dimension. This focus seems to have shaped a strong content focus in BC supervision. The dimension most under threat was the content dimension, and it appears to have been the dimension to have received the most attention.

Thirdly, the work of second-generation biblical counsellors on competence could help explain why BC supervision also focuses on the content dimension (in addition to the content dimension). It is possible that the concerns of the first and second generations of biblical counsellors have shaped the emphases revealed by the descriptive-empirical data in BC supervision.

3.4 Logistical factors

The second factor that aids in interpreting the underdeveloped condition of BC supervision and its emphasis on content and competence (to the neglect of character and community) is logistical. There are logistical challenges at a macro-level, and there are logistical challenges at a micro-level.

Each level will be considered in turn in the sections below.

3.4.1 Macro-level logistical challenges

There are a variety of macro-level challenges that face the BCM. Some of these are purely logistical, but many of the logistical challenges are related to theology. There is a link between the theological convictions of the BCM (particularly regarding the primacy of the theology and the local church in the counselling endeavour) and the concomitant logistical challenges. It is therefore difficult to separate these. However, for the sake of clarity, the researcher is placing financial, educational and vocational challenges together, while factors related to theological convictions will be considered in further detail below (under 3.5).

3.4.1.1 Finances

The BCM, because of its unwillingness to professionalise – at least in part – means that biblical counsellors are typically not operating on a fee basis in private practice and are not government or state-licensed (Hoppe, 2019).

The reason for this non-licensure is essentially theological: biblical counsellors desire both their content and methodology to be biblical and pastoral rather than professional. They also want to operate either in – or with some meaningful connection to – a local church. This theological and ecclesiastical orientation puts biblical counsellors firmly within the religious domain, rather than the secular domain, and means that they are unlicensed counsellors. To gain state licensure, a would-be therapist typically requires a graduate degree focused on secular content and methodology. A trainee therapist also requires supervision by a licensed therapist. This a-religious, secular process, which takes a few years, clearly omits biblical truths precious to the biblical counsellor. Thus, the state or governmental licensure pathway is a secular pathway with a secular domain as the outcome.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when aspiring biblical counsellors seek training, they typically do so at ostensibly Christian institutions and seek mentoring or supervision with seasoned biblical counsellors. They typically opt for the theological and pastoral route rather than the secular professional route. However, this theological training track has several interconnected consequences.

Firstly, not being state-licensed means that, at least in the USA—but also in many other countries such as the UK and South Africa—biblical counsellors cannot accept insurance or work with medical aid reimbursement schemes.

Secondly, not being able to accept insurance/medical aid means that biblical counselling is not subsidised in any way or covered by insurance. The result, predictably, is those biblical counsellors either have to set up a private practice where they charge very high fees, or they have to be employed in a salaried position in a church. However, both scenarios pose financial challenges. In the first case (expensive private practice counselling fees), many counselees simply cannot afford the fees charged by biblical counsellors who need to earn their income from those fees. In the second case, many churches are unable to afford a salaried biblical counsellor as a staff employee. Either way, the remuneration of a graduate-level trained biblical counsellor can be challenging to solve.

This financial conundrum is especially acute in a context such as South Africa. South African evangelical churches are typically smaller than their American counterparts and less resourced. Consequently, there may be many other needs that clamour for a salaried staff position before that of a biblical counsellor. Many South African churches simply cannot afford to hire a salaried biblical counsellor.

This lack of financing is a major logistical issue when it comes to supervision. If biblical counselling is difficult to resource, then supervision is even more so – due to the fact that supervisors require both expertise as well as—in most cases—remuneration. Some supervisors may be able to offer supervision free-of-charge, just as some biblical counsellors do. However, for anyone with a desire to serve vocationally in these roles, remuneration from somewhere is necessary.

Who will pay for these highly-skilled supervisors? Consider the time required to listen to counselling sessions, reflect on them, prepare for supervision sessions and then the session itself—BC supervisors may simply be unable to give the time to this because they are not sufficiently remunerated for it. More comments will be added to this under 3.4.2.4 below.

As a result of this financial challenge, supervision often lacks the funding and resources to be practised in a multidimensional manner. The challenge of finances is, therefore, a factor in explaining the lack of observation and recordings, and also perhaps why the focus is limited to the content and competence dimensions.

3.4.1.2 Education and ongoing supervision

The BCM, after having “stagnated intellectually and institutionally” (Powlison, 2010:208) in the 1980s, saw a reemergence in the 1990s and has seen significant growth since the early 2000s. As Gifford (2018:4) points out, there have been significant

shifts in education that have occurred within the past 20 years of biblical counseling. Prior to the early 2000’s, there were three to four institution (*sic.*) of higher education teaching biblical counseling. The amount of institutions teaching have doubled and nearly tripled in their size.

The institutions teaching biblical counselling in the 1990s consisted of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, The Master’s University, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Gifford, 2018:4). However, less than 20 years later, and there are at least 20 institutions now teaching biblical counselling in the USA (Kellemen, 2019). The growth in biblical counselling education has been significant.

Similarly, in other parts of the world, biblical counselling is growing, with various training and education initiatives, whether in the UK (Midgely, 2016), South Africa (Johnston, 2016), Brazil (Mendes, 2018) or elsewhere (Solomon, 2020).

Another influential biblical counselling institution that has grown both intellectually and organisationally is the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) – formerly known as the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC). After having membership plateau around 100 throughout the 1980s (Powlison, 2010:208), this organisation has grown considerably, now boasting a “membership in the thousands” (ACBC, 2020), with members from various countries. It has also grown in the number of resources it produces—including an academic initiative known as ACBC essays. These rigorous essays seek to “address the issues that concern biblical counselors in a robust and substantive way.” (ACBC, 2017)

A wide range of other counselling organisations and ministries have also developed since the early 2000s, which cannot be explored in any detail in this project.

A salient point worth noting, however, is that, for all this growth, the BCM still lacks models and mechanisms for the praxis of supervision. For example, searching for resources related to ‘supervision’ on the CCEF website – which contains over 3,000 resources – yields nothing directly related to the task of supervision. Supervision does come up in a few blog posts tangentially, but never in a focused or direct way. The same search on the ACBC website yielded one result that focused on supervision.¹³ Perhaps even more significantly, the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* – which has been the leading intellectual publication of the BCM in the last 40 years – has never published an article devoted solely to the topic of supervision. Although Powlison (2002:5) articulates the need for “ecclesiastically grounded supervisory structures for cure of souls” – an explicit model for how to do this is never suggested. While the psychiatric and psychological field has entire journals and associations dedicated purely to the task of education and supervision¹⁴, this supervision focus seems almost entirely missing in the BCM.

Furthermore, whilst ACBC offers initial supervision for counselling, it only requires 50 supervised sessions to be considered a certified biblical counsellor. By contrast, “most graduate students in counselling, psychology, and marriage and family therapy (MFT) will spend at least 100 hours per year in individual or group clinical supervision” (Watson,

¹³ Both these searches were conducted on June 16, 2020.

¹⁴ For example, the *Counselor Education and Supervision*. This is the official journal of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a division of the American Counseling Association.

2018:4). The biblical counselling certification process, in comparison with its secular neighbour, is far less robust.

Additionally, ACBC does not offer ongoing supervision for biblical counsellors. Having been supervised and certified, where is the newly certified biblical counsellor to find a competent supervisor? Has he been encouraged to look for one? Is ongoing supervision a value that is being encouraged amongst newer biblical counsellors?

In the researcher's experience, it can be challenging to seek supervision. Often, this vital dimension is entirely missing in biblical counselling circles. Moreover, there is, rightly, no legal mandate for church-based biblical counsellors to be receiving supervision. However, this lack of legal imperative, while itself an essential civil liberty, also means that it is primarily up to the personal motivation of the individual biblical counsellor to ensure that he receives supervision.

While a direct comparison is unfair, the contrast between biblical counsellors and mental health professionals in the area of supervision is stark: "Tremendous resources are devoted to clinical supervision in graduate education, during post-graduation towards professional licensure, and throughout the career of a mental health professional" (Watson, 2018:4). Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about education and supervision regarding biblical counselling. Indeed, as Kellemen has argued, there certainly is a need to revisit the pedagogy of seminary counsellor preparation (Kellemen, 2012:3).

Thus, another significant logistical factor behind the underdeveloped nature of BC supervision is the lack of education and ongoing supervision within the field.

3.4.1.3 Few routinised career tracks for biblical counsellors

A final logistical challenge that is important to recognise is the complexity of becoming a vocational biblical counsellor. As Powlison and Lambert (2019:37) recently wrote, "Currently there are relatively few 'routinised career tracks' in place either in churches or in para-church organisations for a person described as a biblical counselor." The lack of such a routinised career track is significant because it makes it very difficult to identify and resource a developmental pathway that would-be biblical counsellors can utilise.

Such a path would surely include a vital supervision component—both in the education of the counsellor and in the subsequent vocational career of the counsellor. Perhaps as biblical counselling continues to grow in popularity, such a routinised career track will become evident.

In addition to the macro-level logistical challenges, supervision is also underdeveloped because of how these macro issues play out at the micro-level.

Some of these micro-level challenges will now be considered.

3.4.2 Micro-level logistical challenges

Although the participants' comments have been included in the previous chapter, the researcher thought it would be helpful to include more detailed comments in this section. This enables the reader to develop a deeper sense of the “lived theology” (Ward, 2017:62-67) of the participants. Consequently, this deepens one’s thoughtfulness and wise judgement—critical features in this interpretive task of practical theology.

It is worth noting again that the research participants came from various parts of the world, but primarily reflect an American demographic. This is due to the fact that the BCM has taken root in the USA for over 50 years, and is still in its relative infancy in other parts of the world. Thus, when reading these comments, the American context must be kept primarily—although not exclusively—in mind.

The researcher felt deep sympathy for one participant who honestly shared the challenge of providing supervision to emerging biblical counsellors: “*we’re constantly limited by time, money, geography, busyness.*” Some of these issues will be considered in more detail below, particularly as these comments reveal why supervision practices may currently focus on the two dimensions of content and competence, and why supervisors tend to prefer the method of self-reporting.

3.4.2.1 Time and busyness

A significant challenge for supervisors is the issue of limited time. Both supervisors and supervisees are often very busy people. This seems to be a significant reason for why supervisors chose the method of self-reporting. While engaging in live observation is very time consuming, as is listening to recordings, the supervisee’s self-report is very time efficient.

Consider the following comments from the participants:

- Supervisors are “*really busy people*”

- *“everyone is really busy. For the most part the [supervisors] are doing this on the side. You know, after they are working fulltime or doing whatever”*
- *“there’s never enough time. And I forget to cover things that I afterwards think I should have. And I might miss something cos I’m not checking every case.”*
- Although unable to devote more time to supervision, one time-strapped supervisor said: *“I wish maybe at times that it [supervision] could be a little longer”*
- When explaining why they focused primarily on competence, a supervisor said: *“Practicality... because the majority of people are fitting in counselling between full-time work, full-time ministry, family, and everything else.”*
- Again, when explaining their logistical challenges related to supervision, a participant said: *“their time and their budget. And my time.”*
- Another busy supervisor and supervisor-of-supervisors expressed the challenge of part-time remuneration with a demanding workload: I am, she said, *“limited by the fact that I’m only supposed to work 20 hours in the week! And how am I actually going to fit that in? But also, what about the people who have got these busy lives? They’re also not going to fit it in. And we don’t have that many experienced counsellors who can do supervision.”*

A participant also mentioned the link between busyness/time and job role—which is often also linked to finances.¹⁵ For many biblical counselling supervisors, it seems as though supervision is something additional that gets added to an already full plate. Often an experienced biblical counsellor may agree to supervise a younger biblical counsellor but is adding that onto an existing busy schedule. Moreover, being overburdened and having to fulfil too many tasks means that supervision does not receive the time or attention that it may need. This busyness and lack of time can help explain the preference for the verbal self-reporting method—it is quicker and easier.

Additionally, time and busyness could also explain why supervisors focus on the dimensions of content and competence—these dimensions are more technical than relational, and perhaps they appear less relationally burdensome.

One participant eloquently shared why they think there is an under-emphasis on the characterological dimension, and linked it to the time they felt was needed in developing a relational context of trust: Why the focus on content and competence? They said:

“in some ways it’s the easiest—the practical counselling skill. You know, where is the next step with that particular person or what Scripture might be most

¹⁵ This comment was included in full under 2.4.2.3.2 in the previous chapter.

relevant for that ... In some ways it's easiest. And I guess that probably links then to the second part of that question, which dimension do you tend to place less of an emphasis on? And again I think, while the desire to be spending lots of time on thinking about...character, is there, I think in some ways that's the hardest part because I think constructive comments in particular are almost... You know they're usually best received and also best shared in a context of relational trust, warmth, that kind of thing. And I think when, particularly our mentors... they're trying to build that relationship over long distance. Like many of them they're meeting each for the first time in this kind of context. And I just think it takes a lot longer to get a handle on things. It takes a lot longer to get to know an intern when it's like that. And so I think they probably just tend to be a bit more...not slow to because I think in some ways there's a wisdom in waiting, but it just takes that much longer to get to know the intern's weaknesses or their strengths or those kinds of things when you're trying to do it over long distance."

These insights help us see the connection between character-and-community. These relational dimensions may require more time and may also be hampered by geography.

3.4.2.2 Geography

A number of participants—both supervisees and supervisors—mentioned the challenge of geography. As mentioned above, the geographic distance appears to pose a relational challenge—which directly affects the community dimension—as indicated in the following comments:

- *"the geography of the way we've set things up here, it's a huge limiting factor."*
- *"the challenge of supervising people who aren't local."*
- *"I'm limited by my geographic area, where I live. There are very few biblical counsellors in this area, so the sessions are currently all on Skype."*
- *"none of us are geographically in the same place and so communication takes that much more effort and so sometimes it can feel a bit disjointed."*
- *"never get to meet some of these people because of the distances involved. But I don't like that..."*

- *“One of the weaknesses would be the fact that we have two offices so I don’t actually see the counsellors in person very often. So we don’t get to do like those little small conversations in between our sessions that I think would be useful.”*

In the proposed multidimensional model, community is a crucial dimension. However, community was one of the dimensions identified as being under-focused on in the empirical data from the previous chapter. Geographic distance could be a factor that helps explain why the community dimension has not received the attention it needs in BC supervision.

In the researcher’s opinion, though, geographic distance requires further reflection. Particularly in the 21st century, with the presence of teleconferencing technologies, the challenges of geography can be lessened. The researcher does think that it is possible to have a multidimensional approach done via e-supervision.¹⁶ It will require more intentionality from the supervisor and supervisee, but the researcher is of the opinion that it can certainly be done. Writing about how video conferencing can be effective for counselling, Kellemen (2020) writes:

I can often detect moods even more readily with video counseling than physically-present counseling. Why? Because I don’t have anywhere else to look other than directly at the person. In several recent sessions, from the moment the video call began, I could quickly read the mindset, attitude, or mood of the person, because I could observe their facial expression and body language.

Thus, while geographic distance is a limiting factor that the researcher must acknowledge, he also thinks that it is a factor that can be overcome or at least minimised through videoconferencing.¹⁷

3.4.2.3 Education, skills and training

A further reason that explains why only two supervision dimensions are primarily focused on, and why one method of supervision tends to predominate, has to do with education, skills and training. Or rather, the lack of education, skills and training.

¹⁶ If counselling can be done effectively online, where the characterological and relational dimensions are explored in detail, then there is no conceptual reason why supervision cannot be done online either.

¹⁷ Of course, for many supervisors and supervisees in South Africa, access to high-quality internet remains a challenge. This will, of course, pose an enormous barrier to using videoconferencing effectively.

In the mental health field, argues Watson (2018:6), supervision is highly valued and its ongoing importance emphasised, as revealed in the supervision training approach:

The profession of counselling has a well-developed and systematic approach to training supervisors...most PhD programs in Counselor Education and Supervision emphasise coursework and practicum experiences toward the development of supervision... Masters-level students receive some exposure to clinical supervision theory... and some states require continuing education in supervision as a requirement for renewal of professional counsellor licensure.

In addition, supervisors can access best practice guidelines (ACES, 2011), conferences and journals which all seek to help the supervisor develop their skills and further their training.

In comparison, the BCM has failed to pay sufficient attention to this critical area. The lack of education and training in the area of supervision is one reason why supervisors currently practice supervision the way they do. Based on the interviews in the descriptive empirical task, supervisors do not always seem to be knowing what exactly needs to be done in supervision. Consider the following comments from participants:

- *“there are probably elements of the way that we do supervision that felt a little bit more like stabbing in the dark and a bit more ad hoc.”*
- *“the weaknesses are what we spoke about before, in terms of not so much how I am helping them with their biblical counselling, more sort of caring for the person.”*
- *“another weakness is we don’t always get to talk much about counsellor care as much as we do about the counselees. And that happens a lot of the time because there’s so much case content to talk about. But I would say that’s a weakness, I would like it to be more directly relevant to the counsellors.”*

Supervisors, who have not been trained in supervision, do not seem sure how to provide supervision. In the previous chapter, it was revealed that there was no BC supervision model being used. One reason may well be that no model is being taught at the graduate level. Thus, a lack of education and training in supervision explains why it is currently being practised in the way it is—without a model, and without a multidimensional focus.

3.4.2.4 Money

Finances were considered under 3.4.1.1 above, and this factor appears at both the macro-level and the micro-level. One participant stated that they would like to establish a counselling centre, presumably with a richer supervision experience, if only they could solve the problem of finances: *“if I had all sorts of money, I would establish a counselling training centre at the seminary...But again, that’s a logistical problem, and that’s a financial problem.”*

Another example of the financial constraints supervisors are under can be seen in the policy decision to limit what ACBC Fellows can charge for supervision. Currently, ACBC Fellows can only charge up to \$650 for supervising 50 cases (ACBC, s.a.)—which works out to \$13 per case. While the researcher greatly appreciates ACBC’s desire to keep the costs down for the supervisee seeking certification, the financial burden ends up falling on the supervisor. For experienced and busy supervisors, this amount is probably not sufficient for them to consider supervision as a vocational option.

As mentioned above, the alternative is to provide private-practice BC supervision. However, as this would not be covered by medical aid or health insurance, it would also become prohibitively expensive.

This financial conundrum is not one that can be easily solved. And because of the lack of finances, BC supervisors may be unable to devote sufficient time to the task of supervision. This may play a contributing role in explaining why the character and community dimensions do not receive sufficient attention: given the financial constraints, BC supervisors simply do not have the time.

3.4.2.5 e-Supervision

A final micro-level challenge has to do with online supervision. While this may be the best that many can do due to the problem of the distance between supervisor and supervisee, online supervision remains problematic in the minds of several of the participants.

The comments below help the researcher understand why e-supervision is seen as a logistical challenge:

- *“the use of Skype does make it difficult to build good relationships. It is a barrier. And especially when Skype doesn’t work properly. I mean, I’m so grateful to God this morning that we’ve got a good connection. But when Skype doesn’t work, you know you’ve suffered from that as well...in my practice, connection is important. And Skype*

is, as much as it's a good thing, it's also a weakness. Because the supervisee is in the middle of telling you something and the connection goes and the moment is lost."

- *"Ideally, I wish we could be in-person but it's just not doable. One of the primary reasons is that we are geographically spread out... So that [e-supervision] would be a weakness."*

In a post-coronavirus world, it is unlikely that the practice of e-supervision will decrease. If anything, the chances are that it will only increase. This new online reality makes it even more critical for BC supervisors to be committed to a multidimensional approach. E-supervision has inevitable limitations, especially in the relational dimensions of character and community.

However, the researcher does think that if the commitment to a multidimensional approach is present (and if both parties have a viable internet connection), the supervisor will be able to pursue multidimensional supervision through videoconferencing.

3.4.3 Logistical factors: conclusion

As was mentioned earlier, this chapter seeks to explain why BC supervision is underdeveloped. It especially attempts to explain why BC supervision specifically lacks focus on the dimensions of character and community, and why the method of self-reporting seems to be so popular.

This section on logistical challenges plays a role in that explanation: for various logistical reasons—time, money, training, etc.—it appears that BC supervisors find it difficult to devote the time and energy needed to do multidimensional supervision. Geographic distance may make it harder to build relationships, which impact the character and community dimensions. Furthermore, these logistical challenges also make the method of self-reporting attractive due to its efficiency and no need for preparation from either the supervisee or supervisor.

Therefore, given all these logistical constraints, focusing on the dimensions of content and competence may be easier and quicker. The logistical challenges make the practice of multidimensional supervision difficult.

3.5 Theological factors

Having considered the historical and logistical factors that help in the interpretation of the descriptive-empirical data, this chapter will conclude with a reflection on the theological factors. Biblical counselling is, after all, a theological and pastoral endeavour, and so a reflection on these theological realities is crucial.

It must be kept in mind that these theological factors help explain why BC supervision is generally underdeveloped, but more precisely, why BC supervision tends to focus on the dimensions of content and competence.

The three theological factors to be considered are the nature of the pastoral office, the nature of the church, and the nature of BC supervision.

3.5.1 The nature of the pastoral office

An essential component of this research project is clarity regarding pastoral identity and function. The researcher believes that the right way to conceptualise pastoral identity is with the classical definition—namely that the pastor is “a shepherd of souls” (Senkbeil, 2019:20). Another influential definition that captures a “historiographical” (Kellemen, 2012:8) aspect to pastoral identity is that of Jaekle and Clebsch (1964:4), who write:

The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meaning and concern.

There is widespread consensus that it is right that pastors do soul care. As has been seen under 3.3.1 above, the care and cure of souls have been understood to be the domain of the pastoral task for many centuries. The care and cure of souls was the responsibility of the pastor—and this responsibility endures for pastors today (Powlison, 2012:24).

Furthermore, it is not simply that pastors themselves do soul care – it is that pastors ought to facilitate and oversee the multiplication of soul care in their congregations. As Senkbeil (2019:xiii) rightly asserts, the job of the pastor is to “facilitate ministry and soul care in the church.” This means that BC supervision – overseeing the care of souls – is something that must fall, in some way, under the ecclesiastical authority of the pastor. The nature of the pastoral office means, quite simply, that supervision cannot merely be outsourced. The pastoral office requires that elders “exercise spiritual oversight over the flock intrusted (sic.) to them” (Grant, 1915:924). This oversight prevents outsourcing. Instead, there may be a way to delegate BC supervision, but there is an essential distinction between delegation and

outsourcing. In delegation—either of counselling or counselling supervision—the pastor retains the important role of overseer.

However, in the late modern world, conceptualising soul care as the domain of the pastorate also presents a challenge. The secular psychotherapist, as well as the trained clinical supervisor, offers a plausible professional alternative to the local pastor. And the secular supervisor, trained in clinical supervision models and processes, also presents a plausible alternative to the local pastor. In other words, the secular care and cure of souls present a challenge to the orthodox, historical vision of church-based soul care. As was mentioned in 3.3.2 above, the ministry of the pastorate has been eclipsed by the mental health professions when it comes to the jurisdictional authority of personal problems. Unfortunately, this challenge is exacerbated when the local pastor is either unwilling or lacks the necessary skills to provide any form of soul care to those in his flock who are in need.

Given these compelling professional alternatives, the challenge that pastors—and their churches—face is in providing a plausible alternative care structure. An aspect of this challenge that the faithful pastor will wrestle with is how to develop a care structure that is both theologically faithful as well as pastorally effective. Practically, this means that pastors need to grapple with both how to provide soul care as well as how to delegate and supervise soul care.

That the pastor should retain his task as the authoritative soul care provider for those in his flock was very clearly the view of Jay Adams, who was intransigent on this issue. Adams said, “While all Christians should counsel one another *informally*, unless called officially by God to the ministry of the Word and ordained by His Church to the task, one should take it upon himself to become a *Counselor*... God’s professional counsellor is the pastor” (Adams, 1995:12). While the researcher agrees with Adams’s conviction regarding the importance and authority of the ordained pastor, he also has concerns with Adams’ unwavering dogmatism on this issue. The researcher thinks that this over-focus on the pastor may undermine the need for the pastor to reflect both theologically as well as creatively when it comes to multiplying and delegating the ministry of soul care (biblical counselling). The researcher’s concern is both practical and theological. Practically, delegation is required for multiplication of pastoral care to take place. Theologically, the role of the pastor involves the multiplication and oversight of ministry.

The theological warrant for delegation is to recognise that the pastor is also described as an overseer (1 Tim. 3:2). This term, overseer (Gk: *episkopos*), according to Clark and McLaurin (2014) this “word refers to a person who has responsibility over other people...Overseers (*episkopos*) were to care for God’s church (Acts 20:28).” Furthermore, speaking of these

overseers as a leadership group, Smith (2014) states that “their function had to do mostly with oversight and pastoral care of the believers.” Delegation and supervision are, then, components of what it means to function as a church leader. The salient issue here is that the pastor is not in a position merely to outsource pastoral care or oversight. The nature of the office demands a degree of oversight. Thus, the pastor's goal is to multiply and delegate pastoral care, not to outsource it.

Therefore, the nature of the pastoral office is a factor that aids in the interpretive task of this research project. Pastors sense, appropriately, the God-given responsibility to provide oversight to the biblical counselling ministries in their church. This responsibility to supervise might be one reason why some delegated supervision focuses more on content and competence (character and community being dimensions that the pastor wants to retain more of a focus on). This might be a particularly relevant issue when supervision takes place in a para-church context, where the supervisor is adopting a more consultative and thus limited role. As one of the para-church BC supervisors said regarding the characterological maturity of their supervisee: *“hopefully others have checked that out... But as the supervisor through the 50 hours, I don't have much of a way that I can evaluate that.”*

The nature of the pastoral office, therefore, is likely to be a relevant factor in shaping why current supervision practices look the way they do.

3.5.2 The nature of the church

The second theological factor that aids in interpreting the empirical data has to do with the nature of the church. The church of Christ is, by its very nature, a completely different type of organisation from the ones that are found in the mental health system. The mental health system consists of that “vast complex of higher education, hospitals, publishers, third-party insurers, drug companies, licensing boards, and private practice psychotherapists” (Powlison, 2003:5). This difference certainly needs to be kept in mind when seeking to understand the current practices involved in BC supervision.

This point can be further subdivided into the weakness of the church, the wisdom of the church, and the authority of the church. Each will be briefly considered below.

3.5.2.1 The church is ‘weak’ and ‘foolish’

The church, by God's design, is not a powerful and celebrated institution. Instead, he has ordained the church to be ‘weak’ and ‘foolish’. The church is a community that is patterned

after the cross of Christ; this cruciform pattern describes not just members but also leaders. Carson (1993:9) expresses this cruciform nature of ministry well when he says that “the cross stands as the test and the standard of all vital Christian ministry.” In other words, the cross of Christ is both the means through which God accomplishes his redemptive purposes and also the means by which he shapes Christian ministry. An implication of this, amongst other things, is that Christian ministry will never be elitist. It simply cannot be elitist because genuinely Christian ministry—including biblical counselling—will always be shaped by the cross. Genuinely Christian ministry will ever be as foolish and weak as the cross it proclaims.

The contrast between human wisdom and God’s wisdom in this regard is enormous. Although the following Bible quotation from 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:10 is long, it is a significant text that teaches practical theologians how to think rightly about the church. It is a text relevant to the task of BC supervision because it places that task within the right context: that of the church. This passage will teach us how to think rightly about Christian ministry. Because instead of assuming that the church is wise and powerful—or should at least aspire to become wise and powerful—this crucial passage teaches us how the church is, by God’s design, perceived to be weak and foolish:

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is

because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

When reflecting on the church, this passage provides a helpful orientation to the practical theologian. In an age of professionalism and spiritual rejection of God, the gospel-centred ministry will not impress the cultural elite. A number of points may be deduced:

- The cross of Christ is not typically an attraction to the elites of this world; instead, the gospel message is considered foolish (Mangum & Parr, 2020).
- God has sovereignly ordained that idolatrous human wisdom will never lead to the true knowledge of God (Carson, 1993:18).
- God’s plan for saving weak and unimpressive people “intentionally subverts human expectations.” (Mangum & Parr, 2020).

These deductions have enormous implications when it comes to thinking through the role of the church in providing soul care in the secular age. Three will be considered below.

First, the church must recognise that it must only ever boast in the Lord, and be content with perceptions of weakness and folly. The secular age in which we live has replaced theological soul care with secular psychotherapy—and will likely consider the church version to be weak and foolish. This view may likely extend to the way in which the church practices BC supervision. In this sense, are supervisors willing to be content with an approach that may

well be considered 'foolish' and 'weak'? Are they willing to be content with the cultural perception that they are inadequate?

Secondly, this perception of weakness and folly may have a number of significant institutional and financial consequences. Resources tend to flow towards the institutions and practices that a culture values. It may well be that, in God's sovereign wisdom, He has ordained that His church provide soul care in a far less resourced and formal environment. Again, this has implications for the praxis of soul care—including the number of resources that are available for supervision. This theological conviction has a logistical implication that demands considered reflection from supervisors and supervisees alike.

Thirdly, the care and cure of the human condition require the cross of Christ. Supervision must operate with that same understanding. In their wisdom, the secularists have excised God from their knowledge of the human condition. Nevertheless, because humanity is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), any attempt to deeply and rightly understand a human requires theological knowledge. Thus, by removing God from their conceptualisation, the secularists have made a systematic commitment to getting their anthropology wrong:

Any psychology or psychotherapy that suppresses God cannot help but serve the varied desires and falsehoods congenial to the flesh...the secular psychologies construct diagnoses of the human condition that suppress awareness of sin, and they offer cures that evade the necessity of Jesus Christ's redeeming work (Powlison, 2003:6-7).

Faithful supervision, just as the faithful counselling it seeks to supervise, requires an orthodox, Christocentric perspective on soul care. As weak and foolish and inadequate as it may be deemed by the cultural elites, this Christocentric perspective alone provides the conceptualisation of the human condition that will finally lead to the care and cure of souls.

3.5.2.2 Wisdom is given by the Spirit

We have considered the weakness and folly of the church; it will be helpful to consider the wisdom of the church. Here again, the practical theologian must pay attention to the text of Scripture if he is to remain grounded in theological realities.

The theological view of wisdom, provided for us in Scripture, may be as surprising as it is refreshing. As was seen in the passage above, wisdom is not attained by the wise of this world but by those who have embraced Christ. Similarly, true spiritual wisdom is not attained

by the erudite but given as a gift by the Spirit of God. There are at least two practical implications of this.

The first practical implication related to this view of Spirit-dependent supervision is this: wise supervision can take place even in the absence of theoretical models and frameworks. Although supervision can be informal and conceptually underdeveloped, that does not necessarily mean it will be unwise. BC supervision does not require a model to be wisely practised.

Powlison (2010:300) explains how God often preserves and sustains his people through providing them with grassroots wisdom. God sustains his people:

through times when our ability to systematically articulate His ways is weak. The grassroots wisdom of godly people often far exceeds what is written in both secular and Christian counselling books. The Holy Spirit often works despite our ignorance in articulating his ways... A well-systematised biblical counselling model will not transcend grassroots wisdom but will express, encourage and defend such wisdom.

Powlison's comment both tempers and encourages the practical theologian. It tempers the practical theologian because it is a reminder that God does not need theoretical models in order to communicate his wisdom to his people. Nevertheless, it also encourages the practical theologian because it is a reminder that God Himself will sustain his church, even in times of theological or institutional underdevelopment. This encouragement, of course, is not an excuse to not develop theological models – because, as Powlison noted, such models can express, encourage and defend the grassroots wisdom of God's people.

The second practical implication of this view of Spirit-given wisdom is: Those who have not been saved by God's counter-intuitive grace will never understand God's ways. The reason they will never understand God's ways is that those ways are only discerned by the Spirit. As Mangum and Parr (2020) rightly assert, "apart from God's Spirit humanity can never know what God is doing." In 1 Corinthians 2:11–14, directly after the passage quoted above, the apostle Paul goes on to say:

For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without

the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

This perspective has implications for who could even become a biblical counselling supervisor. If one of the tasks of the biblical counselling supervisor is to help oversee spiritual realities, then that can only be done by someone filled with the Spirit.

Thus, secular supervisors might be very well trained, have years of experience, exceptional research skills and authentic compassion—but unless they have the Spirit of God they will be unable to oversee the spiritual realities that must be happening within a biblical counselling process.

This perspective of the necessity of Spirit-given wisdom may be one reason why the BCM has not looked to the secular supervision literature when it comes to seeking to develop a supervision model. Supervisors need to be filled with the Spirit of God if they are to provide supervision that genuinely grasps the spiritual realities involved.

3.5.2.3 The authority of the church

A final sub-point, after having considered the weakness of the church and the wisdom of the church, is the authority of the church.

In many ways, this issue connects with the historical factors discussed above: who has jurisdictional authority when it comes to the care of souls – and the supervision of the care of souls?

If churches decided to seek the services of secular counselling supervisors, there is every chance that there would be a clash between state-licensure accountability, secular ethical standards, and ecclesiastical authority. Whether it would have to do with confidentiality, sexual ethics, or any number of other issues, the clash of authority would be inevitable. Who is ultimately responsible for the counselling that takes place in the church? Who holds people accountable to biblical standards of morality? Who is ultimately responsible for the supervision of counselling that takes place in the church? The answer, historically and theologically, is the pastors. The care and cure of souls, if it is to be faithful, must take place within the God-ordained authority structures of the local church.

Furthermore, the local church is structured in such a way that supervision could happen in a natural and healthy way. Care structures in the local church “provide the ecclesiastical

support of a biblical and healthy supervision hierarchy. God designed it that way. We have pastors, elders and lay leaders to guide the flock” (Higbee, 2015:68).

The God-designed authority of the church’s overseers requires that they retain their oversight—even when it comes to biblical counselling and supervision.

As was mentioned above, the researcher thinks that it is possible to both maintain oversight and delegate—but the tension between these things must be recognised. One participant articulated this understanding wisely when discussing the tension between providing para-church supervision while not usurping the role of the local church:

“So I guess the line that we’re always walking is: we want to provide [a supervision experience] that is going to be robust, that is going to help as much as we can, but we also need to be careful that we’re not usurping the authority of the local church or trying to do some sort of biblical counselling takeover!”

3.5.3 The nature of biblical counselling supervision

Biblical counselling, as was considered in chapter one, can be defined as the conversational ministry of God’s gracious Word, through which people are renewed. The three features of biblical counselling considered in chapter one were: biblical counselling is conversational, theological, and grace-oriented.

What is worth noting in this definition is the fact that biblical counselling can be all of these things while also remaining informal. Theological, grace-oriented conversations can happen informally over a cup of tea as well as formally in a counselling office. The formality of the counselling context is a far less significant issue than the content of the counselling sessions.

Similarly, BC supervision does not require formality in order to be effective. Supervision can be informal, ad-hoc – it may correlate to the format of the counselling it supervises. Moreover, this may well be entirely appropriate—it would be slightly odd if the biblical counselling were relatively informal, but the supervision thereof highly formalised.

Whereas in a secular environment supervision needs to be recorded, billed, etc., no such features need necessarily characterise a supervisory relationship in biblical counselling. Biblical counselling supervisors – unless possibly those involved in certification procedures – have no mandate to record their sessions, either in writing or through an audio recorder.

Whilst the researcher thinks this a good thing; it potentially poses a temptation: in the rush-and-tumble of busy everyday life, this lack of formality may provide supervisors with an excuse for not providing thorough, thoughtful, multidimensional supervision. Anyone familiar with the time pressures and demands of ministry understands how easily shortcuts can be a temptation for the busy pastoral worker.

Regardless of how individual supervisors relate to the non-formal nature of supervision, the researcher thinks that this is a factor that helps explain the currently underdeveloped praxis of BC supervision.

A final theological aspect is worth considering regarding the nature of BC supervision. It has to do with how BC supervisors conceptualise what is needed in a biblical counsellor. To use Kelleman's language, the theological issue here is how to define the resume of the biblical counsellor (2011:179). If there has been insufficient work regarding what a biblical counsellor should look like characterologically, or what supervision should entail relationally, one would expect to find a deficiency in the resultant praxis of supervision. Indeed, the researcher thinks that this is the case.

Although Kelleman has provided some excellent work in this area, it is the researcher's intuition that there has been a deficiency in theological reflection regarding these issues of character and relationship within BC supervision. It is the task of the following chapter—the normative task—to consider what should be happening within BC supervision.

3.5.4 Theological factors: conclusion

This chapter has sought to explain why BC supervision is underdeveloped generally, and why it lacks focus on the dimensions of character and community specifically. Several factors were mentioned, and each may play a part, to a greater or lesser extent. How exactly these theological factors have influenced supervision in any given context will have to be discerned on a case-by-case basis.

Although further theological reflection will be done in the following chapter and task, it is essential to note that theological views always have real-world consequences. When the truth is valued at the expense of love, or when skill is valued at the expense of character, or whatever it might be, there will inevitably be consequences in praxis.

3.6 Conclusion

The first task, the descriptive empirical task, revealed that supervision appeared underdeveloped. Specifically, the practice of supervision lacked a theological-and-practical model and appeared to focus largely on the dimensions of content and competence. This two-dimensional focus is in contrast to the four-dimensional model being proposed in this research project. In addition to discerning this two-dimensional focus in supervision, the most common method in supervision appeared to be verbal summaries provided by the supervisee to the supervisor.

The focus of the chapter has been on the interpretive task. It tries to explain why this is happening. Why has there been little theological development? Why this two-dimensional focus? Why this particular method of verbal self-reporting?

The researcher has used a multi-disciplinary approach in seeking to answer these questions. There has been a consideration from various fields of research – the descriptive empirical data, theological categories, relevant supervision literature, and recent church history in an attempt to analyse and interpret why the current supervision methods, models, and activities are being used the way they are.

Osmer (2008:119) argues that the value of this multidisciplinary approach when engaging in the interpretive task enables the practical theologian to “interpret complex, multilayered systems and problems that are multidimensional.” Unquestionably, seeking to understand why BC supervision looks the way it does is a complex and multi-layered task. The researcher identified three interconnected factors: historical, logistical, and theological.

The historical factors began with a consideration of how the jurisdictional authority for the cure and care of souls was the domain of the clergy for centuries. Because there has been no significant need for pastoral supervision, the clergy have not developed models for it. Additionally, the clergy and the church have recently been displaced by the modern psychology movement and its mental health professionals. Furthermore, the modern BCM has been an anti-psychiatry movement, which has argued from Scripture that Christ must be restored to counselling – and counselling to the church.¹⁸ The BCM has, therefore, as a movement seemed to focus on two dimensions—content (with the first generation) and competence (with the second generation). The advances in the BCM broadened from the first dimension into the second. This focus correlates with the focus on content and

¹⁸ This is a well-known phrase in the BCM, as it is the mission statement of CCEF: <https://www.ccef.org/about/>

competence in supervision discovered through the descriptive-empirical task. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of emphasis on the other two dimensions.

The section on logistical factors considered both the macro-level challenges (financial, educational and vocational) and the micro-level challenges. At the micro-level, some of the issues that were identified in the empirical data were considered again – with the goal of deepening thoughtfulness. These logistical challenges shed further light on why supervisors may be hard-pressed to have a multidimensional approach to their supervision. Simply put, many supervisors seem to have a two-dimensional approach because of the lack of time, money and training. This lack of time can also explain why the method of verbal self-reporting may be so popular.

Finally, the theological factors were considered. These included a reflection on the nature of the pastoral office, the nature of the church and the nature of BC supervision. Again, these theological factors may help to explain why BC supervision is underdeveloped generally and is two-dimensional particularly.

The following chapter focuses on the normative task, and seeks to answer the question: “what ought to be going on?” The normative question aims to answer that by looking to Scripture.

Therefore, the following chapter consists of exegetical study and reflection.

CHAPTER 4

DETERMINING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELLING SUPERVISION THROUGH EXEGESIS

4.1 The normative task

This particular chapter within the research project engages in the normative task. The normative task, building off the previous two tasks, revolves around this crucial question: when it comes to biblical counselling (BC) supervision, what ought to be going on?

The normative task is the third of the four tasks of practical theology, as advocated by Osmer (2008:4). These four tasks are represented diagrammatically in figure 4.1 below. As has been mentioned, the focus in this chapter is on the normative task.

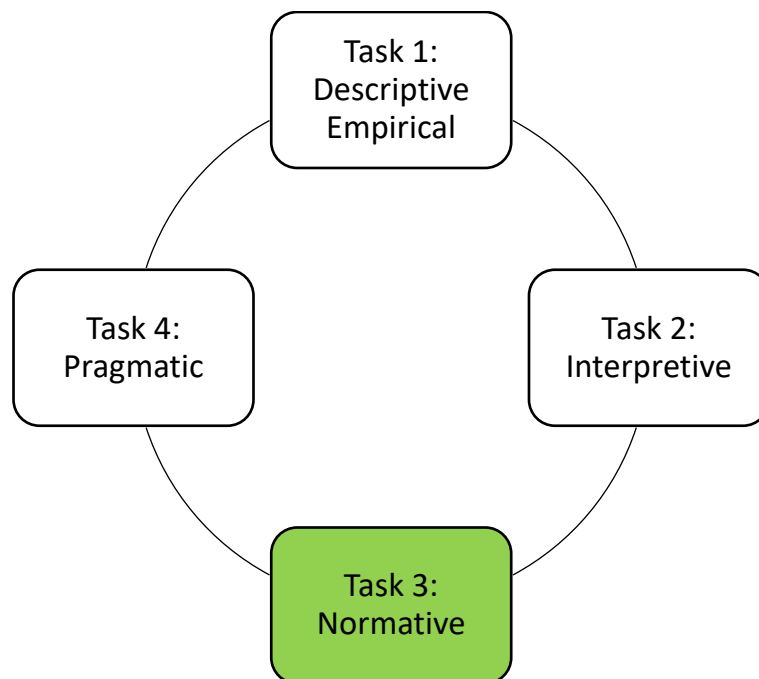


Figure 4.1: Osmer's (2008:4) four tasks of practical theological interpretation

The aim of this task and chapter is to answer the following subsidiary research question: What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?

We will engage this task by looking to the Bible for answers. Therefore, the author will go beyond Osmer's perspective on the normative task by engaging in biblical exegesis—which is necessary because Osmer's normative perspective does not rely upon the exegesis of biblical texts (Smith, 2010:112). In a reformed worldview, however, the normative task is strongly linked to the exegesis of relevant biblical texts—because biblical exegesis enables the practical-theologian-researcher to understand what genuine progress in praxis entails. The Bible gives us the vision we are seeking to realise. Therefore, in this section of the research, the author will engage in an exegetical study to discern an answer to the normative question of the research project.

As mentioned above, the normative question is this: What biblical principles regarding BC supervision can be used to promote multidimensional development?

This question will be answered—through biblical exegesis—in the following syllogistic proposition:

- a) BC supervision is a form of discipleship.
- b) Discipleship is multidimensional.
- c) BC supervision, therefore, ought to be multidimensional.

This chapter will follow the logical flow of this syllogism.

In addition to these exegetical considerations, the researcher will be incorporating and building on the 4C equipping framework developed by Kelleman (2011:179-200; 2015:77-94). In addition to building on Kelleman's model, other counselling works will be consulted, as well as literature on discipleship, pastoring, and training.

In doing biblical exegesis, the researcher will make use of the grammatical-historical method as formulated in the book *Hearing the Spirit* by Christopher Ash (2011:67-113). The hermeneutical rules articulated by Carson (2015:2633-2636) will guide the researcher when it comes to the interpretation of the Bible.

The researcher undertakes this approach to practical theology based on a reformed perspective regarding epistemology. The researcher's conviction is that it is as we pay close attention to the Bible that discerning the will of God for present realities might be more reliably identified and fruitfully pursued. God's Word, rightly understood, provides the

practical-theologian-researcher with the normative information she needs to chart the way forward.

By working through the syllogistic proposition, engaging in biblical exegesis, and incorporating insights from relevant theological literature, the researcher will be able to answer the normative question in this research project: what ought to be going on in the realm of biblical counselling supervision? More specifically, why should biblical counselling supervision be multidimensional?

4.2 Biblical counselling supervision is a form of discipleship

As mentioned in chapter one, the author proposes that BC supervision is rightly conceptualised as a specific form of discipleship. Supervision ought to be conceptualised as a form of discipleship because, from a theological perspective, supervision and discipleship contain overlapping elements. These overlapping elements are development and relationship. Each of these elements will be explored in more detail below.

4.2.1 Supervision involves development

Many definitions of counselling supervision will include the promotion of the counsellor's development because the developmental model of supervision cuts across a wide range of theoretical orientations (Tan & Scalise, 2016:140). For example, as mentioned in chapter one, a well-known definition of clinical supervision is that proposed by Loganbill *et al.* (1982:14), who describe supervision as “an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designed to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person.”

This definition highlights the developmental orientation inherent within the supervision relationship; the supervisor seeks to facilitate the development of the supervisee. Likewise, Worthington (1987:71-72) argues that supervision is a developmental process in which the supervisor helps the counsellor to make progress. Hogan (1964:139-141), who pioneered the developmental model, proposed that a counsellor's supervision process may include distinct stages of development. Hogan suggested that supervision would look different at these different stages. While the researcher disagrees with the details of Hogan's distinct stages, he does concur with her claims that the supervision relationship is inherently developmental—and being cognisant of the developmental level of the supervisee would be

helpful when determining a supervision approach. Indeed, the researcher of the opinion that the supervisor's role may even change with the developmental level of the supervisee. In light of these well-known authors and their definitions, it can be asserted that supervision is developmental. Supervision has, as a critical goal, the aim to help counsellors develop. Supervision involves development.

4.2.2 Supervision involves a relationship

Supervision is a relational enterprise. According to Watkins (1997:4), "Supervision takes place in a relational context: It is first and foremost a relationship." Furthermore, according to Stevenson, Eck and Hill (cited in Tan, 2009:59), an effective supervisor is a genuine mentor. This speaks to the quality of the relationship and highlights the organic link between mentoring and supervision. These authors' perspectives reveal that the relational nature of supervision is widely agreed upon, but one scholar has suggested an even more profound and developmentally significant view on the nature of this relationship.

That scholar is Johnson who, in 2007, wrote a journal article entitled *Transformational Supervision: when supervisors mentor*. In this article, Johnson argued that supervision ought to move from being something that is transactional to something that is transformational. This movement, from transaction to transformation, occurs when supervision moves beyond focusing on clinical competence and starts incorporating mentoring aspects. As the supervision relationship becomes more genuinely relational, it typically becomes more transformational. Johnson (2007:265) argued that it is better when supervising psychologists engage supervisees in connected, collaborative, and increasingly reciprocal developmental relationships (which, of course, is what he means by mentoring). The most effective kind of supervision, Johnson argued, involves a healthy and deep relational connection. So while supervision will always involve a relationship, the best supervision relationships typically have deeper relationships (or, to use Johnson's language, *mentoring relationships*).

This robust relational perspective is also emphasised in the work of Carifio and Hess (1987:244) who, having reviewed research and theory relating to ideal supervisor behaviours, suggested that effective supervisors perform with high levels of empathy, respect, genuineness, flexibility, concern, investment, and openness. This once again reinforces the value of genuine relationship within the supervision enterprise. This research all supports the main point proposed in this section: supervision involves relationship.

Thus this literature survey helps us see what is being said by various scholars across the broader field of counselling and psychotherapy. Namely, that supervision is a developmental relationship.

As we turn to discipleship, we see a very similar thing. Like supervision, discipleship is a developmental relationship.

4.2.3 Discipleship is a developmental relationship

When the supervision phenomenon is evaluated theologically, it becomes clear what type of relationship a developmental relationship is: it is a discipleship relationship.

That supervision should be regarded as discipleship is clearly seen when one considers the nature of discipleship. Let us begin by considering a biblical passage that connects discipleship to development and learning.

In Luke 6:40, the Lord Jesus says that the "student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher." Jesus teaches here that a disciple is not merely a learner in the sense of learning data, but a learner also in the more profound developmental sense of becoming like one's teacher—transforming and developing one's values and lifestyle by learning from one's teacher (Collinson, 2004:125). This is a student who develops through imitating their teacher. Notice that Luke 6:40 includes both the elements of relationship and development—namely, that the disciple is to grow into his or her teacher's likeness. Marshall and Payne (2016:69) argue that discipleship involves this kind of transformative development that takes place in a learning relationship:

a 'disciple' is someone who is engaged in transformative learning. This is a kind of learning where the student's understanding of reality is changed and keeps changing, leading to a transformed experience and life.

Other theologians and Bible teachers make a similar comment regarding the nature of discipleship. According to Wilkins (1992:194), discipleship is a mentoring, developmental, life-transforming relationship. Chan and Beuving (2012:11) argue that discipleship is about relationships that encompass all of life (rather than compartmentalising it to a 'spiritual' arena). Marshall (1996:277) defines a disciple simply as "the pupil of a teacher." Collinson's theological research, which surveyed the whole Bible, affirms the relational and developmental nature of discipleship: "Discipleship is not pure friendship. The purpose of the relationship is that teaching will take place and that learning will occur" (Collinson,

2004:241). Of course, these definitions all assert a relational connection as well as a developmental or transformative orientation.

So when the phenomenon of supervision (defined above as a developmental relationship) is interpreted through the lens of Scripture, one sees that it is seeking to accomplish what discipleship seeks to accomplish. Discipleship aims to develop someone into Christian maturity and competence. Supervision seeks to develop and promote competence in the supervisee.

In this sense, because of its developmental and relational orientation, we can conclude that supervision functions, in many ways, as a secular form of discipleship. The previous sections of this research project indicated that there is much helpful information regarding effective supervision in the secular literature. The author is not here saying that we should ignore or reject helpful information—useful information is welcomed when it comes to stimulating one's thinking regarding supervision. Nevertheless, when it comes to conceptualising supervision theologically (and when it comes to proposing a supervision model), the Bible and its theological categories must play a normative role. The Bible must shape the perspective of BC supervision—hence the focus on the Bible in answering the normative question.

Therefore, when it comes to the conceptualisation of BC supervision, we must allow the phenomenon of supervision to be reshaped, even redefined, by Scripture. When biblical categories are used to evaluate a developmental relationship, it is seen for what it is: discipleship.

The implication is that the biblical perspective of discipleship must shape how supervision is conceptualised and practised. As will be seen from the exegesis below, discipleship involves a relational learning process that results in the disciple's whole-life transformation. In other words, when we think about what type of development takes place within discipleship, we are not merely thinking about skills or data (as crucial as those things are for the emerging biblical counsellor). The development under consideration is a more profound and broader kind of transformation that includes the disciple's heart, mind, and lifestyle. It is a transformation that is multidimensional.

Indeed, as Byrley (2014) writes,

discipleship fundamentally involves all of one's being, not just the mind or intellect. All of the biblical terms used to convey the concept of discipleship involve more than just academic engagement.

Discipleship is a developmental, life-transforming relationship. Discipleship, therefore, seeks to accomplish multidimensional development.

4.2.4 Supervision ought to facilitate discipleship

It is helpful to connect these two phenomena: supervision and discipleship. This conceptual connection is essential to recognise if the biblical concept of discipleship is to inform supervision praxis. So if discipleship seeks to accomplish multidimensional development, then this has significant implications for how BC supervision is conceptualised and practised.

Furthermore, unless this theological understanding of relational-and-developmental discipleship is brought to bear on the supervision task, essential elements required for adequate supervision may be neglected—or erroneous elements may be incorporated. To neglect essential biblical elements, or to include unbiblical elements, would inevitably weaken and distort supervision—and thereby decrease its effectiveness, which would have further negative consequences for the welfare and vitality of the church more broadly.

At this point in the chapter, at least one implication can be identified: supervision ought to be developmental and therefore facilitate spiritual maturity in the life of the supervisee. Supervision ought to be something that aids in the discipleship of the supervisee. Supervision ought to help supervisees to make progress in their walk with Christ.

The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) recently published a blog post on supervision. In that post, the author wrote that because of the supervision he received at ACBC, "more than merely being better off as a counselor; I'm a better pastor, husband, parent, friend, and disciple because of it too" (Christensen, 2017). This positive testimonial illustrates the implication being asserted here—that supervision, rightly conceptualised and practised, ought to facilitate discipleship. Further, when this discipleship emphasis is incorporated into the supervision, the encouraging result is a whole-life development of the counsellor that honours God.

Having considered the nature of supervision, we now turn to the nature of discipleship. In particular, the multidimensional nature of discipleship will be explored.

4.3 Discipleship is multidimensional throughout the Bible

An assertion the author is making is that the Bible has a multidimensional view of discipleship. In this research project, the term 'multidimensional' refers to the four dimensions as articulated by Kellemen (2011, 2015): content, character, competence, and community.

The exegetical research for this sub-section of the project seeks to answer the following questions: Are these four dimensions included in the biblical concept of discipleship? Does this multidimensional view of discipleship find normative support in the Bible?

Selected biblical texts will be exegeted. Texts have been chosen from different genres of Scripture so that it will be seen that a multidimensional view of discipleship is supported from a variety of different genres within the biblical canon. The variety of texts, therefore, seeks to diminish the possibility of ideological bias or eisegesis.

In the section that follows, the author's purpose is to demonstrate that, in both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT), and across a variety of genres, these four dimensions are consistently included within the biblical concept of discipleship. The exegesis therefore seeks to make clear that discipleship, throughout the Bible, finds normative support for being considered multidimensional.

4.3.1 A working definition of 'disciple' and 'discipling.'

As previously mentioned, discipleship involves relationship, learning, and development. Before a whole-bible investigation is launched, a working definition of discipling and disciple is proposed.

Disciple: a learner. As mentioned in chapter one,

the term *mathētēs* occurs very frequently in the NT. Its fundamental meaning is one who seeks to learn from another. A disciple is not only a partaker of information but also one who seeks to become like his or her teacher (Luke 6:40) (Byrley, 2014).

Therefore, a disciple seeks to learn in such a way that her whole life is transformed and developed—the learner seeks to become more like her teacher. A disciple is, simply put, a learner.

Discipling: discipling refers to a relational learning activity. According to Collinson (2004:164),

Christian discipling is an intentional, largely informal learning activity. It involves two or a small group of individuals, who typically function within a larger nurturing community and hold to the same beliefs. Each makes a voluntary commitment to the other/s to form close personal relationships for an extended period of time, in order that those who at a particular time are perceived as having superior knowledge and/or skills will attempt to cause learning to take place in the lives of others who seek their help. Christian discipling is intended to result in each becoming an active follower of Jesus and a participant in his mission to the world.

In Collinson's definition, we can see all four categories Kellemen articulated regarding 4C training (mentioned in chapter one). The table below makes this clear by connecting Collinson's definition with Kellemen's categories.

Content	Discipling is a learning activity; those with particular knowledge and skills will attempt to cause learning in the life of another; those involved typically hold the same beliefs (there is an agreed body of content).
Character	Discipling is intended to result in each becoming an active follower of Jesus and a Christ-like participant in his mission to the world.
Competence	The person with superior knowledge and skills is aiming to transfer them to those seeking to learn. Discipling seeks a transfer and growth of knowledge and skills, so that the disciple can, with greater competence, participate in God's mission in the world.
Community	Discipleship involves two or a small group of individuals, who typically function within a larger nurturing community and hold to the same beliefs. Each makes a voluntary commitment to the other/s to form close personal relationships for an extended period.

Table 4.2: Multidimensional discipleship (a blend of Kellemen's work and Collinson's work)

What follows is an exegetical investigation regarding multidimensional discipleship in the Bible. A variety of texts in both the OT and NT will be exegeted, and their connection to these four dimensions explored.

4.3.2 Discipleship in the Old Testament

In the OT, discipleship begins with God calling a people to Himself (Exod 6:7). Despite the absence of disciple terminology, "the roots of biblical discipleship go deep into the fertile soil of God's calling" (Wilkins, 1992:53). In other words, discipleship has its genesis in the electing call of God—the Lord of Israel called Abraham (and his descendants) into a covenantal relationship (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 6:2-8). Thus the nation of Israel becomes God's people—he says to them that, "I will be your God" (Exod 6:7). The corollary, of course, is that Israel is God's Son (Exod 4:22-23). We must, therefore, recognise the covenantal nature of this discipleship relationship. Indeed, before the multidimensional nature of this discipleship relationship is considered, it would be helpful to explore the connection between covenant and discipleship.

Covenant and discipleship

First, God initiates a relationship with his people in the OT, and we see that the covenant relationship he initiates is a discipleship relationship (Driscoll & Breshears, 2010:178-180; Wilkins, 1992:67). It is vital to notice this: God's covenantal relationship with Israel was also a discipleship relationship—a relationship of development and learning. God called Israel into a covenant relationship so that they might follow Him and walk in His ways (Gen 17:1-2). The metaphorical language of 'walking' points to the relational and transformational dimension of Israel's discipleship—through their covenantal discipleship relationship, they were to experience the joy of God's benevolent presence and care (Wilkins, 1992:59).

As mentioned, this covenantal relationship was a discipleship (and thus a developmental) relationship: "walking in the way(s) of the Lord' has an ethical and transformational aspect to it—it is usually linked with obeying God's commands and reflecting God's character" (Wright, 2006:364). Covenant relationship involves both knowing and obeying God's Word. Already one can see how this relationship has various dimensions to it—knowing laws (this involves content) but also being changed and transformed by those laws (this involves characterological development).

Secondly, this covenantal discipleship relationship was rooted in gracious love—gracious love that was designed to foster intimacy and devotion. A biblical passage that reveals this poetically is Jeremiah 2. This language of devotion and intimacy is seen in Jeremiah 2:2, where the Lord says, "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown." Notice the language: 'devotion' and 'loved' – highlighting the profound love the nation of Israel had for her

Heavenly Father. The evidence of that love was demonstrated in how Israel followed God throughout the wilderness (Wright, 2014:61). Sadly, however, Jeremiah goes on to reveal the reality of Israel's subsequent unfaithfulness to God and their sinful attachment to worthless idols. Jeremiah articulates it thus in 2:11-13,

"Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols. Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the Lord. "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

Jeremiah indicts Israel for their disloyalty to God's covenant—their disloyalty to his love is so unnatural that there is no parallel to it and so irrational that there is no profit from it (Wright, 2014:67). Neither nature nor reason can explain idolatry. Sinfully and irrationally, Israel sought comfort and help in places other than God. Though he was himself the spring of living water, they sought out broken cisterns. The glorious God was sinfully exchanged for worthless idols. Here we see the opposite of discipleship—defection and disloyalty to Yahweh; a love for God that had been tragically and sinfully abandoned and replaced by a love for lesser things.

Thus, in the OT, we see the remarkable uniqueness of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. Discipleship is covenantal; rooted in gracious love and designed to foster intimacy and devotion. A metaphor God uses in Jeremiah 2 to symbolise this is that of marriage—Israel was Yahweh's devoted bride (Jer 2:2). We learn that discipleship is not merely an informal relationship between a teacher and a learner but a covenant relationship, a relationship of grace and love and loyalty. The discipleship relationship between the Lord and Israel is one of deep covenantal commitment.

Indeed, Israel's relationship with God was to be their primary (vertical/spiritual) discipleship relationship. And this relationship was developmental in multiple dimensions, as we have already briefly seen and as we will see below. Nevertheless, this primary vertical discipleship relationship with God did not preclude secondary (horizontal/human) discipleship relationships. In fact, being in covenant with God inevitably led to the need for mutual discipleship among God's people. Consider the following passage in Deuteronomy 6:1-3, where Moses says to Israel,

These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give

you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

As the above passage teaches, Israel's vertical discipleship relationship with God resulted in horizontal discipleship relationships among them—particularly seen in how God's commands, decrees and laws were to be taught from generation to generation. The nation of Israel was to be a nation characterised by the praxis of discipleship; Israel was to be a nation characterised by learning to obey God's commands and decrees.

What follows is a brief survey of whether these discipleship relationships were multidimensional. It will be helpful to consider each of the four dimensions separately: character, content, competence, and community.

4.3.2.1 Character

The first dimension under consideration is that of character: discipleship included characterological development. This characterological transformation would be experienced as Israel learned to follow God and walk in his ways. Wilkins (1996:176) argues that the:

abstract covenantal relationship with God finds concrete expression in 'following God' and 'walking in his ways.' When the nation fulfils its commitment to the covenant it is said to be following God (e.g., Deut. 4:1–14; 1 Sam. 12:14) and walking in his ways (Deut. 10:12–13). When the nation violated the covenant, it is said to be following the gods of the heathen and walking in their ways (Deut. 6:14; Judg. 2:10–13; Isa. 65:2)... Following God is understood in a metaphorical sense of walking in the ways of God.

As has been mentioned, 'walking in the ways of God' has an ethical (or characterological) meaning. As Israel walked with God, they were to become more like him. God's relationship with Israel was designed to transform the moral quality of their national character. An excellent example of the Lord's desire for this national characteristic of holiness is in Deuteronomy 4:5-8, where Moses says to the Israelites:

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to

have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Here it can be seen that the Lord desired Israel to obey his laws—and it was as they obeyed his laws that their wisdom and understanding would be evident to the surrounding nations. As a nation, they were in a discipleship relationship with Yahweh that was to result in a transformation of their moral and ethical character. In this passage, it is clear that there is an indissoluble link between the dimensions of content (in this case, the law) and character (in this case, revealed in observing God's decrees and laws).

However, in addition to their character-transforming relationship with the Lord, the relationships among the Israelites was also designed to facilitate their growth in character. Let us consider a biblical text from another genre to see how this point is made.

In the book of Proverbs, we are given insight into how discipleship relationships can result in characterological development (or characterological degradation!). Proverbs 13:20, says, "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

Biblical scholar John Kitchen (2006:294) comments on this proverb:

The difference between wisdom and foolishness rests not merely upon formal training, but also upon the informal relationships of life. Wisdom and foolishness are not simply taught but caught. For this reason, one must guard carefully who influences him.

This proverb captures the intersection of character and community—one's relationships can have a direct influence on one's character. In other words, this proverb reveals something of the multidimensional nature of development.

A third text from another genre makes a similar point. Psalm 78 highlights the connection between knowledge, relationship, trust and obedience—or, to use the language of the 4Cs—content, community, character, and competence. Space does not permit a complete exegesis of Psalm 78, but the first eight verses are worth reflecting upon.

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our

ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

The first eight verses, Motyer (1994:536) asserts, teach us an important connection: the psalmist asserts that the words and the deeds of the Lord (verses 4-5a) are to be taught to the next generation (verse 5b), so that they would trust in God and obey his commands (verse 7). The flow, using the language of the 4Cs is: content (teaching) builds character (trust) and leads to godly competence (obedient living). Character is developed when, informed by truth, the disciple obeys God's commands. God's Word teaches her what discipleship entails. Already, in this single text, the multidimensional nature of discipleship is evident—although, for now, the focus is primarily on the development of character.

Thus, in these three OT texts from three different genres, we can see how a relationship with the Lord and wise others was designed to facilitate characterological development in the disciple. Whether the book under consideration is Deuteronomy, Psalms or Proverbs, the point is the same: Discipleship involves the development of godly character. Indeed, a lack of godliness is tantamount to unfaithfulness to the Lord. Character is essential to biblical discipleship.

4.3.2.2 Content

By further reflecting on Deuteronomy 4:5-8, one can identify the 'content' dimension quite clearly: intellectually, Moses wants the Israelites to understand what the Law teaches; conceptually, Moses wants them to understand the doctrinal content correctly. So discipleship in the OT necessarily involved learning content. Byrley (2014) asserts,

Discipleship in the OT is fundamentally about learning what is required from the Torah and submitting to it in obedience. The Hebrew terms *yāsar* ('to instruct') and *lāmad* ('to teach') fit the idea of discipleship well, as they both strongly imply a change in behavior as a result of the instruction.

Instruction in content resulted in a change in behaviour. Thus, behaviour change required content. It can be concluded, then, that discipleship in the OT was concerned with content—true theological knowledge that aimed to produce characterological development.

In addition to seeing the importance of 'content' in the Law/Torah genre, we also see the importance of 'content' in the Wisdom Literature. For example, it is common to see the OT sage exhort the younger generation to learn from his teaching. Another example from the book of Proverbs will be considered.

In Proverbs 4:1-5, this call to embrace sound theological content is made explicitly from a father to his children:

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them."

Notice the emphasis on teaching. Biblical scholar John Kitchen (2006:99-100), commenting on this passage, notes that the "'teaching' described implies the necessity of personally receiving the instruction... Maturity is evidenced as one gains an ever-increasing ability to grasp with his mind the wisdom of God, as it relates to his particular circumstances."

The point is clear: teaching is to be grasped by the mind and, when that happens, it produces practical wisdom. Those who have personally appropriated the instruction become wiser regarding their particular circumstances.

Regarding the wisdom literature, Mounce (2006:708) also emphasises the characterological renewal that results from learning God's Word: "God calls his people to learn his laws, decrees and statutes (5:1; Ps. 119:7, 71, 73) as well as wisdom (Prov. 30:3) and righteousness (Isa. 1:17). What they learn is meant to affect their entire lives."

This passage in Proverbs 4 also indicates a wisdom tradition—just as the father learnt from his father, so he now passes on that teaching/instruction to his son. This passage has three generations in view, as the father hands down to his sons what his father taught him.

Furthermore, the content of God's Word is essentially God's revelation of himself. This is because God discloses himself to humanity through his words and deeds—recorded for us in the Bible (Carter & Alldritt, 2013:64). In other words, to know the content of Scripture is to know God—for God reveals himself through his Word. Carter and Alldritt (2013:71) put it memorably when they write,

The claim is that the Bible is God speaking to you personally. Reading the Bible is not like consulting a manual. It is not some dusty tome, full of obscure

characters useful only for pub quizzes. Opening the Bible is the experience of picking up the phone. It is your live link-up with God. The whole Bible is God speaking to us today.

Knowing content, therefore, is inextricably connected to a relationship—because the content provides relational knowledge of who God is and what it means to have a relationship with him. Much like the words in any human relationships, God’s Words to humanity in Scripture aim to facilitate a relationship with God. This relational perspective of the Bible reveals to us the connection between two of the 4Cs—content and community. To know God’s content is to know and love God. The God who spoke in the Bible to his people then is the same God who speaks to us today (Ps. 95:7-11, Heb. 3:7). And just as he spoke then through his Word, so he speaks today, through that same Word.

Discipling is, therefore, a relational teaching activity. Discipleship involves content that is revealed by God, transmitted across generations through teaching, recorded in the Bible, and seeks to develop the disciple characterologically and relationally. Discipleship involves content to be known because learning takes place as God speaks to his people through his Word.

4.3.2.3 Competence

In addition to character and content, discipleship in the OT also aimed to promote competence. Discipleship aimed to promote skill in living. This is indicated by the particular Hebrew words that were used. These two words, along with an OT passage, will be considered.

The first word is the Hebrew verb *lāmad*. Byrley (2014) writes that the “verb *lāmad* (‘to teach’) and its relatives share an overlap in meaning with ‘training’, where the emphasis is a change in behaviour as well as growth in knowledge” (Judg 3:2; 1 Chr 5:18).

The translation ring below, exported from Logos Bible Software, shows the different English words (in the 2011 NIV) that translate the Hebrew word *lāmad*.

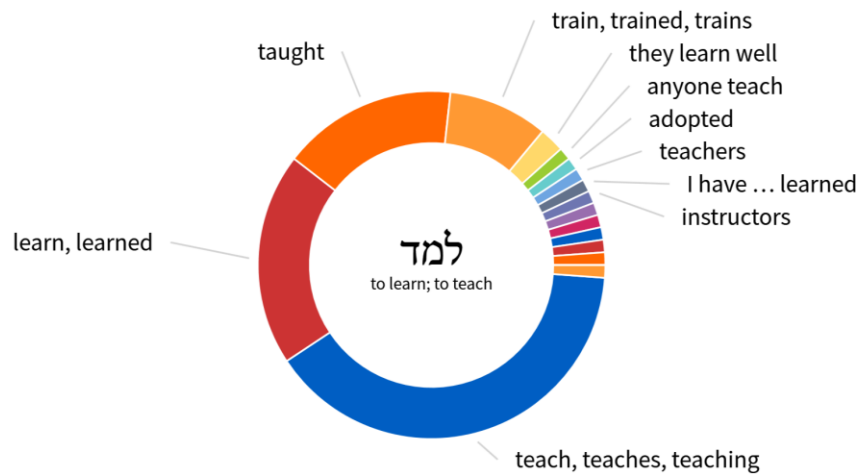


Figure 4.3: The NIV English translation of the Hebrew word *lāmad*.

This Hebrew word, and its use in a variety of contexts, demonstrates Byrley's point—that growth in knowledge was connected to a change in behaviour. The one being taught then learns and is trained. This word also indicates the connection between the four different dimensions: content informs (and transforms) character, as well as renewing or improving one's competence in living for God. Discipleship, in this sense, doesn't merely inform us about God but also trains us to live skilfully for God. This link, therefore, between content, character, and competence is inseparable.

To demonstrate this multidimensional inseparability from specific texts, here are two examples, from different OT genres, that show how this word is used.

Deuteronomy 4:10:

Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."

Here it can be seen how learning God's word (in the content dimension) enabled the Israelites to develop a reverence for God (in the character dimension). It is as God's people hear His Words that they learn to revere Him. A second example makes a similar point:

1 Chronicles 5:18:

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 men ready for military service—able-bodied men who could handle shield and sword, who could use a bow, and who were trained for battle.

This might seem a somewhat surprising verse to quote, yet it makes a similar point outside of the typical 'spiritual' sphere: Here we see how being taught to handle a shield, bow and sword resulted in military competence. In other words, we thus see the connection between knowledge (content) and being trained (competence).

Another Hebrew word that highlights this connection between intellect and skill, between content and competence, is *ḥokmâ* which, according to Holladay and Köhler (2000:104), can be defined as wisdom, technical skill, aptitude, and good sense.

This Hebrew word is usually translated as 'wisdom' (in 134 out of 148 occurrences), but it is occasionally translated as 'skill' as the translation ring below indicates.



Figure 4.4: The NIV English translation of the Hebrew word *ḥokmâ*

For example, in Exodus 35:26, a passage about the women involved in producing materials for the tabernacle, one sees how the word *ḥokmâ* refers to technical skill: "all the women who were willing and had *the skill* spun the goat hair" (italics mine). Moreover, in Exodus 31:6 the Lord says, speaking of those who would work on the construction of the tabernacle, that "I have given *ability* to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you" (italics mine).

Thus wisdom is seen not just in intellectual qualities, but also life skills and practical abilities (Mounce, 2006:793). Wisdom, as the Bible conceives of it, is, therefore, more than an

abstract quality, it is something practical. Wise people are competent in real life; they have learnt how to live well. Tim and Kathy Keller (2017:6) put it this way: "Wisdom is wedding thought and experience to become competent with regard to the realities of life."

Thus we can say that wisdom is practical rather than merely theoretical. It is in this important practical sense that discipleship seeks to develop someone in their competence.

A review of the word *ḥokmâ* ought to also include some comments on the work of the Holy Spirit. This is because the Old Testament teaches that the work of the Holy Spirit is essential in the development of competence.

One of the passages that reveal interesting and relevant information on this is Exodus 35:30-36:1. This passage teaches that the acquisition of competence involves the work of the Holy Spirit as well as the involvement of other people:

Then Moses said to the Israelites, 'See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts. And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers – all of them skilled workers and designers. So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded.'

This passage shows us the role of the Holy Spirit in the development of competence. God, through his Spirit, fills both Bezalel and Oholiab with all kinds of skills, the ability to teach others, and the ability to carry out all the work of constructing the tabernacle. Their competence is directly related to the work of the Holy Spirit. Commenting on Exodus 35:34, Osborn and Hatton (1999:837) write that:

Yahweh "has bestowed the gift of teaching" (NJB) on Bezalel. This may be interpreted as "the ability to teach others" (35:34 NIV), "to give directions" (TAN), or "to teach their crafts to others" (35:34 TEV). This "ability" (35:34 TEV) was also given to Oholiab.

Thus we see that both Bezalel and Oholiab were given their abilities; their competence came from God. But, in addition to the work of the Spirit in the development of competence, this

passage also teaches the role that Bezalel and Oholiab would have had in developing competence in others—highlighting the human-relational dimension in the development of competence. God gives them the ability to be teachers. The mention at the end of verse 34 of Bezalel's and Oholiab's 'ability to teach others' highlights the value of apprentice learning. Commenting on this passage, Stuart (2006:758-759), says the following:

something implicit in 31:6 but made explicit here so that no one would fail to understand that the process by which God would "have given skill to all the craftsmen" (31:6) would include the learning process generally known as apprenticeship. Nothing in the earlier command context or here in the fulfillment context should be understood to suggest that the various craftsmen were suddenly given all the knowledge and skill they needed for constructing the tabernacle by divine fiat. Instead, just as prevails today in God's work, some skills are the result of a lifetime of study, training, and experience, some are the result of special divine intervention and guidance, and some are learned from others in the process of carrying out a given assignment for the Lord.

It might be tempting to say that our competence comes from God only. However, that is not what this passage does. The development of competence can be the result of divine intervention (as in the case of Bezalel and Oholiab), but competence could also be (and usually is) the result of training, apprenticing, and learning from others.

These two components in developing competence—namely, the Holy Spirit and the teaching of others—show us how interconnected the dimensions under consideration truly are. People develop competence supernaturally—through the work of God's Holy Spirit. But people also develop competence through apprenticeships, training, practice, and—for our purposes—supervision. Competence is developed both by God and (often!) through a relational learning process.

Thus, as these words are examined and as this passage is consulted, we see how the development of competence was an integral part of one's spiritual life in the OT; growth in wisdom and learning was designed to develop competence in serving God and living life. Furthermore, seeing the interconnectedness of the development of competence ought to caution us as we seek to identity these dimensions—although distinct conceptually, they are absolutely connected in their realisation in the lives of God's people.

4.3.2.4 Community

We looked at how discipleship involved content, character and competence. We conclude with considering the community dimension. In the OT, biblical scholar Collinson (2004:24) argues, discipleship takes place across a variety of learning relationships. These discipleship relationships take place across the relational spectrum—they range from one-to-one relationships to groups, and from formal to informal.

Some of these different examples will briefly be considered below.

4.3.2.4.1 One-to-one discipleship

Although the relationship between Moses and Joshua was never described as having an explicit learning intention, when the narrative that chronicles their relationship is considered it is clear that learning occurred—Joshua learning from Moses—over the course of their 40-year relationship (Collinson, 2004:16). This is an example of a mentor (Moses) developing his protégé (Joshua) in the context of a one-to-one relationship. In contemporary language, a relationship like this may be described as a mentoring relationship or an apprenticeship.

4.3.2.4.2 Group learning

Following on from one-to-one relationships, one also sees the existence of group learning. A good example of this is the bands of prophets (cf. 1 Sam. 10:5-10, 19:18-20:1). Prophets often operated in bands or in pairs, thus displaying something of the flexibility in these types of learning relationships. We see something of this in 2 Kings 2:1-3, where the company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?" Elisha's short response does not reveal much about the way that the pair (Elijah and Elisha) interacted with the company but that they were aware of one another's ministry is clear.

Additionally, the Elijah-Elisha relationship, like the Moses-Joshua relationship, may have acted as a model for discipleship among other prophets. Although the biblical material does not specify the specific goal of these relationships, "it seems probable that the learning which occurred was intentional" (Collinson, 2004:17). Other examples could include group-based scribal training. This would, in all likelihood, have had discipleship characteristics, and although no formal discipleship goals may have been targeted, it is possible that the "older,

more outstanding scribes would provide guidance for the others, and this certainly could be considered a type of master-disciple relationship" (Wilkins, 1988:71).

Furthermore, group learning would include the discipleship and learning that takes place in families. We see this clearly, for example, in Exodus 12. In the Passover, narrative group learning by the family would have occurred as they followed the ceremonial instructions given by God through Moses. That this event would be later taught in the context of the family seems clear given that the subsequent ordinance was designed to impress the redemptive narrative on the children. In Exodus 12:26-27, the Israelites are told:

when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'

Likewise, in Deuteronomy 6:1-2, we see the important role group learning was to play as, from parents to children, families passed down God's Word from one generation to the next:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

In both Exodus 12 and Deuteronomy 6, it is clear that families played an enormously important role in developing disciples. Through love and teaching, parents were to raise their children to revere and obey the Lord—thus promoting a multidimensional approach to discipleship. Bible scholars Nathan and Ella Isaacs (1915:2554) highlight some key parental activities:

The Bible represents the father as commanding (Gen 50:16; Jer 35:6 ff; Prov 6:20), instructing (Prov 1:8; 4:1), and rebuking (Gen 37:10; Nu 12:14); at the same time, as loving (Gen 25:28; 37:4; 44:20), pitying (Ps 103:13), and blessing his household (Gen 27:41), rejoicing over its triumphs (Prov 10:1; 15:20), or grieving over its misfortunes (Gen 37:35). The mother, too (ἡ μήτηρ, *mētēr*), naturally displays love and care (Gen 25:28; Prov 4:3; Isa 49:15; 66:13).

Thus, discipleship can certainly take place in the context of group learning.

4.3.2.4.3 Institutional bodies

Additionally, as mentioned above, discipleship relationships in the OT certainly would have consisted of relationships within the wisdom movement. In the passage briefly considered above, Proverbs 4:1-5, three generations were in view—implying that each successive generation is tasked to pass on wisdom to the next. Wisdom training would have likely begun in the home, but it is also likely that there may have been some kind of institutional body behind the clearly recognisable corpus of wisdom writings (Kitchen, 2006:100; Wilkins, 1988:88). Although the wisdom movement consisted of families, it is likely to have had an institutional element to it as well.

After an extensive survey of OT passages, Collinson (2004:24) concludes with the following assertion regarding these OT discipleship relationships:

No specific instances of discipling are spelled out in the Old Testament, but learning relationships between older experienced leaders and aspiring young men were more than likely...in the ancient world, the concept of discipleship covered a very wide range of learning activities and relationships involving a master and learner or learners...it sometimes implied formal academic learning, but more usually involved the impartation of knowledge, skills, and conduct in informal situations.

Discipling in the OT, therefore, was a relational and educational endeavour that aimed to promote the development of the learner.

Therefore, it seems clear that while the exact term 'multidimensional' is never used to describe discipleship in the OT, the four elements are consistently present across a variety of texts and genres.

Discipleship involved content (God's Word) that aimed to develop the character and competence of the learner, in the context of a relationship. Discipleship in the OT was, therefore, a relational learning activity that aimed to develop the student in a multidimensional manner.

4.3.3 Discipleship in the New Testament

In this section, the author will investigate different NT texts in order to explore the multidimensional nature of discipleship. The question being explored is whether there is normative support for having a multidimensional conceptualisation of discipleship.

Specifically, does the 4C model advocated by Kellemen (2011; 2015) find normative support in the NT?

This question will be answered in three stages. First, an overview of the NT concept of discipleship will be considered. Secondly, the portrait of a disciple elucidated in each of the four Gospels will be considered. Thirdly, a brief survey of different NT texts as they relate to each of the four dimensions will be reviewed. This will reveal whether there is NT support for the multidimensional discipleship paradigm.

Having done that, the author will then conclude this whole-Bible survey on multidimensional discipleship.

4.3.3.1 Overview

In general, the NT concept of discipleship "frequently involves being disciples of a particular person. The term for disciple is *mathētēs*, which describes someone who is devoted to a particular teacher" (Byrley, 2014). Discipleship, therefore, involved learning from, and becoming like, one's teacher. Disciples imitate their teacher.

Moreover, in addition to the noun, there is also a verb for 'disciple'—which refers to making a disciple. The verb highlights the multidimensional nature of discipleship. Again, Byrley (2014) articulates this multidimensional reality lucidly when he points out how Jesus' Great Commission involved the mind, behaviour, and relationships:

When Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission (Matt 28:19), he commands them to make disciples (*mathēteuō*) of all nations. Jesus clarifies this command by instructing them to baptise these converts in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as to teach them to do all that he commanded. Again, the individual who becomes a disciple must alter his behavior as well as his mind.

Discipleship, therefore, seeks to change and develop one's mind as well as one's behaviour. So a disciple is one who has put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is holistically transformed. Marshall and Payne (2016:70) write about this multidimensional development in the following way:

the effect of this transformed understanding [of the gospel] is a corresponding transformation of our whole person—of our identity and experience and life and action. Being a 'learner' of Jesus necessarily involves learning truth and content

conveyed in words, but it must also involve the learning of a new way of being and living.

Discipleship, therefore, continues to be a learning relationship that fosters multidimensional renewal; disciples become new kinds of people. Disciples not only think in a renewed way but also relate and behave in new ways as well.

4.3.3.2 Multidimensional discipleship in the Gospels

The concept of discipleship was popular in the Judaism of Jesus' day (Richards, 1985:226). Disciples of rabbis were expected to be developed across different dimensions—not merely, for example, in intellectual content or in practical competence. The vision of what it meant to be a disciple was typically broader than that: "The disciple was expected not only to learn all that his rabbi knew but also become like him in character and piety" (Richards, 1985:226). Disciples imitated their masters. Therefore, this multidimensional understanding of discipleship was prevalent in the time of the Lord Jesus. With this background in mind, what follows below is a brief exploration of the discipleship portrait in each of the Gospels.

4.3.3.2.1 Matthew: Disciples are learners

In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples of Jesus learn that "discipleship is a radical way of life" (Nässelqvist, 2016). One sees the disciples seeking to learn this way of life from their Teacher, the Lord Jesus. The radical demands and implications of his teaching impact all four dimensions under consideration. The dimensions that are particularly highlighted in this Matthean passage quoted below are those of character and community. Thus, in Matthew's Gospel, disciples are seen as relational learners. Consider Matthew 12:46-50:

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Jesus makes a startling claim about family. The Lord Jesus teaches that those who do the will of God (which refers to faith-driven obedience to God's revealed commands) are in God's family – God's intimate community. The content-character-community connection is

this: obedient disciples, who embrace the Lord Jesus' Word, are in his family. As Nolland (2005:518) asserts, "The loyalties and bonds of the natural family are relativised by the claim of God (cf. 8:21; 10:34–37) made tangible in the link with Jesus."

The significance of this must not be lost: Jesus reconstitutes human conceptions of kinship and loyalty when he calls his followers mothers and brothers and sisters. This has enormous social implications: disciples are grafted into Jesus' spiritual family (Keener, 2009:370).

Individual discipleship turns out to be a community project; developing as a disciple involves a community experience—as disciples are incorporated into Jesus' family. This also means that disciples are fellow siblings in Jesus' family—a profound relational reality that mitigates against a merely transactional or individualistic view of discipleship.

Furthermore, what also becomes clear as the Gospel of Matthew concludes is that discipleship training is the calling of all believers (Matthew 28:16-20). Commenting on the Lord Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:19, Nolland (2005:1265) writes:

Matthew has already introduced the idea of being disciplined in 13:52, where the imagery was of the disciples being disciplined to be scribes of the kingdom and where the scribe was seen, as are the Eleven now in 28:19, as a discipling disciple: the treasure he has gained is a treasure he passes out to others.

Disciples are disciple-makers; their mission involves discipling others; they are to pass on to others what they themselves have received. In fact, Nolland goes on to argue that Matthew indicates that the discipleship of the original twelve disciples, though unique, embodies patterns of discipleship that are of more general relevance. In that sense, every disciple is a disciple-maker (Nolland, 2005:1265); every disciple is to multiply themselves many times over.

Therefore, according to Matthew's account, disciples are learners who have embraced God's commands and have, through faith, come into Jesus' family. They are siblings—profoundly connected in their shared relationship with Christ. Furthermore, this relational learning is not just something they have experienced, but also something they are to pass on to others. Indeed, they are, if we stay with the family metaphor, to invite others to join the family as well. Disciples are learners who are drawn into Jesus' ever-expanding family.

Matthew's conceptualisation of discipleship strongly highlights the content (being a learner) and community (being a family) dimensions. One can, therefore, see how Matthew's gospel supports a multidimensional perspective.

4.3.3.2.2 Mark: Disciples are imperfect servants

In Mark's Gospel, the imperfections and failures of the disciples make it clear that discipleship is developmental. Disciples are servants, but imperfect servants. Dan Nässelqvist (2016) argues for this strong developmental aspect by asserting the following:

Mark's portrayal of the disciples is more ambiguous than Matthew's. While they are shown with both positive and negative features, Mark emphasises the failure of the disciples and uses it to show the meaning of true discipleship. Readers can identify with the disciples' difficulties and are shown that failure does not mean the end of discipleship.

In a wonderfully redemptive way, Mark highlights the developmental nature of discipleship—it is a process of both learning and failing. Failure or weakness is not something that ends the discipleship process. In fact, failure is a characteristic mark of the journey of true discipleship—and just as Peter was restored (cf. Mark 16:5), so too can weak or failing Christians be restored and strengthened in their own discipleship journey.

Furthermore, as Wilkins (1992:196) points out, in Mark's Gospel, the disciples do not truly understand the nature of Jesus' ministry or teaching (8:14-21). The disciples fail to grasp that the Lord Jesus' message centres around his journey to the cross (8:31-33; 9:30-32) through servanthood (10:35-45). Indeed, the central section of Mark's Gospel "stresses the necessity of Jesus' death" (Bolt, 2004:75). True disciples of Jesus are to follow his example of sacrificial servanthood (Breed, 2017:359-361), something which the disciples in Mark's Gospel struggle to understand.

We see this lack of understanding on the part of the disciples famously demonstrated in Mark 10:35-45,

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high

officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

This passage powerfully contrasts the selfish attitude of the disciples with the servant attitude of the Lord Jesus. Commenting on Mark 10:35-45, France (2002:425) writes of Jesus, that the "loss of his life for the sake of others not only embodies this new scale of values but also offers the disciples a model to follow." Jesus' sacrificial death becomes a paradigm for his disciples—an entirely unexpected paradigm if one considers the disciples' attitude. In his comments on this important passage, Hurtado (2011:172) asserts that,

The discussion between Jesus and the two brothers precipitates a wider controversy involving all the Twelve (v. 41), indicating that the attitude behind the request of James and John was shared by the whole lot. This sets the scene for the final words of the passage (vv. 42–45), in which Jesus reiterates basically the teaching given in 9:33–37, contrasting the patterns of life among the Gentiles (lit., "the nations," also in v. 33) with the pattern that is to be followed among his disciples.

The pattern for disciples, therefore, is a pattern that Jesus modelled—namely, a pattern of sacrificial service. Disciples are servants who model their lives on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Of course, it is worth emphasising, as the text of Mark 10:45 does, that all of the spiritual imperatives are preceded by spiritual indicatives. It is because of God's sacrificial love for his people that they become convinced that they should serve him and others with similar sacrificial love. It is because of God's prior acts of soteriological service that his people are then, empowered by his Spirit, enabled to serve him with joy. Jesus served us before we ever thought of serving him—but because he has now served us, true disciples seek to serve him in return. Disciples are servants who model their lives on the sacrificial service of Jesus Christ.

Conceptualising discipleship as servanthood has implications for all four dimensions—each dimension becomes an avenue through which others can be served:

- Content: a disciple seeks to learn and grow in knowledge in order to serve others by teaching and sharing accurate information.
- Character: a disciple seeks to develop a godly, Christ-like character so that they will be a mature and caring servant of others.

- Competence: a disciple seeks to grow in skill and competence in order to serve others with excellence.
- Community: a disciple seeks to serve others in relationships; relationships are to be used to serve, not merely to receive.

Thus we can see the vibrant way in which this servanthood theme can inform a multidimensional understanding of discipleship. Mark's portrayal of discipleship as servanthood strengthens and deepens the multidimensional perspective because the servanthood concept has implications for each of the dimensions in this multidimensional model.

4.3.3.2.3 Luke: Disciples count the cost

In the Gospel of Luke, to be a disciple "is to be a follower of the Way, which is the way of salvation through self-denial" (Nässelqvist, 2016). Thus, Luke emphasises the costly obedience Jesus requires from those who would follow him. Disciples are to take up their cross daily and deny themselves: in Luke 9:23, Jesus speaks to those following him and says, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Discipleship is hard work and, according to the gospel of Luke, requires personal sacrifice. Knowing this in advance will enable the mentor to empathise with the one he or she is discipling. This demand for personal sacrifice will also provide a realistic framework for, and expectation of, the ongoing discipleship journey. Wilkins (1992:206) writes that:

Luke emphasises the cost of discipleship. Luke presents one of the harshest delineations of what authentic discipleship to Jesus means...He recognises that a long path lies beyond one's initial commitment, a path that will be marked by Spirit-filled victory for the church but will also be marked by apostasy, persecution, and martyrdom.

This focus on the need for perseverance and self-denial demonstrates that discipleship is not merely about intellect or competence. It requires a godly character to voluntarily choose difficulty and potential suffering in one's discipleship journey. Perhaps of all the dimensions, Luke especially focuses on the characterological dimension.

Of course, as was mentioned above, the indicative always precedes the imperative—even in the Gospel of Luke! It is because Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10) that disciples, who were formerly lost, are now willing to lose everything in following him.

Discipleship involves sacrifice, but it also involves love—love for Christ that is rooted in an experience of his grace. A passage that powerfully teaches us about how discipleship should involve profound love is the pericope in Luke 7:36-50. Challenging Simon the Pharisee because of his coldness towards Jesus and his judgmental attitude towards a woman who was expressing exuberant love for Jesus, Jesus then said to Simon in Luke 7:44-47:

"Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

This striking passage teaches us that discipleship, although requiring daily sacrifice as mentioned in Luke 9:23, also involves deep affection and love. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus' comments reveal that this deep love is the result of experiencing God's free gift of forgiveness. The woman's love for Jesus was the evidence that she had experienced God's forgiveness. Her exuberant devotion was rooted in God's prior act of grace. Thus we see that sacrificial service, costly obedience and deep love are all involved in genuine discipleship. Discipleship truly is a multidimensional reality.

Luke's portrait, therefore, serves to reinforce the multidimensional nature of discipleship: disciples are not just learners or servants, they are *sacrificially obedient* (even to the point of death or disgrace) in their loyalty to Jesus Christ—because of their great love for him.

4.3.3.2.4 John: Disciples are transformed through belief

In John's Gospel, the transforming power of faith is emphasised. John teaches how genuine faith in Jesus Christ results in the transformation of his disciples. Speaking of this transformational consequence of faith, Nässelqvist (2016) says the following about what a disciple is:

a disciple is one who believes and accepts Jesus' claims about His identity (John 6:69). Such a belief will then radically change the life of the disciple, resulting in externally recognisable marks of one's belief: that the disciples love each other (John 13:34–35), that they stick to Jesus' words (John 6:66–68), and that their lives bear fruit (John 15:8).

This three-fold transformation of life (love, obedience, fruitfulness) again provides normative support for a multidimensional perspective on discipleship. Commenting on how life-transforming discipleship is according to John's Gospel, Wilkins (1992:235) writes:

John clearly demonstrates that belief in Jesus for salvation is what produces disciples. He is equally clear that disciples bear the marks of Jesus' life upon their lives as evidence of true discipleship...Disciples of Jesus have entered into a new life that causes radical transformations.

When disciples place their trust in Christ, they experience a transformation that transcends a single dimension, and it goes on to impact all of life. This emphasis on faith connects most strongly with the character dimension. However, renewal in the character dimensions then leads to renewal in other dimensions as that disciple's life is transformed into a life of love, obedience and fruitfulness. John's conceptualisation of discipleship certainly supports a multidimensional perspective.

See the tabulated summary below, which seeks to bring biblical data from the four gospels together and relate them to a multidimensional paradigm.

4.3.3.2.5 Tabulated summary of multidimensional discipleship in the Gospels

The Gospels portray the life-transforming multidimensional nature of discipleship. The tabulated summary below highlights the different emphases each of the Gospel writers portrays regarding discipleship. This diversity in emphasis is not to be seen as contradictory but as complementary. These different emphases, when combined, highlight the multidimensional nature of discipleship.

<i>Gospel</i>	<i>Discipleship emphasis as it relates to the 4C dimensions</i>
Matthew	<i>Relational learners</i> : Disciples as learners pursue radical holiness of life, which is the result of internalising the teachings of Jesus. A disciple has, therefore understood and embraced the <i>content</i> of Jesus' teaching—and they are passing it along to others. Disciples become teachers who make disciples, and so, in turn, the <i>community</i> of Jesus grows.
Mark	<i>Imperfect servants</i> : The process of becoming authentic servants of God who are willing to serve sacrificially. Despite their failures, a disciple is willing to sacrificially serve others, thus imitating a Christ-like <i>character</i> .

Luke	<i>Costly obedience</i> : Luke emphasises the cost of discipleship and the necessity of sacrifice, self-denial, and hard work. Disciples have the <i>characterological maturity</i> to suffer in order to remain faithful to following Jesus Christ.
John	<i>Transformative faith</i> : John highlights the importance of belief, which then issues forth in life-renewal, especially love, obedience, and fruitfulness. This touches on all four areas— <i>content</i> to believe (that Jesus is the Christ), <i>competent</i> and fruitful obedience, and the <i>characterological</i> quality of love in the context of meaningful relationships or <i>community</i> .

Table 4.5: 4C discipleship in the Gospels

In closing this review of the four gospels, it may be worth commenting again upon one of the critical elements of the multidimensional paradigm: community. Lest we think that Jesus promotes an individualistic view of discipleship, we would do well to notice that Jesus is actually the new leader of a new Israel. Wilkins (1992:141) has rightly observed that "Jesus called individuals to discipleship, yet responding to that call brought the disciple into the community of faith." Discipleship is lived out relationally. Similarly, Tidball (2000:409) writes that the Lord Jesus:

frequently uses communal language. His disciples are a family (Mark 10:29–31; Luke 8:19–21); a fraternity (Matt. 23:8); a little flock (Luke 12:32); and a city (Matt. 5:14). They are a synagogue which, unlike contemporary Jewish synagogues, does not require ten males for legitimacy; Jesus will be present with two or three (Matt. 18:19–20).

Discipleship is not a solitary endeavour but a community-oriented relational enterprise. Of course, this will have implications for how one conceptualises BC supervision, and what type of model is proposed. The Gospels' emphasis on the communal dimension must be observed in the proposal of a counselling supervision model.

4.3.3.3 The book of Acts and the Epistles

As with the OT and the Gospels, selected words and texts from the epistles will be analysed to ascertain whether the portrait of discipleship in the epistles supports a multidimensional perspective. Considering a variety of words and passages is designed to minimise

theological bias or eisegesis when seeking to garner normative support for a multidimensional discipleship paradigm. Each dimension in the 4C paradigm will be considered separately below.

4.3.3.3.1 Content: disciples have to learn content

In his *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, scholar Lawrence Richards argues that when it comes to words such as 'teaching' and 'learning' in the epistles, the emphasis "rests squarely on content" (1985:591). Furthermore, this content is "focused on the transformation of the believer" (1985:592). That this is indeed the case is made clear by such texts as 2 Timothy 3:16-17, in which one sees how biblical content informs the characterological and practical development of the servant of God. Indeed, this developmental ability is one of the primary functions of Scripture (Knight, 1992:444). Scripture, in other words, is both profoundly true in its content as well as profoundly practical in its application.

Consider the transformative power of content from 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

This passage teaches us that the Bible is useful to teach and train the servant of God. The content of Scripture is foundational when it comes to the development of the disciple. In other words, without inscripturated content for the servant of God to learn from, they will be unable to be equipped for works of Christian service. Furthermore, the Scriptures are the primary means by which God brings disciples to maturity (Kitchen, 2009:421). Moreover, because the Scriptures are profitable for teaching, the appropriate response to them is to seek to learn in humility (Ward, 2009:175). Disciples should be humble learners of the Bible.

It is worth adding that this aim of teaching and transforming the reader is something that the Bible does for all believers—all who come to it to learn and read it with faith. Laansma (2009:193) asserts that, although Timothy was addressed personally as a 'man of God' in 1 Timothy 6:11, the clause should not be restricted to leaders only; the Bible can teach and equip all of God's people. That same point holds true for Paul's comments in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The fact that the Scriptures can equip and develop God's people for service implies that the Bible is a resource that can equip biblical counsellors for their task of counselling, and equip supervisors for their task of supervising. The implications of this for a multidimensional supervision model is significant—the Bible must remain the primary text for biblical counsellors and BC supervisors alike.

In addition to this specific passage, the words related to 'teaching' appear many times in the epistles. For example, the verb for teaching, *didasko*, appears 97 times, and the noun for teacher, *didaskalos*, appears 59 times. Mostly, these refer to the person and activity of Jesus (Mounce, 2006:708-709), as he went about teaching. However, the verb and noun are also used to refer to leaders and teachers in the church.

In Acts, it is also clear that teaching is a prevalent activity among the apostles. For example, when the Sanhedrin rebuke Peter and the other apostles—they rebuke them for teaching! Frustrated and angry, the Sanhedrin says to Peter and the apostles, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name...Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching” (Acts 5:28a). Several chapters later, another apostle—Paul—is questioned in Athens at a meeting of the Areopagus. They ask him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?” (Acts 17:19). These examples reveal how important and pervasive the activity of teaching was with the apostles (cf. Acts 6:4).

The prevalence of these words highlights the fact that the activities of learning and teaching remained a core dimension of the life of the disciples after the ascension of Christ. Disciples, as learners, spent much time teaching and learning; content played a significant role in the early church's efforts at making disciples.

Thus we see the content dimension remaining an essential dimension of discipleship throughout the NT.

4.3.3.3.2 Character: disciples have to develop righteous character

The text in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is a classic example of the relationship that has been noted previously between content and character. The relationship between those two dimensions can be articulated in this way: content has a causal relationship to character because the Scripture is useful *for* teaching, rebuking, correcting and training.

Biblical Scholar John Kitchen (2009:420), referring to these four benefits—teaching, rebuking, correcting, training—Scripture yields, puts it this way: “The very destiny for which the Scriptures were appointed by the God who breathed them out was that they might yield these four practical benefits in the daily lives of those who would embrace them with obedient faith.”

Thus we can see that God's Word is designed to yield these practical benefits; God's Word renews the life of a disciple characterologically. These benefits become evident when each of the four words is reflected upon in further detail.

- Teaching: The Greek word (*didaskalia*) translated ‘teaching’ does not refer to the setting so much as the activity (Louw & Nida, 1996:33.224). So although teaching can happen either formally or informally, this word shows us that the Scripture teaches. The Bible provides believers with the doctrinal content they need in order to grow and develop into mature disciples; Scripture provides believers with the instruction they need—about sin and salvation, about life and godliness, about God and eternity.
- Rebuking: this word (*elegmos*) teaches us that the Bible is able to prove that someone has done something wrong (Louw & Nida, 1996:33.417). This enables the disciple to be confronted when wrong so that they might change. The Bible rebukes false thoughts and sinful desires, helping the counselee move from error to truth and from being wrong to living a more righteous life. It is easy to consider how valuable this practical benefit of Scripture is for both the counselee, counsellor, and supervisor.
- Correcting: improvement, or the correction of faults, is what this Greek word (*epanorthosis*) emphasises. It speaks to the fact that Scripture can correct our faults and amend our lives (Louw & Nida, 1996:72.16). Thus, a disciple ought to be receptive to Bible-based critique because of how such a critique can lead to renewal in thinking and behaviour.
- Training: this final word (*paideia*) highlights the ability Scripture has to form habits of behaviour (Louw & Nida, 1996:33.226). Just as an athlete is trained by their coach, so the Bible trains the disciple in righteousness. Furthermore, just as an athlete is committed to their training regime, so disciples need to be committed to spending time reading and meditating upon the Scriptures.

The content of Scripture, therefore, plays a foundational role in the characterological formation of a disciple.

Moreover, the moral example of other Christians is also to play a role in the development of a disciple's character. The value of a role model is where the connection between character and community also becomes evident.

A text that asserts this character-community connection is Philippians 3:17, where the apostle Paul writes, “Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.”

Paul knew the Philippians, and they knew him. Paul's relationship with the Philippians meant that he could be a tangible and accessible moral model to them (Hansen, 2009:261). By asserting himself as a role model in this way, Paul shows us the value in having Christian exemplars that others are to emulate. Our role models can have a positive impact on our character (something we also saw in the OT survey above). Thus, we see how vital the godly community is to the characterological formation of the disciple.

A similar point is made in Hebrews 13:7, where the author exhorts his readers to, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

These Christians ought to consider the way their leaders actually lived, what their leaders' lifestyle was like, and (most importantly) the faith that generated such a lifestyle. Again, the more significant point is that one's community (including one's leaders) can have a positive influence on one's characterological development.

So there is a link between the character and community dimensions, but the NT also makes a connection between the character and competence dimensions—as we see in 2 Timothy 2:22-26. In that passage, we read:

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

This passage makes a clear connection between the character of the person doing ministry and their ability—or competence—to do that ministry effectively. The Lord's servant must be kind and not resentful (character qualities) in order to gently instruct and teach opponents (competence abilities). Once again, the NT shows us the interconnectedness of these dimensions.

In light of these texts, one can confidently assert that the life of discipleship involved growth in character. There is a secure link between the content that a disciple embraces, the community that a disciple participates in, and the characterological formation that a disciple experiences.

Thus, like the content dimension, we see the character dimension remaining an essential element of discipleship in the NT. We also see its inseparability from the other dimensions!

4.3.3.3 Competence: disciples have to be equipped to serve competently

As has been argued, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches the connection between content, character, and competence. Although the Bible does renew the servant of God characterologically, it also promotes greater competence. It equips us to do God's work. Bible teacher Peter Williams (2007:87) puts it this way: "we all need to reach maturity in Christ, and it is only by our diligent study of the Bible that we can become thoroughly equipped in knowledge, faith and holiness to do God's work." Simply said—the Bible makes people competent for serving God.

The practicality of the Bible refers to its ability to produce competence in those who diligently study and apply it. That the scripture is practical is the conclusion of the apostle Paul's argument in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (DeYoung, 2014:121). DeYoung goes on to write:

We need the Bible if we are to be competent Christians. The Bible will build us up so that we can endure suffering. It will give us discernment for difficult choices. It will make us strong enough to be patient with others and patient enough to respond with kindness when others hurt us... There is no limit to what the Bible can do for us, to us, and through us. We can never outgrow the Bible, because it always means to make us grow.

Content produces competence—the Bible equips disciples to serve God effectively.

Furthermore, the competence dimension of discipleship is addressed by the NT through the wisdom category. One of the relevant Greek terms in this category is *phronimos*, and it refers to one who is wise, insightful and prudent (Mounce, 2006:794). So, for example, this is the wise man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24), the wise virgins who have sufficient oil (Matthew 25:1-9) and the wise servant who is ready for the coming of his master (Matthew 24:45). Wisdom, seen in prudent action, is commended by the New Testament. The fact that the apostle Paul prays the Colossians would be wise (cf. Colossians 1:9-11) highlights the importance of this dimension in the lives of disciples. Practical competence is an essential element of discipleship in the NT. Mature Christians are wise—they know how to live with competence and skill.

We also see particular competencies in different NT passages. For example, we see what Kelleman describes as 'parathetic' competence (Kelleman, 2015:89). Parathetic competence

(a neologism based on two Greek words—*parakaleo* [comfort] and *noutheteo* [admonishing/teaching]) is the competence to both comfort and admonish, to both console and to teach. Kellemen (2015:87-89) references different passages to highlight what parathetic competence involves.

Firstly, when it comes to the *competence to comfort*, Kellemen looks at 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. There the apostle Paul writes:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

Here the apostle shows us that as we receive comfort from God, we then have that comfort to share with others. The competence to comfort others comes from being comforted by God.

Secondly, when it comes to the competence to admonish and teach, Kellemen (2015:88) looks at Colossians 1:27-29. There the apostle writes:

[Christ] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

Here the apostle shows us that his goal was to bring the Colossians to spiritual maturity by teaching and admonishing them. This ability to teach such that others would become mature required wisdom from the teacher: Paul taught and admonished with all wisdom. Moo (2008:161) rightly asserts that just as "people need wisdom to know how to live out true knowledge of God, so the preacher needs wisdom to know how to teach and admonish the people."

Thus, we can see that even within the competence dimension, specific competencies exist. By coining this term, 'parathetic' competence, Kellemen (2015:89) highlights the fact that the competence dimension remains a crucial dimension of discipleship in the NT. Disciples were to be competent in caring for one another in these ways.

As applied to supervision, competence is something needed by the supervisor and something that the supervisor seeks to cultivate in the supervisee. The particular types of skills that this competency may consist of will be considered in the following chapter.

4.3.3.3.4 Community: disciples are in a web of reciprocal developmental relationships

As was seen in the OT, in the NT epistles, it is assumed that the context for both teaching and learning is the Christian community (Richards, 1985:592). There is no such thing as a solitary Christian existing outside of the community. The reason this is so is that the Christian community, the church, is described as being the family of God (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15). To be a Christian is, therefore, to be part of the family. Just as a son or daughter, an aunt or uncle, a grandmother or grandfather is part of their larger family, so too is each Christian part of God's family—the church. Community is the context for discipleship.

Similarly, in the book of Hebrews 10:24-25, we see the following exhortation:

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

In this passage, one can see how important community is, for Christians are to continue to meet and support one another (Kassa, 2010:1503). The church, the Christian community, is a community of mutual support and encouragement.

Furthermore, the reality of community is rooted in the very being of God. We see this profound idea being taught in John 17:20-23, where the Lord Jesus prays for Christians who would believe the apostles' message. Here is a portion of that prayer:

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

In this prayer, the Lord Jesus prays for the future church. That is to say, the Lord Jesus was praying for disciples today. And he makes a startling point—that our love for one another is essential in revealing who God is to the world. The deep community and relational intimacy enjoyed by the Father and Son is to be analogically reflected in the community of Christians on earth—so that those on the earth would know who God is. It is the relational love and unity of the Christian community that serves this compelling apologetic purpose. Carson (1991:568) argues that this display of genuine love is so compelling that the community of disciples "becomes explainable only if Jesus truly is the revealer whom the Father has sent."

We can, therefore, see how essential genuine relationships of love and care are for the life of a disciple.

One final NT passage will be briefly looked at in which we see the community dimension emphasised. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, we see the apostle Paul employ three metaphors that characterise pastoral leadership ministry. Paul writes to the Thessalonian Christians, describing his ministry among them as though he were a young child, a mother, and a father:

We were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Kellemen (2015:33-46) discusses how this chapter gives us a portrait of the relational realities that should characterise a biblical counsellor. The three metaphors that Paul uses are children (verse 7a), a nursing mother (verse 7b), and a father (verse 11). These metaphors point to Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians Christians, and they highlight Paul's innocence, tender gentleness and affection, and individualised teaching (Weima, 2015:2441). Thus this passage highlights the deep relational connection Paul had with his fellow believers, and yet, as Kellemen points out, "Paul's motherly love is not simply the touchy-feely love devoid of content. It is passionate love filled with the meat of God's Word applied to people's lives" (2015:38). Besides this robust maternal affection, when it comes to being an attentive father, Kellemen points out that the "original Greek highlights the individual, focused attention that Paul gives each person he ministers to...Paul offers person-specific, situation-specific, and need-specific counsel" (2015:38). 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 provides us with a robust view of just how relational discipleship was in the NT. Disciples were in a web of relationships that could be genuinely described as familial.

The verses above, selected from different sections of the NT, give a meaningful sample of typical NT teaching: personal growth and change is a community project (Chester, 2008:166). Claire Smith (2012:386) conducted a study of the apostle Paul's churches as learning communities that supported this relational perspective. Her study explored the

nexus between community and content. Having surveyed these Pauline communities, she concluded that:

The model of education that emerged was a ‘community’ model rather than a ‘schooling’ model. The goal of the latter in the modern era, is standardised outcomes of attainment, where students do their own work, and there is a clear distinction between teachers and students. The goal of the former is a ‘common life’, where each member is involved in teaching and learning, the less experienced use the more experienced as resources and guides, and the community is formed as the members learn shared beliefs and values, and these individuals form the community.

Smith’s conclusion reveals the connection between learning content, embracing beliefs and values, and participating in reciprocal relationships. It seems to be that the combination of these dimensions is necessary when seeking to develop disciples.

In the light of these various biblical texts and theological proposals, it can be proposed that discipleship is a relational endeavour; the community dimension remains an essential dimension of discipleship in the NT.

4.3.3.4 Summary of discipleship in the New Testament

So is discipleship multidimensional in the NT? Well, while the term ‘multidimensional’ is never used to define discipleship in the NT, these four elements are consistently present when one considers the discipleship phenomenon. Discipling, according to the NT, was a relational learning activity that sought to develop the learner in a multidimensional way—in content, in character, and in competence, in the context of community.

The table below highlights the different dimensions from various NT epistles. Four different texts have been selected to emphasise the prevalence of this multidimensional perspective seen throughout the NT.

Epistle	Dimension in view (with italicised biblical text)
Romans 12:1-2	Content: disciples are to be renewed in their thinking. <i>Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this</i>

	<i>is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.</i>
Hebrews 12:14	Character: disciples are to pursue holiness and purity of life. <i>Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.</i>
Ephesians 5:15	Competence: disciples are to live wisely and with competence. <i>Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise.</i>
2 Peter 2:4-5	Community: disciples have a shared spiritual life in the Lord Jesus Christ. <i>As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.</i>

Table 4.6: The four dimensions addressed in different NT epistles

4.3.4 Summary of the biblical teaching on discipleship: multidimensional across Scripture

This survey of biblical data reveals that discipleship is consistently understood as a developmental and multidimensional relationship. A variety of texts, from a variety of genres, from both testaments, have all reinforced this multidimensional perspective. Discipleship is indeed a developmental relationship that impacts all of life. At this point, the following principles regarding discipleship became clear: discipleship is—

- Relational
- Developmental
- Multidimensional

Disciples are learners who are seeking to become like their teacher. In his biblical-theological survey of discipleship, Lunde (2010:226) writes, “what, after all, is the purpose of discipleship, if not to foster transformation into the image of the great Rabbi himself—Jesus?” Disciples are learners and servants who seek to imitate their master, Jesus Christ.

Their discipleship ought to be multidimensional because “no aspect of life is lived outside of his kingly reign” (Lunde, 2010: 279).

Multidimensional discipleship involves content, character, competence and community. Regarding content, we saw that inscripturated truth is a critical component of developing as a disciple because knowing God’s Word facilitates the desired transformative relationship with God. This inscripturated content is designed to promote godliness and wisdom; biblical truth leads to characterological maturity. This maturity promotes the practical equipping of the servant of God for every good work. So discipleship involves the development of real-life godly competence, such that disciples can live wisely and practically for Christ. Finally, the process by which that truth is translated into actual lives is relational. Thus we must conclude, with Richards (1985:592) that discipleship “calls for intimate, ongoing relationships with those who model and explain the Word in life situations to which it applies.” Discipleship exists within a relational environment.

Biblical discipleship can, therefore, rightly be described as multidimensional. Indeed, we might say that biblical discipleship is multidimensional discipleship, as a learner seeks to relationally develop into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This biblical data supports the validity of Kellemen’s paradigm, and therefore also supports the multidimensional supervision paradigm being proposed by the author. We can see that there is normative biblical support for the proposal that discipleship is multidimensional.

4.4 Conclusion: Biblical Counselling supervision ought to be multidimensional

This chapter focused on biblical exegesis because it engaged in the normative task. The normative task in this research project revolves around this question: when it comes to counselling supervision, what ought to be going on?

As this chapter has unfolded, it has become clear that BC supervision ought to be considered as a specific form of discipleship. Furthermore, it was discovered—through biblical exegesis—that discipleship can rightly be considered to be multidimensional. Therefore, the answer to the question—what ought to be going on in BC supervision?—is this: multidimensional supervision ought to be happening.

Multidimensional supervision ought to be happening because a conviction regarding multidimensional discipleship must have implications for how we think about BC supervision. Specifically, a multidimensional understanding of discipleship should lead us towards a

multidimensional understanding of supervision. Consequently, biblical counselling supervision ought to result in the multidimensional development of the supervisee so that well-rounded, multidimensional counsellors are developed.

The challenge, however, is that it is one thing to agree with multidimensional discipleship in principle, and quite another to achieve this in real-life BC supervision practice.

Therefore, in the final chapter of this research project, a practical model will be suggested. It is to that multidimensional model that we now turn.

CHAPTER 5

PROPOSING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL BIBLICAL COUNSELLING SUPERVISION MODEL

5.1 The pragmatic task

This chapter of the research project will seek to propose a biblical counselling (BC) supervision model. This model aims to promote the multidimensional development of the counsellor. Within Osmer's model of practical theology (2008:4), this task is known as the pragmatic task.

The pragmatic task is "the task of forming and enacting strategies of action that influence events in ways that are desirable" (Osmer, 2008:176). This task moves, therefore, from the normative question—what should be going on? (the previous chapter)—to the practical question: how might we respond?

In so doing, however, it does not merely draw from the normative task. Instead, this chapter and task seek to draw from all the previous tasks: the situational, interpretive and normative studies presented in chapters 2-4.

As the culmination of this research project, this chapter is focused on practical action and will present the MULTIDIMENSIONAL supervision model. This model will propose strategic action that seeks to positively influence the praxis of supervision.

As has been mentioned previously, this research project follows Osmer's practical theology model (2008:4), which consists of four tasks that each answer a specific question:

- The Descriptive-empirical task: this task involves paying careful attention to the situations, contexts and lived theology (Ward, 2017:64) involved in the research project. Osmer wonderfully describes this as "priestly listening" (2008:35). This first task seeks to answer the question: What is going on? (Chapter 2 of this project)
- The Interpretive task: this task seeks to discern why things are happening the way they are. Osmer describes this as "sagely wisdom" (2008:81). It involves interpreting why the present situation exists as it does. It answers the question: Why is this going on? (Chapter 3 of this project)
- The Normative task: this research project is built on a reformed worldview and sees the Bible as the normative standard. The Bible, therefore, provides the basis for assessment and for providing appropriate responses; the Bible guides renewal in praxis. The Bible is also the crucial text related to theory-building. Osmer describes

this task as one of "prophetic discernment" (2008:129). It seeks to answer the question: what ought to be going on? (Chapter 4 of this project)

- The Pragmatic task: this task takes all of the previous tasks into account in order to propose models or strategies of action. Osmer describes this task as one of "servant leadership" (2008:175). And, as mentioned above, this task seeks to answer the question: how might we respond?

The four tasks of Osmer's practical theology method (2008:4) are represented in Figure 5.1 below.

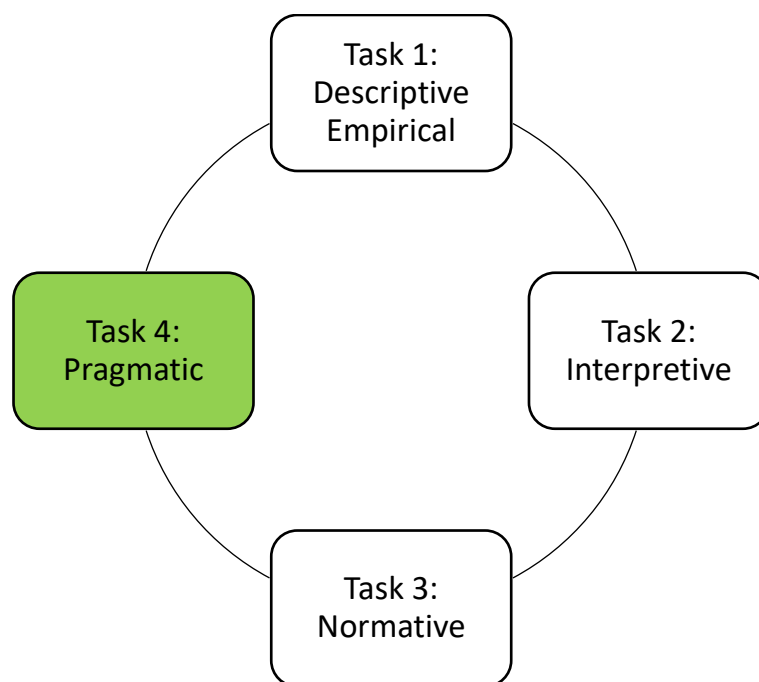


Figure 5.1: Osmer's (2008:4) Four Tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation

This chapter's focus is on the pragmatic task (highlighted in green in Figure 5.1 above). This task consists of drawing on the previous studies in this research project and proposing a model. Proposing a model is the way in which practical theology seeks to make a contribution to solving the challenges faced by the church. In this sense, this model humbly aims to promote renewal and improvement in the practice of biblical counselling supervision.

Speaking of the pragmatic task, Osmer (2008:176) writes,

Practical theology often provides help by offering models of practice and rules of art. Models of practice offer leaders a general picture of the field in which they are acting and ways they might shape this field toward desired goals. Rules of art are more specific guidelines about how to carry out particular actions or practices.

Whilst not following Osmer's conceptual definitions strictly, this chapter can be rightly understood as offering a model of practice related to biblical counselling supervision. Rules of art, or the more specific guidelines for how to use the proposed model, will be included in the following chapter.

The model presented in this chapter is a model that aims to promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. It emerges from the hermeneutical interaction of the previous studies in this research project. As such, it seeks to answer the primary research question (see 1.6.1): What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

Additionally, this chapter also seeks to answer the subsidiary research question: What counselling supervision model can be proposed, and what counselling supervision methods can be suggested, that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors?

This chapter will, therefore, seek to both propose a model and suggest some methods that will promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

It is essential to mention that this model is presented in humility, recognising that biblical counselling supervision is already happening. Furthermore, the researcher recognises the limitations of a single perspective and welcomes others in the field to contribute to the development of BC supervision. However, given those qualifications, there clearly are areas of BC supervision that could be strengthened. This model may be a way in which that may happen.

As was mentioned in 1.7.1, the aim of this study is to develop a multifaceted BC supervision model with the goal of promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. This would enable supervisors to more effectively serve and develop their supervisees, which would, in turn, increase the quality of care that counselees receive.

5.2 The multidimensional model

The multidimensional model aims to provide both a theological as well as a practical foundation for the supervision of biblical counsellors. Based on the work of Kellemen (2011) and Bernard (1979), it has been developed from the data and hermeneutical interaction of the previous descriptive, interpretive and normative tasks. As the model is explained, the relevant sections of earlier research will be referenced, and new research presented.

5.2.1 Introducing the multidimensional model

As mentioned above, a significant component of the multidimensional model is based on the work of Kellemen (2011). However, in addition to Kellemen, Bernard's Discrimination model (1979) has also been helpful in developing the researcher's multidimensional model.

More information regarding Bernard's discrimination model will be provided under 5.2.2 below.

Figure 5.2 below represents the multidimensional model in tabulated form.

4x3 Matrix	Supervisor's Role		
Supervision Foci (Dimensions)	Teacher	Counsellor	Co-worker
Content			
Competence			
Character			
Community			

Table 5.2: The multidimensional model

Notice that the model includes supervision foci (dimensions) on the vertical column and the supervisor's roles horizontally across the rows. The vertical categories are based on the

work of Kellemen (2011) as well as the exegetical work done in the previous chapter. These are the four dimensions of content, competence, character, and community.

The horizontal categories were inspired by the work of Bernard (1979) but have been adapted and theologically translated. These horizontal categories refer to the role the supervisor approaches supervision with: these are the roles of teacher, counsellor, and co-worker. These categories will be further explained at each relevant point below.

An additional aspect to note is the way in which the vertical and horizontal categories can interact. The four dimensions interact somewhat differently with the three roles. The model encourages the supervisor to select both a focus for supervision, as well as a role for supervision. This focus and role may even change within a session! This focus on both the dimension and role provides the supervisor with both guidance and flexibility. The model guides the supervisor by highlighting the crucial dimensions and roles. However, it also allows enough room for the supervisor to select a dimension and role best suited to the needs of the supervisee. Indeed, the model suggests 12 potential choice-points for the BC supervisor to consider for any given session.

These seven categories (the four supervision foci and the three supervision roles), and the way in which they may interact will be the focus of this chapter. As they are successively defined and explained below, the usefulness of the multidimensional model will be made clear.

Before that is done, however, a brief summary and evaluation of Bernard's Discrimination Model may be helpful.

5.2.2 Bernard's discrimination model

Bernard's model has many helpful features, but it also requires theological transposition. These useful features will be highlighted, and the theological transposition will be done below.

5.2.2.1 Introducing Bernard's model

Bernard's Discrimination Model aimed to do two things: identify the counsellor skills that need attention in supervision and identify the roles in which the supervisor provides assessment. Her view of supervision was relatively straightforward: "The goal of supervision is to produce more competent counselors" (1979:61). Thus, it is clear from the outset that

Bernard did not embrace a multidimensional view of supervision. Nevertheless, within the focus on competence, her model recognised the various supervisee skills and supervisor approaches that can take place in supervision.

Regarding the critical skills for the counsellor, she identified three areas: "(a) process skills, (b) conceptualisation skills, and (c) personalisation skills" (1979:61). These three areas, she argued, can be used "to delineate the abilities of a competent counsellor" and thus serve "as an outline for supervision" (1979:63).

In addition to these three counsellor skills, she highlighted the approach or role chosen by the supervisor. Bernard argued (1979:64) that "three basic roles have been identified for supervisors...(a) the teacher-student approach... (b) the counsellor-client approach... and (c) the consultant approach." The simple way to discern the difference in these roles, Bernard said, is to think of their goals:

- For the teacher role, the goal is to transmit knowledge to the supervisee.
- For the counsellor role, the supervisor's goal is to focus on the "counselor's personal needs" (1979:64), with the belief that this will aid development in competence.
- For the consultant role, the goal is to focus on a relationship that is explorative and assumes that the counsellor "has the ability to express his or her supervision needs" (1979:64).

What gave Bernard's Discrimination model its name was the emphasis on the supervisor choosing (discriminating between) different roles in different supervision moments. She argued that supervisors needed to become comfortable with "contrasting roles and using the data at hand to select the most appropriate role for a supervision contact" (1979:64). In other words, the supervisor was to exercise discrimination regarding which role to select. Thus, the discrimination model "is a *situation-specific* model...there are nine potential choice points for the supervisor to consider" (1979:64). It is here where the similarities between the Discrimination Model and the Multidimensional Model will become clear.

These nine choice points are illustrated in the table below. This enables the reader to see that for each counselling skill, the supervisor can 'discriminate' between three roles or approaches. Do they want to approach the assessment of that skill as a teacher, a counsellor or a consultant?

	Supervisor Role

Counselling Skills	Teacher	Counsellor	Consultant
Process			
Conceptualisation			
Personalisation			

Figure 5.3: Bernard's Discrimination Model (1979)

Whilst there are significant differences between the Discrimination Model and the Multidimensional Model being proposed, the strengths of the former model have been considered and acted as a stimulus for the researcher's thinking.

5.2.2.2 The strengths of the model

The researcher found Bernard's Discrimination model (1979) helpful because of the awareness it has of both the supervisor's multifaceted role as well as the different aspects of help required by the developmental stage of the supervisees. It, therefore, recognises some of the complexities inherent in the task of supervision. Furthermore, the "model serves as a guide for the supervisor in establishing training priorities for supervision sessions" (Bernard, 1979:63). In light of the empirical research (see 2.5.1 regarding the absence of biblical counselling supervision models), it appears that biblical counselling supervisors would benefit from more guidance regarding what to focus on in supervision.

An additional strength of this model, although it seems unclear that this was ever in Bernard's original conceptualisation, is how the different supervisor roles appear to connect somewhat with the developmental stages of the supervisee. The researcher appreciates this awareness regarding supervisee development.

For example, as was indicated by participants in the descriptive-empirical task, there may be a sense in which counsellors initially want more of a focus on content and competence. In the words of one participant: *"a lot of the way I felt supported as a new counsellor was by being helped with my cases."* The focus on content and competence corresponds well with the more directive role of the teacher. However, as time goes on, supervisors may want to focus more on the character and community dimensions of supervisees—dimensions that are better suited to the roles of counsellor and co-worker.

There is, therefore, an organic synergy between multiple dimensions and multiple roles. Indeed, the multidimensional nature of the model is – by design – aimed to enhance the development of a biblical counsellor. This multidimensional awareness promotes counsellor development because, as Bernard herself says, “counselling is both personal and personalised, it is difficult to become a more efficient and skilled counsellor without also experiencing greater personal growth” (1979:63). Thus, the sensitivity to the issue of multidimensional counsellor development was a crucial factor in the researcher’s incorporation of Bernard’s concept of supervisor roles.

Furthermore, the “discrimination model not only is one of the best known models of supervision, it also has strong empirical support” (Borders & Brown, 2005:16). The discrimination model has been used for years, the research confirms its usefulness, and thus it remains a popular model that enjoys empirical support.

5.2.2.3 Theological transposition of the model

As useful as the Discrimination Model may be, however, critical theological reflection on it is necessary before seeking to learn or incorporate any insights from it.

First, a critique: Bernard focuses almost exclusively on competence – only one of the dimensions. She also lacks a theological vision for the counselling endeavour as well as how to provide soul care.

Secondly, let us consider the positive side: the richness of the supervisor role. In particular, Bernard excels at highlighting the different aspects of how the supervisor approaches the supervisee. How the researcher reflects theologically on these three roles will be considered briefly below.

- Teacher: this dovetails nicely with what was considered in the previous chapter, regarding how a disciple is a learner. The corollary is that the supervisor is a teacher.
- Counsellor: we saw repeatedly in the empirical data the need for counsellors to debrief and process their counselling experiences with supervisors. This also connects with the character dimensions reflected on in the normative task.
- Co-worker: this needed to be more significantly reconceptualised. That reconceptualisation is provided under 5.3.9 below. Nevertheless, Bernard’s initial insight here was catalytic for the researcher’s deeper theological reflection. The mutuality of this role also reminded the researcher of the comments of several

participants, which highlighted the reciprocity and mutuality that can take in supervision.

5.2.3 An overview of the components of the multidimensional model

The components, or categories, within the multidimensional model all contribute towards the efficacy of the theological and practical task. However, because the words may be used differently in different contexts, a brief operational definition for each will be supplied.

- **Multidimensional:** in this project, the term ‘multidimensional’ refers to four dimensions—content, character, competence and community. In earlier chapters, the researcher provided Kellemen's (2011) descriptions of these 4C components. The summaries in this current section are the researcher's development of these four concepts based upon the work done thus far in this dissertation.
- **Content:** theological knowledge and depth. This also includes biblical faithfulness and precision regarding how counselling problems and solutions are conceptualised. It also, in Kellemen's paradigm, includes the ability to relate theological truth to the personal details of the counsellor's own life as well as to the life of the counselee.
- **Character:** maturity, wisdom, compassion, and love. This also refers to the intrapersonal dynamics that a supervisee is aware of during the counselling sessions.
- **Competence:** practical counselling skills, or relational competencies. This refers to the evaluation of the counsellor's intervention skills and can also include assessment of the counsellor's attending skills, teaching skills, and confronting skills.
- **Community:** this refers to the interpersonal skills of the supervisee. It also includes an awareness of their relationships outside of their counselling relationships. Thus, the supervisor is also aware of the supervisee's spiritual friendships and their experience of the one-another ministry of the local church.
- **Teacher:** the supervisor as an instructor. Within the biblical counselling framework, this role also includes a theological component. As Nylund (2016) argues, a teacher is “one who instructs others...Despite its infrequent use of the term ‘teacher,’ the Old Testament contains multiple examples of teacher-pupil interactions that provide insight into the role of a teacher in ancient Israel. Moses and Joshua can be seen as having a teacher-pupil relationship, as can Elijah and Elisha.”
- **Counsellor:** available to explore the personal issues and motivational dynamics of the supervisee, with a particular focus on how the supervisee's personal issues are impacting the counselling sessions.

- Co-labourer: the role emphasises the reciprocal nature of Christian friendship and ministry collegiality. This paves the way for peer supervision and mutuality, something which may be especially helpful for local churches and under-resourced areas.

5.2.4 The goal-setting version of the model: the multidimensional supervision development planner

Goal-setting is an important component of the supervision process and takes into account the developmental stage of the supervisee, as well as the supervisee's strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, as reported by Lehrman-Waterman and Ladany (quoted in Watson, 2018:53), the "use of goal-setting in supervision has been found to be highly correlated with the development of a strong supervision alliance and with overall supervisee satisfaction."

To facilitate this goal-setting focus, the multidimensional supervision development planner has been created. This development planner is based off, and adapted from, the Apprentice Development Planner (Marshall, 2007:107).

This multidimensional supervision development planner can be incorporated into the supervision relationship at its commencement, introduced for a short period of time for specific planning, or used as an ongoing tool. It is designed to help both the supervisor and the supervisee decide upon which areas to work on in each dimension. As the same dyad may use multiple development planners, they can also be used to track progress and planning over the long-term.

Dimension	Developmental Goal	Action Step(s)	Date (by when?)
Content			
Character			
Competence			

Community			

Figure 5.4: The Multidimensional Supervision Development Planner

Steps in creating a development plan:

1. Set goals

The supervisor and supervisee can collaboratively set goals that are specific and realistic. Due to the need for counsellors to develop in a multidimensional way, it is crucial that goals are identified in each of the four dimensions: content, character, competence, and community.

Many goals are too vague or overly ambitious—the supervisor can assist the supervisee in identifying specific and realistic goals that can be achieved through concrete actions in a timeous manner.

2. Monitoring and assessment

Supervisees require ongoing monitoring and assessment. The monitoring refers to the gathering of data, that data is then used to assess the supervisee. Monitoring and assessment are often done informally, but a formal review of the development plan can also be helpful. This will enable the supervisor to assess the supervisee regarding their long-term development.

Of course, much BC supervision revolves around feedback and interaction regarding the counselling cases a supervisee is dealing with. That is an appropriate focus. The advantage the BC Supervision Development Planner offers is that the longer-term goals can be kept in view even in the midst of the typical counselling exigencies.

Furthermore, it is important for monitoring and assessment to happen regularly and in a loving, gracious way. To encourage that, below are some questions that the supervisor could ask the supervisee (Marshall, 2007:77):

- What was (and what was not) achieved?
- What factors have been at play impacting the supervisee's progress?
- Are these goals still the right goals to work on? Any changes needed? Why?
- If goals have not been achieved on time, what needs to be adjusted so that they can be achieved?

3. Identifying action steps

Remember that the action steps are going to be somewhat shaped by the due date. These action steps need to be realistic and achievable, keeping in view the supervisee's time, skills, and resources.

Finally, it is important for the supervisor to consider whether they are able to do anything that will help their supervisee's achieve these goals. Whilst keeping responsibility firmly on the supervisee, there may be some helpful things a supervisor can do to assist their supervisee.

5.3 The model described

What follows is a detailed description of the Multidimensional Model's four supervision foci and three supervisory roles. Each aspect will be carefully defined, and various aspects of the research project will be cited – participant comments (empirical research), secular literature, and Biblical texts. As was mentioned above, the pragmatic task draws on and interacts with the three previous tasks.

Firstly, the four supervision dimensions will be considered. Having done that, we will then reflect on the three supervisor roles.

5.3.1 Supervision foci (dimensions)

The four supervision dimensions remind supervisors to seek to develop the supervisee holistically. Recognising the interconnectivity between content, character, competence and community enables the supervisor to develop a truly multidimensional biblical counsellor.

5.3.2 Content

The first dimension that supervisors should focus on is that of Content. This dimension refers to the theological knowledge and depth of the counsellor. Even at the training phase, biblical counsellors must “gain deep insight into people, problems and solutions—from a biblical perspective” (Kellemen, 2011:190). The content dimension, therefore, must include a level of knowledge related to biblical theology, systematic theology, exegetical theology and pastoral theology. These theological foci—specifically systematic theology—enable the biblical

counsellor to do what Kellemen describes above. It's also worth highlighting that these theological disciplines must always result in application—both for the supervisor and counsellor, as well as for the counselee.

Furthermore, the content dimension extends to other aspects, including how to evaluate and use a biblical counselling model, as well as how to conceptualise specific issues that the biblical counsellor may come across.

These various aspects related to the content dimension will be reflected on in further detail below.

5.3.2.1 Theology

If biblical counselling is a theological discipline (Lambert, 2016:11) then it follows that biblical counsellors must have a firm grasp on theology. But what does this involve? A clear understanding of what makes for theological maturity will help the supervisor know what to look out for. There are essentially two categories to consider: exegetical skills and application skills. Each will be considered briefly below.

Firstly, it's important to notice what is involved when it comes to 'doing theology' with hermeneutical integrity. According to Peter Tong (2014), "sound theology is built upon the integration of at least three distinct tasks". These three tasks are exegesis (understanding the meaning of a verse in its historical and redemptive context), biblical theology (understanding each part of the Bible within the context of the whole), and systematic theology (organising theological categories logically and hierarchically). He summarises these three tasks in this way (Tong 2014):

every verse must first be understood in the context of its historical period of God's unfolding revelation (biblical theology); but a second step needs to be taken wherein each verse is also read in light of the 'analogy of Scripture', taking into account the whole Bible's revelation (systematic theology).

Biblical counsellors ought to be able to know how to engage in these three tasks of good hermeneutics.

Secondly, it is crucial to recognise that these hermeneutical tasks lead to pastoral theology. An application must result from hermeneutics, and so these three tasks must result in a fourth: pastoral theology. This is especially crucial in the area of biblical counselling because pastoral theology "answers the question, How should humans respond to God's revelation?" (Carson, 2015:2634). Therefore, it is essential for biblical counsellors not just to know how to

do theology, but how to apply God's Word. Does the biblical counsellor have the ability to relate relevant biblical content to the specific challenges of the unique individual sitting in front of them? Pastoral theology recognises that the Bible was given "to transform people's lives" (Carson, 2015:2636). And because biblical counselling seeks to renew and transform lives, it is imperative that biblical counsellors understand how to move from the tasks of exegetical, biblical, and systematic theology to the task of pastoral theology.

Theological maturity involves correctly handling God's Word – as well as correctly applying God's Word. And it is, of course, imperative that BC supervisors know how to help their supervisees both handle God's Word rightly as well as apply it relevantly. Sound theology, in this sense, must involve pastoral theology. As Carson (2015:2636) notes, the Bible

was given to transform people's lives; it was given to be practical. The notion of impractical theology—theological study that is unconcerned with repentance, faith, obedience, conformity to Christ, and joy in the Lord—hovers somewhere between the ridiculous and the blasphemous.

This is a crucial area relevant to the content dimension—discerning whether the supervisee is engaging in sound theology.

5.3.2.2 Model for biblical counselling

A second aspect of the content dimension has to do with biblical counselling models. It is very helpful for biblical counsellors to have a model of framework enabling them to make sense of people, the problems people face, and what the biblical solutions to those problems typically involve.

There are several excellent models available that fall within the reformed-evangelical heritage. Among the more well-known models are Lane and Tripp's *How People Change* (2008), Kellemen's *Gospel-Centered Counseling* (2015), Heath Lambert's *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (2016). Although these works have much in common theologically, each provides a slightly different way of framing the task of biblical counselling:

- Lane and Tripp provide a model often referred to as the 'Three Trees' in which the progressive sanctification process is visualised pictorially.
- Kellemen, using the redemptive narrative of Scripture as his guide, explores "life's ultimate questions as they relate to your life and ministry as a biblical counsellor" (2015:20).

- Lambert works through the corpus of systematic theology, explaining what each doctrine is and then showing how each doctrine relates to the practice of biblical counselling.

In each model, the reader is provided with reformed-evangelical anthropology, hamartiology, and soteriology. Furthermore, essential concepts related to union with Christ, pneumatology, and progressive sanctification are explored and illustrated through practical case studies.

Whilst these models do not replace the Bible, they can provide a faithful and useful framework to the biblical counsellor, promoting orthodoxy in the task of counselling.

5.3.2.3 Specific issues in biblical counselling

A final component of the content dimension relates to how biblical counsellors conceptualise specific issues. There are a host of various issues and struggles that a biblical counsellor will come across, from the more common struggles such as anxiety and depression to more infrequent issues such as gender dysphoria.

It is vital that a biblical counsellor, using the expertise in areas related to exegetical, biblical, systematic and pastoral theology, knows how to understand these issues and how to intervene in such a way that facilitates a biblical solution.

Specific counselling issues – especially the ‘newer’ issues such as gender dysphoria – highlight why the theological nature of the ‘content’ dimension is so important. Biblical counsellors must be orthodox and faithful in helping their counselees understand and resolve their contemporary struggles. It is often in this category of contemporary issues where biblical counsellors will face the most pressure to abandon distinctively Christian conceptualisations and “conform to the pattern of this world” (Romans 12:2). The good theology of the biblical counsellor must translate into the ability to conceptualise contemporary issues within the historic orthodox framework. Lambert (2016:12-13) explains:

Good theology must be contemporary theology. Contemporary theology does not mean that we develop new truth in each age. Instead, it means that we seek to understand how the old truths in God’s Word apply to our contemporary setting.

It is this ability to do contemporary theology, which has some similarities with the pastoral theology described above, that will enable biblical counsellors to care for their counselees with in a biblically orthodox manner.

With these issues in mind, the BC supervisor focuses on the dimension of content. They are to help their supervisee develop into theological maturity—which involves assessing and encouraging them in how they do theology, which models they use, and how they conceptualise the specific issues that arise in the contemporary ministry contexts.

5.3.3 Competence

The second supervision foci or dimension is that of competence. The competence dimension focuses on the practical counselling skills of the supervisee. This dimension often falls under the category of biblical counselling methodology. And just as there are several popular models regarding how to frame people, problems and solutions (5.3.2.2 above), so there are various popular biblical counselling methodologies available.

Among the most popular books that discuss BC methodology are Paul Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (2002), Robert Kelleman's *Spiritual Friends* (2004) and *Gospel Conversations* (2015), David Powlison's *Speaking the Truth in Love* (2005) and John MacArthur and Wayne Mack's *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (2005). A brief sketch of each model will be summarised below.

- Tripp advocates a four-part model, summarised by the words Love-Know-Speak-Do. As can be seen from the words, Tripp emphasises the importance of love but also includes the crucial components of conceptualisation, conversation and practical action.
- Kelleman's manuals provide a historic model. Kelleman provides twenty-two biblical counselling relational skills categorised under four headings gleaned from the historic practice of soul care in the church: sustaining-healing-reconciling-guiding.
- Powlison's book consists of a series of essays rather than a specific methodology. Nevertheless, many of the chapters provide insightful guidance related to the use of Scripture, illustrations and other related issues (such as preparation) in the practice of biblical counselling.
- The chapters in MacArthur's book related to biblical counselling methodology are supplied by Wayne Mack. Mack's model is known as the '8 I's' – Involvement (developing a helping relationship with counselees), Inspiration (instilling hope in the counselee), Inventory (collecting data on the counselee), Interpretation (biblically evaluating what the counselee has told you), Instruction (teaching the counselee), Inducement (motivating the counselee and engaging with any resistance) and

Implementation (helping the counselee implement the biblical instruction in their daily life).

Thus, there are several excellent models available to both the counsellor as well as the supervisor. Although it is not necessary to adopt a particular model in order to provide faithful pastoral care and counselling, these models can be enormously beneficial in providing structure and guidance to both new and experienced counsellors.

Furthermore, these methodologies provide supervisors with a methodological framework that can be used for assessment purposes. It is the researcher's opinion that these methodologies can prove to be a great aid in promoting greater competence in biblical counsellors.

However, in addition to these excellent models, what other skills might fall under the competence dimension?

Professor Eric Johnson (2014), in his Logos Mobile Education video course on Pastoral Counseling, argues that there are some "basic counseling skills that are necessary in order to effectively help people" as well as more advanced skills. In the sections below, the researcher has organised these skills into attending skills, teaching skills, confrontational skills, and application skills. Supervisors, in their assessment of supervisees, could use the categories discussed below. Each will be briefly considered.

5.3.3.1 Attending skills

Attending skills begin by focusing on the "quality of the helping relationship" (Johnson, 2014), and thus the counsellor focuses on creating an environment in which the counselee is "willing to share things that maybe they've never shared with anybody else" (Johnson, 2014). This environment is created by inviting the counselee to share their struggles and their story – and the focus of the counsellor at this point is on asking questions and listening. This accomplishes two things—it both develops an empathic and trusting relationship, and it also gives the counsellors the information they need to know and understand the counselee. This, in turn, creates an atmosphere where vulnerability facilitates further sharing and self-disclosure.

Other aspects of attentiveness, Johnson argues, are the skills of active listening: "Active listening is where we're really engaged at a deep level and we're constantly processing everything that's happening." This means paying attention to the explicit verbal message being delivered by the counselee—this is often referred to as the presenting problem—as

well as the emotional cues and non-verbal data. Active listening thus operates on two levels—both the actual content being shared, as well as the manner in which that content is being shared.

This means that the biblical counsellor also attends to what is not being mentioned by the counselee. Johnson (2014) says:

We want to attend to what's missing in the picture that we're being given. What might be a kind of blind spot? What seems to be left out? What might we expect to be said that's not being said? Why is that? These blind spots may be examples of ignorance in the person or just a lack of awareness. They also may be evidence of things that the person is not wanting to be aware of.

Thus, the key attending skills consist of empathic listening, asking questions, and active listening. These skills appear very basic but are often much harder to put into practice than it seems! The wise supervisor will, therefore, pay attention to the attending skills of the supervisee. This is an additional reason why live observations or recordings are so useful to the supervisor.

5.3.3.2 Teaching skills

An additional set of skills necessary in effective biblical counselling has to do with teaching. Teaching is necessary in biblical counselling because of the therapeutic power of God's Word: "there's a necessity of communicating divine truth to heal the soul according to God's agenda" (Johnson, 2014). Biblical counsellors promote God's therapeutic agenda by teaching His Word faithfully and relevantly to their counselees. This means that the biblical counsellor will want to help people "by directing them to biblical teaching that relates to the problem that they're struggling with" (Johnson, 2014). Or, in the words of David Powlison (2005:63) the role of the counsellor is to connect truth to life:

Keep the big picture in view, then act on some detail. Get the whole story on God. Get the whole story on this person. Then apply one relevant thing from our Redeemer to one significant scene in this person's story. Bring one bit of Bible to one bit of life.

Supervisors would do well to assess the ability of their supervisees in this regard. The teaching skills of the supervisees, or the lack thereof, will be a significant factor in determining whether they are able to apply Scripture to life.

5.3.3.3 Confronting skills

A third, and perhaps a more difficult area yet, of counselling skills has to do with confrontation. Why is it necessary to challenge counselees? Counselees need to be challenged, from a biblical perspective, because theological indicatives must be followed by theological imperatives.

The biblical indicatives reveal what God has done for the Christian believer in and through Christ – redemption, the forgiveness of sins, the seal of the Holy Spirit, etc. The imperative exhorts the believer to now live in the light of these marvellous truths. Imperatives are often of an ethical nature and typically follow indicatives. An epistle that highlights this relationship is Ephesians: in Ephesians 1-3, the indicatives reveal all that God has done in Christ. In Ephesians 4-6, the imperatives show what it now means to live a life “worthy of the calling” that they have received (Eph 4:1). As John Stott (1979:146) says, Paul “turns from exposition to exhortation, from what God has done (in the indicative) to what we must be and do (in the imperative), from doctrine to duty.”

Biblical counsellors, likewise, are to follow the apostle Paul’s theological logic and challenge counselees in order to help them live out the full implications of their Christian life. In this sense, confronting a counselee about their sinful desires and behaviour, or their false beliefs, is an important way in which biblical counsellors serve their counselees.

Furthermore, confrontation actually reflects something of the holiness of God to counselees: Johnson: “God has standards and... we can’t image God to the fullest if we are completely uncommittal and non-evaluative in our interactions with others.”

As biblical counsellors seek to reflect God to their counselees, part of that reflection entails confrontation. Supervisors, then, need to explore what the confrontation skills of the supervisee are like.

5.3.3.3 Application skills

The final set of skills that the supervisor ought to assess in the supervisee are related to helping a counselee apply truth to their lives. These skills are very important, for as biblical counsellor Paul Tripp explains (2002:242):

Most of us are tempted to think that change has taken place before it actually has. We confuse growth in knowledge and insight with genuine life change. But

insight is not change and knowledge should not be confused with practical, active, biblical wisdom.

It is the ability to help a counselee move from insight to practical wisdom that these skills relate to. Thus, when discussing these skills, Johnson (2014) explains how he uses Scripture – both in sessions as well as “assigning it for homework and personal devotions.” The big issue, of course, is how God’s Word brings truth and grace into this counselee’s life at this point in time. If these truths can be incorporated into personal devotions, all the better.

The wise counsellor will also follow-up with their counselee, providing both encouragement and accountability (Tripp, 2002:242). This enables the supervisee to ascertain whether the counselee really is applying God’s Word to their struggles. These application skills enable the counsellor to help the counselee successfully graduate from counselling, having experienced genuine change.

The insightful supervisor, therefore, will be seeking to assess the competence of the supervisee in this vital area.

5.3.4 Character

This supervision dimension focuses on the characterological development of the supervisee. Here the supervisor will focus on areas such as maturity, wisdom, empathy, and love. When discussing this dimension, Kellemen (2011:232-239) describes four marks of Christlike character that every biblical counsellor must cultivate. These four marks fall under the relational, rational, volitional, and emotional categories:

- Relating like Christ: loving God and others (relational).
- Thinking like Christ: having a biblical perspective of life (rational).
- Choosing like Christ: dying to self and living sacrificially for others (volitional).
- Feeling like Christ: managing moods biblically (emotional).

These four areas of characterological development provide helpful areas of focus for supervisors as they seek to cultivate and encourage these in their supervisees. However, as Kellemen notes, these four marks are “only one map of foundational character to emphasise ...there is no one-size-fits-all character map” (2011:238). Additional character maps could be identified from various portions of Scripture, from the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:1-17) to the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

An additional character map that can prove to be of assistance is one consisting of the classic theological and cardinal virtues. Advocated by Watson (2018), these are the virtues of faith, hope, love, practical wisdom, justice, temperance and courage. Because of their classical nature, and their comprehensive focus, the researcher appreciates Watson's contribution to the issue of character development in supervision and will summarise each characterological virtue below.¹⁹ An additional reflection will be provided regarding how such a virtue might be encouraged by the supervisor. These are given as an example of how the BC supervisor might explore characterological development in supervision.

We will begin with the theological virtues, famously clustered together in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." Having done that, a similar brief reflection will be provided for the four cardinal virtues.

5.3.4.1 Faith

Faith, according to Watson (2018:40), "involves belief, trust and willing obedience." The Lexham Theological Wordbook (Kugler, 2014) offers a similar definition: "Faith refers to a sense of trust, guiding belief, faithfulness, and often a committed sense of loyalty."

Faith in Christ, from a reformed perspective, is an infused virtue, enabled through the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit – and is both the way into the Christian life (a person is justified by faith) as well as the way onwards in the Christian life.

Watson connects the virtue of faith with the characterological behaviour of fidelity and trustworthiness: "A Christian integrative approach to clinical supervision will include attentiveness to belief, trust... and encourage the development of faithful practices and habits" (2018:43).

How might a supervisor promote the virtues of faithfulness, trustworthiness and responsibility in their supervisees?

Firstly, the supervisor promotes the virtue of faithfulness by modelling it. The supervision agreement or contract can be an enormously useful tool in this by framing goals, expectations and procedures in the supervision process. Adhering to these agreed-upon practices models faithfulness and responsibility, while neglecting them does the opposite. In fact, neglecting to be faithful and trustworthy in how supervision is practised "runs the risk of

¹⁹ While Watson does not represent a biblical counselling perspective, the researcher appreciates her theological emphasis in this work and thinks that her contribution can enrich the characterological dimension of biblical counselling supervision.

supervisees repeating these neglectful patterns in their own professional lives with clients” (Watson, 2018:53). So often, in supervision as in many areas of ministry, it is not just what is taught – it is also what is caught.

Secondly, supervisors promote faithfulness “through nurturing supervisees’ faith and trust in God as an essential component of their development” (Watson, 2018:55). As supervisees navigate the many challenges involved in biblical counselling, supervisors have a wonderful opportunity to help supervisees apply their biblical knowledge to real-life problems. Furthermore, supervisors have an opportunity to pray with their supervisees, study Scripture together, and incorporate “spiritual formation practices from the Christian tradition into the supervision process with the aim of holistic formation of character” (Watson, 2018:58).

In these ways, the faith-filled and faithful supervisor can promote faithfulness in their supervisee.

5.3.4.2 Hope

Faith leads, naturally, to hope. Because of what God has done in and through Christ, those who have placed their faith in Him have hope. This hope consists of future anticipated blessings in God’s eschatological Kingdom, despite those future blessings being invisible at present. This invisible aspect of hope is captured poignantly by the apostle Paul when he writes that, “in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (Rom. 8:24-25).

Hope is essential in biblical counselling, argues Watson, because of the “challenges that disillusionment, cynicism and acedia” (2018:63) that can occur in the supervisee as a result of their counselling work. Acedia, commonly recognised as a synonym of laziness is actually, argues Watson (2018:65), an expression of despair:

The opposite of hope, according to classical and contemporary writers, is despair or acedia...it can manifest in sloth and laziness as well as overexertion to prove our significance – refusing to take a Sabbath, for example.

When hope has been lost, perhaps partly due to the exhaustion of counselling and the exposure to sin and suffering, the supervisee can start to experience despair. This despair can then lead to a variety of problems – some more overt and explicit, whilst some remain

covert and implicit. Either way, it will be necessary for the supervisor to remain sensitive to the dimension of hope, and seek to promote it in their supervisees.

How might the supervisor promote the virtue of hope in the supervisee? Watson (2018:74-76) advocates three areas of focus:

- Foster reliance on the Holy Spirit: the supervisor can do this by starting the supervision sessions with prayer, by exploring whether the supervisee is taking too much responsibility in the counselee's sanctification, and by reviewing Scripture's teaching regarding God's role in the process of renewal. This reliance points the supervisee back to the reality of God's Holy Spirit as the true agent of all genuine change.
- Connect vocational work to historic soul care: even though she is not a biblical counsellor, Watson recognises that professional Christian counselling is "part of a long history of pastoral care in the church" (2018:75). Making this connection enables supervisees to see how their counselling work dovetails with the work God is doing in the world through the person of the Lord Jesus. Reflecting on how God is using the counsellor to further His work can be an incredibly motivating and hope-infusing reality to meditate upon.
- Think developmentally: an awareness of the developmental nature of supervisee growth can also promote hope. This is because the developmental perspective normalises challenges and provides a positive expectation regarding future performance. The challenges, within a developmental perspective, do not overly discourage. And as "supervisees learn to sustain hope for their own progressive change process, they are better able to maintain a hopeful perspective on their client's growth" (Watson, 2018:70). As supervisee experience positive change, they may well gain a fresh sense of hope for their counselees.

5.3.4.3 Love

Love, as the greatest of the virtues, encompasses all of our duties as Christians (Mark 12:28-31). Without love, theological knowledge and pastoral skill will be insufficient for the task of genuinely Christian ministry.

Watson (2018:83) asserts that love ought to manifest in relational competence, and needs to permeate every aspect of the supervisory relationship. As a psychologist, Watson defines these relational competencies in technical, therapeutic terms: developing and maintaining a therapeutic alliance, showing empathy and respect, dealing with alliance ruptures, working

effectively with others, demonstrating reflexivity, and managing both transference and countertransference issues (2018:90). As a biblical counsellor, the researcher would argue that the manifestation of love could be more accurately described using biblical-theological terms. There is, however, value in exploring how love is expressed through relational competence and an ethic of care. Indeed, love would seek to express itself competently and ethically if it genuinely seeks the welfare of the beloved.

Watson argues that the best place for this virtue to be cultivated in supervisees is in the “interpersonal dynamics” of the supervision relationship itself (2018:91). Furthermore, Watson argues that if the relational competencies of the supervisees are to be accurately assessed, “it is important for supervision to occur as close to the actual clinical work of the supervisee as possible. Co-therapy, live supervision, and review of taped sessions are ideal methods for assessing and intervening in the development of relational skills” (2018:96). What the researcher finds insightful about Watson’s comment here is that the supervision methods that are often associated with developing competence are also relevant for the formation of character. Indeed, her observation reveals that something like relational skill is a synthesis of both character and competence.

It is, therefore, as the supervisor models love, and evaluates the quality of the supervisee’s love that this virtue is developed in the supervisee.

5.3.4.4 Practical wisdom

Practical wisdom is the first of the cardinal virtues that Watson delineates. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice: “The chief Christian moral theologians, e.g. St Ambrose, St Augustine, and St Thomas Aquinas, took over this classification from Plato and Aristotle” (Cross & Livingstone, 2005:289). Thus, while it is important to note that the original source of these virtues lies in Greek philosophy rather than Christian theology, the fact that they have remained in use – and, indeed, been incorporated into a Christian worldview through years of theological reflection – testifies to their value.

In this first chapter on the cardinal virtues, Watson defines wisdom—her word for ‘prudence’—as “knowing the right thing to do at the right time” (2018:103). Wisdom, the book of Proverbs teaches, is founded upon a fear of the Lord (Prov 1:7, 9:10) and is thus connected to vital faith in God. It is, therefore, inseparably related to the aforementioned virtues of faith, hope, and love. As was seen earlier in this project, wisdom refers to skill and thus affirms Watson’s definition of being something more than mere knowledge.

Speaking on the cardinal virtues in his Logos Mobile Education course, McCloskey (2018) asserts that “wisdom grasps the full context of a situation, both the circumstances and the people involved. Prudence recognises what’s actually happening as well as how individuals and groups are likely to interpret the situation and respond.” It is this knowledge of people and situations that helps the wise person know how to act.

Wisdom, as it is manifested in the realm of counselling, is both about competence as well as ethical decision-making (Watson, 2018:108). This finds corroboration in the book of Proverbs, where the wise person is also righteous (Prov 10:1-9). The wise counsellor values competence and ethical care, and the wise supervisor seeks to cultivate the virtue of practical wisdom in the supervisee.

How does the supervisor cultivate wisdom in the supervisee? One key way is to assess supervisee competence “through direct observation and review of video and audiotapes” (Watson, 2018:112). Again, it is worth noting the emphasis on these direct methods of supervision. Other avenues of promoting wisdom have to do with developing ethical awareness and discernment (Watson, 2018:118), which enables supervisees to apply their knowledge in the midst of complexities.

Therefore, in seeking to promote wisdom, supervisors will seek to observe the counselling of their supervisees as closely as possible, evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions provided, and also initiate discussions regarding the ethical questions raised in counselling.

5.3.4.5 Justice

The virtue of justice “involves development of habits related to fair and just treatment of others as individuals and in society” (Watson, 2018:121). In other words, this virtue speaks to the willingness to consider others – to take their concerns, needs, thoughts and emotions into account.

The New Testament word that captures this virtue is the word ‘righteousness’; described as a hallmark of the ‘fruit of the light’ in Ephesians 5:9. God’s people are to live righteous lives; to be righteous, in this sense, means to do what is right. Sometimes translated as justice, this word refers to the fact that God’s people do what is right by conforming to God’s ethical standard. Righteousness, when it describes behaviour, often refers to behaviour that seeks the wellbeing of the community (Milne, 1996:1020). The righteous person, then, has a sensitive social conscience as well as a sensitivity to what pleases the Lord (cf. Eph 5:10). An example of a righteous man in the New Testament is Simeon, who, in Luke 2:25, is

described as “righteous and devout.” Simeon’s example reflects the God-centred orientation of righteousness in Scripture.

Thus, the supervisor who seeks to promote righteousness and justice in the supervisee must be sensitive to ethics and spirituality. Again, as with previously mentioned virtues, it will be necessary to both observe the supervisee but also to model righteous behaviours within the dynamics of the supervisory relationship.

Particular issues that would provide areas for reflection and exploration would be ethnicity, socio-economic diversity, and partiality. By initiating these conversations, the supervisor invites the supervisee to reflect on their counselling through the lens of justice and righteousness. Or, to put it negatively, are there any aspects of unrighteousness or injustice which the supervisee would like to explore?

5.3.4.6 Temperance

Temperance “is the inner discipline of self-restraint. It’s the strength to say no to harmful drives, impulses, and the inordinate desire for comfort, self-interest, and pleasure” (McCloskey, 2018). According to Jones (quoted in Watson, 2018:144), temperance is “the discipline of oneself to live a more ordered life.” This virtue is captured well in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, where the apostle Paul writes:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

This passage captures well the ideas of self-control, discipline and even humility that are associated with the virtue of temperance.

Self-discipline is vitally important for the practice of biblical counselling. This is evident not only in the counselling sessions themselves but also when it comes to writing up session notes, counselling reports and the administrative tasks associated with a counselling ministry. These post-session tasks can seem tedious, and especially difficult when the biblical counsellor feels tired or is under time pressure. This makes the virtue of temperance crucial. Distraction, whether it be from constant phone use, internet browsing, or any other

source, can be a significant hindrance to the focus and attentiveness required in effective biblical counselling ministry.

Furthermore, there is an aspect of humility in this virtue of temperance. This humility highlights the self-awareness the supervisee should develop regarding how they are handling the pressures of their work. Part of this self-awareness involves recognising the vulnerability all biblical counsellors have towards both weakness and sin. Interestingly, in a study conducted by Paine, Sandage, Rupert, Devor and Bronstein (quoted in Watson, 2018:148), humility was proposed “as a potential protective factor against professional burnout, as humble and aware clinicians are more likely to recognise their limits and seek supervision and support.” Humility becomes a safeguard in that respect—enabling the supervisee to ask for needed help. This same openness is likely also to promote an attitude of ongoing learning and development, and so will be a valuable trait for both supervisors and supervisees alike.

Supervisors can explore this virtue by asking the supervisee about what self-control, self-discipline and self-care look like in their lives.

5.3.4.7 Courage

The Hebrew word for courage (*hāzaq*) means literally ‘to show oneself strong’, and this particular virtue is revealed through patient endurance, moral steadfastness, and spiritual fidelity (McDonald, 1996:234). The opposite of courage is cowardice, often revealed in a sinful unwillingness to challenge a person or the social environment due to fear. Cowardice is condemned in Scripture (Rev 21:8).

Why might this be an important virtue in biblical counselling? For at least two reasons.

Firstly, courage is essential because the supervisee may be failing to challenge the sinful behaviours of the counselee. This enables the counselee to continue living in a destructive and sinful manner. This, of course, undermines the very goal of biblical counselling, which seeks to foster renewal in people’s lives. When the supervisor discerns this counselling cowardice, they must encourage the supervisee to act courageously in exposing sinful behaviour. Although this might sound simple, the wise supervisor will, of course, seek to understand why the supervisee finds it difficult to challenge sinful behaviour.

Secondly, the Lord often uses a courageous rebuke to facilitate repentance. Moreover, repentance is often the gateway to spiritual renewal and blessing. Therefore, in order to seek the welfare and blessing of their counselee, a supervisee has to be willing to rebuke them.

We see this positive attitude towards correction, and the link between rebuke and blessing, clearly mentioned in Scripture. For example, consider Psalm 141:5, “Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head.” Similarly, Proverbs 27:5 says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love” and just one verse later, “Wounds from a friend can be trusted” (Prov 27:6). These verses provide compelling reasons for why rebukes can lead to blessing, and thus why courage will be necessary for both counselling and supervision.

Courage is valuable when the job of the counsellor and supervisor is to speak the truth. There may often be potentially negative consequences connected to speaking the truth, particularly when it transgresses contemporary ethical sensibilities. And yet, in a culture that is increasingly moving away from traditional Judeo-Christian values, courage will be an increasingly important virtue.

Supervisors could explore with supervisees areas where they are tempted to be cowardly, and identify areas where courage will be especially needed.

The character traits mentioned above, highlighted by Watson (2018), provide an additional character map. As was previously noted, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and yet the comprehensiveness of the virtues can aid the supervisor in assessing the characterological development of the supervisee.

However, whichever character map is ultimately selected, it must be remembered that the key questions that provide a focus on this dimension of supervision are ultimately very personal:

- Does my supervisor know my heart and soul—my hopes, fears, sins, and sorrows?
- Can I talk about my flaws, sins and weaknesses with my supervisor?
- Does my supervisor help me experience spiritual growth?
- Does my supervisor know how to apply the Gospel to me?

It is when a supervisee is able to explore these questions with their supervisor that the seeds for genuine characterological development will have been sown.

5.3.5 Community

This fourth dimension refers to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisee. The discerning BC supervisor will want to understand what these interpersonal dynamics look like – both in

the counselling sessions, but also more generally in the supervisee's life. This includes the supervisee's involvement in a local church and the nature of their relationships. The supervisee's interpersonal dynamics may reveal important insights related to their counselling. In fact, the supervisor is themselves part of this dimension—and they have the opportunity to play a generative role within this dimension (Johnson, 2007:262).

This 'community' dimension can be looked at in three areas: the interpersonal dynamics the supervisee has with his or her counselees, the interpersonal dynamics that characterise their other relationships, and the unfolding dynamic that exists between the supervisee and supervisor. Each will be briefly considered below.

5.3.5.1 The relationship between the biblical counsellor (supervisee) and their counselee.

What are the interpersonal dynamics that exist between the counsellor (supervisee) and their counselee? This relationship is co-created and thus something in which the counsellor is necessarily enmeshed. This enmeshment can make it harder for the supervisee to recognise some of the features of the relationship. Good supervision, therefore, can help the supervisee stand outside the counselling relationship and "see its pattern and dynamic" (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:93). The following questions, based on the work of Hawkins and Shohet (2012:93), may help the supervisee to reflect on this relationship in a more precise way:

- What did you notice about your initial reactions to this counselee?
- Tell me the history of this relationship—how did the counselee come to see you, why do you think they chose to meet with you, etc.
- Can you identify an image or metaphor that describes this relationship?
- Imagine being a fly on the wall in your last session; what would you have noticed about the relationship?

These questions, argue Hawkins and Shohet, are designed to help the supervisee reflect on the relationship as a whole rather than just from their perspective within it (2012:93). Ideally, this promotes discernment in the supervisee and helps them to re-enter that relationship with greater wisdom and perspective.

Furthermore, the supervisor can seek to discern these interpersonal dynamics even when the supervisee is merely presenting the counselee's struggles and the interventions used thus far. That is because the manner in which the supervisee conveys such data may reveal information germane to the nature of the relationship.

5.3.5.2 Other relationships in the life of the biblical counsellor (supervisee)

An important area for the supervisor to explore with their supervisee is the other relationships in the supervisee's life. What is the quality of these relationships? How would the supervisee describe them? What inter-personal dynamics characterise their relationships at home, in their church, and in their community?

One of the participants shared an insightful comment:

David Powlison once said... One of the marks of a mature biblical counsellor is someone who doesn't have discrepancies between who they are in the counselling room and who they are in the rest of their relationships—you know, with their friends, with their neighbour, with their family. They don't turn into somebody else when they're in that counselling room. There's an evenness, or a consistency I suppose, in the way that they live.

That insight reveals why it can be beneficial to get a sense of what the supervisee's other relationships are like. What patterns or dynamics characterise these relationships—with family, friends, and others at church? Are they domineering? Obsequious? Moreover, do any of these patterns correlate with any behaviours that have emerged in the counselling endeavour?

As Powlison remarked in the quotation above, the ideal situation is for there to be congruence – a mature biblical counsellor is the same across their relationships. The biblical value here is integrity. Regardless of the external pressures and temptations, the person with integrity acts consistently in an upright manner because of their unchanging internal values (Grenz & Smith, 2003:61). However, the supervisory relationship has to be a place where inconsistencies can be acknowledged, and the grace of the Gospel applied. Furthermore, it needs to be a place where ungodly—or even just unwise—relational patterns that are a feature of these relationships can be discussed.

This is another example of the value of the multidimensional model, because when the supervisee's relationships are evaluated, characterological issues may naturally come into focus. Character deficits that may have been concealed in more formal ministry contexts may be more evident in these other informal relationships. And so these insights enable the supervisor to explore the character dimension in more detail with their supervisee.

Furthermore, it is another reason why the grace of the Lord Jesus needs to be at the very centre of the praxis of supervision. Grace must be central because when characterological

issues or relational dynamics are explored under the lens of God's Word, there will invariably be a need for the supervisee to repent and access the grace of God.

5.3.5.3 The relationship between the biblical counsellor (supervisee) and the supervisor

It is widely agreed that the quality of the relationship between supervisee and supervisor is essential. Transformational supervision, Johnson argues (2007:263), occurs when the supervisory relationship is reciprocal, flexible, rooted in trust, and characterised by a cyclical process of mutual validation. Others have similarly highlighted the importance of a strong supervisory relationship. Watson (2018:48) writes:

Clinical supervision research supports the central importance of a secure, trusting supervisory relationship as the foundation for all supervision activities. A review by Watkins (2014a) of the last 50 years of theory and research on the supervision alliance concluded: "If there is a common, integrative factor in psychotherapy supervision of supreme significance, then the supervisory alliance would be it" (p. 159).

This supervisory alliance, then, is crucial. However, this raises the question: what factors need to be kept in mind when seeking to develop this relationship?

First, from Scripture, it is clear that the person in a senior or supervisory role should act as a role model. For example, in 2 Timothy 3:10-11, the apostle Paul says to the young pastor,

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.

The apostle Paul is reminding Timothy of his (Paul's) hardship because he wants Timothy to follow his example and join him in suffering for the Gospel (cf. 2 Tim 1:8). Paul endured such suffering and now calls Timothy to do the same. In 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul also exhorts Timothy to be a role model to those Timothy would provide pastoral oversight to: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

Scriptural references could be multiplied, but these references make the point. There is, interestingly, a similar view regarding the importance of modelling in the secular counselling literature. Writing about the nature of the supervisory relationship, Hawkins and Shohet (2012:98) argue that there needs to be congruence between what the supervisor asks the

supervisee to do and what the supervisor does: “the supervisor practices what he or she preaches.” Again, this importance of being a role model is seen.

Secondly, another factor to keep in mind regarding the relationship between supervisee and supervisor is how the supervisor *experiences* the supervisee. In secular literature, this phenomenon is described as ‘paralleling’ – whereby:

The processes at work currently in the relationship between client and supervisee are uncovered through how they are reflected in the relationship between supervisee and supervisor...in effect, I become my client and attempt to turn my supervisor into me as therapist (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:99).

Additional research suggests that this parallel process works the other way as well. Watson (2018:51) cites Bennet, who argued for the:

importance of “parallel process” in supervision: what happens in the supervisory relationship is often repeated in the supervisee’s relationships with their clients. Citing neurological research on “mirror neurons,” Bennet suggests that supervisees “mirror” their supervisor’s relational style in their relationship with clients.

It goes beyond the scope of this research project to evaluate the veracity and extent of this ‘paralleling’ phenomenon. Whilst the researcher has some scepticism regarding the way in which this bi-directional paralleling process is touted as a “universal phenomenon in treatment” (Doehrman, quoted in Hawkins & Shohet, 2012:100), there is undoubtedly some common sense and biblical evidence for how certain relationships can exert an imitative influence on other relationships.

An example of this would be how Timothy had imitated Paul’s way of life, and in that sense could reflect Paul’s way of life to the Corinthian church:

I urge you to imitate me. For this reason, I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church (1 Cor 4:16-17).

There is, of course, a difference between this type of godly imitation and the bi-directional paralleling described above. Nevertheless, there is also a similarity. Moreover, as mentioned above, the wise supervisor should pay attention to how he experiences his supervisee. For how the supervisor experiences his supervisee may have some correlation with how the counselee is experiencing the supervisee.

The 'paralleling' literature in this second point also reinforces the emphasis mentioned in the first point regarding the supervisor being a role model. Hawkins and Shohet argue that the supervisor should consciously act in such a way as to be a good role model for how the supervisee might choose to relate to his counselee (2012:100). Just as Paul influenced Timothy in a godly manner, so that Timothy could influence the Corinthians in a godly manner – so too should the biblical counselling supervisor seek to positively influence his supervisee, so that the supervisee could, in turn, positively influence his counselee.

The questions for the supervisor to consider here is: Am I modelling for my supervisee what I would like them to do for their counselee? Am I an example that they can imitate in such a way to be a blessing to their counselee?

The four supervision dimensions have now been explored. Having explored the four foci, the three different supervisory roles will now be considered.

5.3.6 Supervisor roles

The researcher appreciates the insight from Bernard's discrimination model regarding the different roles or approaches a supervisor may select. This awareness of different roles or approaches resonates intuitively, based on counselling experience. Additionally, as mentioned above, Bernard's model has enjoyed empirical support as well (Borders & Brown, 2005:16).

The different supervisory roles also provide a helpful reminder to supervisors that all supervisees are on a developmental journey, and different approaches may be needed at different stages of the journey. Arthur and Bernard make this connection between supervisor role and developmental stage when they write, "a supervisor working with a novice supervisee may use a teaching role with more frequency; yet, as the supervisee develops more skill and confidence, a consultation approach may be warranted" (2012:34).

Perhaps somewhat simplistically, it could be argued that initially, supervisees require teaching, and as time goes by they require more of a counselling approach until they eventually reach a level of maturity and development where they can act more as peers and thus become co-workers with their supervisors.

This link between development-and-role seems to be confirmed by Hawkins and Shohet when they write, "As a general rule, supervisees who are new to the work need to start with

most of the supervision focusing on the content of the work with the client and the detail of what happened in the session” (2012:107). Relating this to their seven-eyed model, Hawkins and Shohet then add, “As the supervisees become more sophisticated, then Modes 3,4, 5 and 6 [modes that focus on inter-personal and intra-personal dynamics] become more central to supervision” (2012:108). This link between the developmental stage and the supervisory role is also taught by Borders and Brown when they write, “At beginning levels, the need to take more of a teacher role will be clear...supervisees often arrive with a long list of specific questions” (2005:51). Thus, initially, the supervisor’s interventions will be primarily didactic and instructional. As the supervisee develops, however, “at the middle developmental levels, you will find your counselling skills to be quite useful, as your supervisees are becoming more aware of their reactions to clients” (Borders & Brown, 2005:51). At that developmental stage, the supervisor may switch roles to help their supervisee explore internal dynamics that may be influencing their counselling. Finally, “at the later developmental levels, you will be called to be more of a consultant with your supervisees...a major defining characteristic of your role at this level is the collegial, peer interaction” (Borders & Brown, 2005:52). These citations from other supervision theorists and practitioners positively affirm the link the researcher is suggesting might exist between the development of the supervisee and the role of the supervisor.

This movement from teacher-counsellor-co-worker paves the way, ultimately, towards peer-supervision.

The awareness of different supervisory roles further reminds supervisors that all supervisees may, at times, need to receive pastoral care and counsel. This is because supervisees also struggle with sin and suffering—and although the focus in supervision is not counselling, it is nevertheless a natural place where the sins and sorrows, fears and desires of the counsellor may be explored.

Furthermore, these different supervisory roles guide the supervisor regarding the developmental trajectory of their supervisees—ideally, every supervisee reaches a stage of developmental maturity where they are able to engage with their supervisor in a collegial manner.²⁰

Finally, the emphasis on three different supervisory roles prompts the supervisor to not just focus on what they are most comfortable with. The three roles highlight the different options available to them based on the needs of the supervisee at any given time.

²⁰ It is important, however, to note a distinction between developmental level and experience level. As Brown & Borders explain, “counselors with years of experience may be functioning at middle—or early—developmental levels, particularly if they have not had counseling supervision” (2005:51).

5.3.7 Teacher

According to Bernard, the teacher role is primarily about instruction. As a teacher, the supervisor provides guidance to the supervisee through instructing. This role is more directive and didactic. Correspondingly, this role highlights the importance of learning for the supervisee. “The teacher role is also utilised when the supervisor is giving feedback, suggesting an intervention, or otherwise assuming authority for the direction of the therapy” (Arthur & Bernard, 2012:34).

As Bernard’s model gets theologically transposed and synthesised with the four dimensions, it is worth noting something important. The instruction given in the teacher role does not merely refer to the supervisee’s content dimension but can also apply to the other three dimensions. As a teacher, the supervisor provides instruction to the supervisee regarding the development of counselling skills, helps the supervisee understand and grow in characterological maturity, and teaches the supervisee to notice – and respond to – interpersonal relational dynamics. The teaching role, like the other roles, can, therefore, be applied to any of the four supervision dimensions.

In Scripture, the term ‘teacher’ has an illustrious connotation. It was used as a title for the Lord Jesus (e.g., Matt 8:19), as well as for those who would eventually teach in an official capacity for the church (Acts 13:1, Jas 3:1). Within this multidimensional model, the term ‘teacher’ is not used in that technical or official sense such as it is used in Scripture. Instead, the term ‘teacher’ here refers to the emphasis on the instructional approach or role within the supervision relationship.

One final comment regarding the example of the teacher is worth mentioning. It was argued in 5.3.5 above that the supervisor ought to be a role model for the supervisee. The importance of modelling remains true as the different supervisor roles are considered. When it comes to the teacher role, it has to be remembered that, according to Ryken *et al.* (2000:843), “the ministry of Jesus shows that the character and quality of life of a teacher is as important as creativity and skill in using effective teaching methods.” Like counsellors and supervisors, bible teachers must also model multidimensional maturity.

5.3.8 Counsellor

Bernard’s counsellor role focused “on the supervisee’s internal reality and insights” (Arthur & Bernard, 2012:34). This focus on the supervisee’s psychodynamics conceptually resonates

with biblical counsellors because of the central importance of the heart (Prov 4:23). Biblical counselling supervisors realise that even though a supervisee might have high levels of competence and knowledge, there may be internal realities—beliefs, desires, and motives—that hinder effective praxis.

This particular role reminds us that the supervisor must also attend to these internal realities. Moreover, it is worth noting, again, that this role can apply to all four dimensions. For example, a supervisee may be struggling to ask thoughtful, open-ended questions with a particular counselee—an issue that would fall into the competence dimension. While the teacher role would focus on how to construct such questions, the counsellor role would explore why the supervisee might be finding this particular skill tricky with this particular counselee.

This role, therefore, enables the supervisor to explore the reasons behind the supervisee's behaviour. Instead of supervision simply being about imparting information (the teacher role), the counsellor role encourages the supervisor to go deeper into each of the four dimensions.

5.3.9 Co-Worker

In Bernard's model, the third role is known as the 'consultant role', and it is used by the supervisor to encourage the supervisees "to build upon their knowledge base and think through their own solutions to questions" (Arthur & Bernard, 2012:34). This role is markedly different from the teacher role, because while the teacher role has more authority vested in the teacher, with an emphasis on imparting information, in the consultant role the authority and knowledge tend to be more egalitarian. In other words, there is a shift from teacher-learner to worker and co-worker.

In translating Bernard's model theologically, the researcher decided to transpose this consultant role into a more theologically-informed 'co-worker' role.

In the New Testament, the word 'co-worker' (Gk: *synergos*) refers to someone who works together with someone else (Louw & Nida, 1996:42.44). Interestingly, Timothy is someone who both imitated Paul (see the reference to 1 Corinthians 4:16 above) and was considered a co-worker with Paul (Rom 16:21, 1 Thess 3:2, etc.). In fact, although he was an apostle, Paul considered several people to be his co-workers: Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16:3), Urbanus (Rom 16:9), Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Clement (Phil 4:3), Justus (Col 4:11), and Philemon (Phm 1) – along with Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke (Phm 24). All of these people, diverse in ethnicity and gender, are described as Paul's co-workers.

The word *synergos* refers to people working together cooperatively, much as we might use the word ‘colleague’ today (Liddell, 1996:774). The translation ring below, exported from Logos Bible Software, captures this emphasis well.

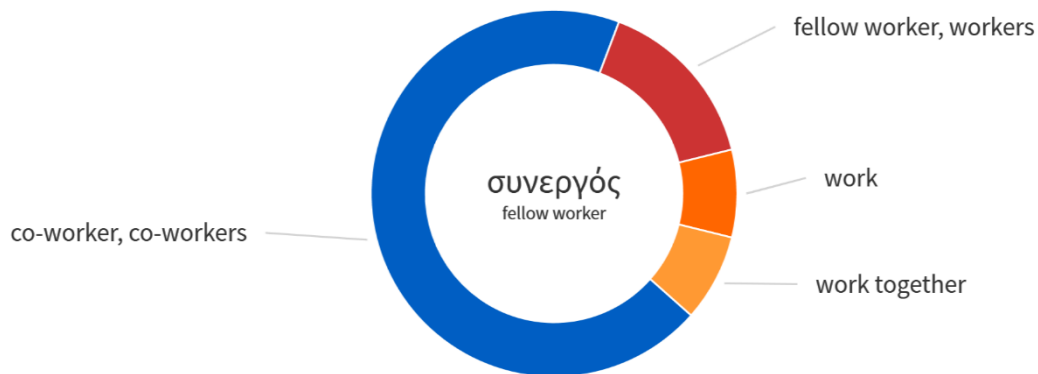


Figure 5.5: The NIV English translation of the Greek word *synergos*

This third supervisory role—that of a co-worker—seeks to faithfully embody an approach to supervision that is described by the term ‘co-worker’ as expressed in the New Testament. The mutuality, cooperation and collegiality of the term seek to describe the egalitarian approach emphasised in this role.

Therefore, the types of interactions that characterise this role would be things like brainstorming sessions, reviewing and discussing options, asking questions, bouncing ideas off one another, and considering multiple perspectives. This approach seeks to share the authority and highlight the agency of the supervisee. In this sense, it is an approach that can very naturally promote a culture of peer supervision. In the co-worker supervisory role, both the supervisor and supervisee work together.

5.4 Suggested supervision methods

When considering how to promote multidimensional development, a reflection on – and suggestion of – counselling methods is appropriate. As was mentioned under 5.1 above, this chapter also seeks to answer the subsidiary research question, which included a suggestion

regarding counselling supervision methods²¹ that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

It must be noted that it is likely that these methods will be shaped by contextual factors, such as the ministry policies of the church or para-church in which the supervisee/supervisor is based, the cultural factors, the economic resources, supervisory responsibilities, and so forth. The researcher is cognisant of the variables that influence the selection of supervision methods. Nevertheless, with an awareness of these contextual factors, what supervision methods might helpfully contribute towards multidimensional development?

Supervision methods typically include, among others, things like session reports, verbal summaries, video recordings, audio recordings, co-counselling and live observation. It may be helpful to see these methods as existing in two main categories: self-assessment or supervisor-assessment.

5.4.1 Self-assessment methods

Two common methods of supervisee self-assessment emerged in the descriptive-empirical research. These methods were written self-assessment or verbal self-assessment. In chapter 2, the researcher briefly commented on both methods and indicated the value of them. Each will be considered in further detail below.

5.4.1.1 Written self-assessment

The written self-assessment typically refers to something like a counselling session report. In the researcher's view, this method particularly promotes development in the content dimension. This content-focus is the result of writing out a session report: a written report can be an aid to the supervisee in how they are conceptualising the counselling case, and enables them to reflect on their selected interventions, as well as prepare for following sessions. In this sense, the session report connects with the model for biblical counselling that the counsellor is using – and enables them to reflect on how faithfully they are adhering to their professed theological model as the case progresses. A similar reflection can be made regarding their competence as they review the effectiveness of their skills mentioned under 5.3.3 above.

²¹ In some contexts, the term “supervision intervention” is used as a synonym for how the researcher is using the term supervision method (Borders & Brown, 2005:56).

It is thus recommended that supervisors request their supervisees to provide written self-assessments. The researcher is not mandating this, nor suggesting that they need to be an ongoing, continuing feature. However, in the researcher's opinion, written self-assessments can be especially beneficial at the beginning stages of a counsellor's development.

Reviewing such reports dovetails naturally with the supervisor's role as a teacher in this stage of counsellor development.

Indeed, specific organisations – such as ACBC – have session report templates that they require candidate members to use. While the ACBC form is helpful, there is no particular reason why supervisees cannot also create their own template (perhaps a template linked to an identified BC model).

5.4.1.2 Verbal self-assessment

A verbal self-assessment typically involves providing a verbal summary of the counselling session or case to the supervisor. "Self-report is both the most commonly used intervention (Borders & Usher, 1992; Goodyear & Nelson, 1997; Roberts & Borders, 1994)—likely due to its convenience—and the most criticised intervention" (Borders & Brown, 2005:56).

Firstly, it is helpful to start with a consideration of this method's usefulness. The verbal summary, in the researcher's opinion, is particularly useful in enabling the supervisor to assess the content, character, and community dimensions. This is because the supervisor can discern not only the content of what is being verbally summarised by the supervisee but also the tone and non-verbal cues that the supervisee may be displaying—issues that take the supervisor beyond the content dimension and into the character and community dimensions. It is in the verbal summary and discussion that the impact the counselee is having on the supervisee might become most clear and could be explored. Indeed, in the researcher's opinion, the paralleling phenomenon discussed under 5.3.5.3 above will be most easily discerned through the supervision method of verbal summary.

Speaking of the verbal summary method, one participant said that when the supervisee starts talking:

you pick up so much in the way that they present it to you... because they're telling me this is what's happening to the person [counselee]; I'm listening to how they tell me that and what happened. So there's the thing that happened when the counselling happened. That's one thread. But the other thread is how

they talk about what happened and how they interpret what happened. So it's kind of like the meta-conversation.

This participant's comment reveals the value of this method: not only does the supervisor receive the supervisee's conceptualisation of the case, but the supervisor also discerns how the supervisee is experiencing the counselee. Furthermore, the supervisor is possibly even getting a hint at the inter-personal relational dynamics involved.

Additionally, of all methods, this is the most convenient for both supervisor and supervisee as it requires little to no preparation. This convenience is perhaps why the verbal self-assessment remains ostensibly the method of choice for so many supervisors and supervisees.

The researcher affirms the value of this method and suggests its use in the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

5.4.1.3 The weakness of self-assessment methods

Whilst both of these self-assessment methods have value, they do, however, share the same significant weakness. That is, in both methods, the supervisor must rely exclusively on the reported data of the supervisee. This data, which comes to the supervisor through the interpretation of the supervisee, could be potentially misleading. The supervisee may neglect to mention essential relational dynamics or substantive content due to forgetfulness, ignorance regarding their significance, or embarrassment regarding a perceived failure in their counselling. "The supervisee can only report what he or she consciously heard and observed, through whatever biases and unconscious filters govern the supervisee's conscious awareness" (Borders & Brown, 2005:56).

Furthermore, in neither methods does the supervisor gain access to the actual communicative and inter-personal dynamics that took place. This is why it is often recommended that these self-assessment methods be used in conjunction with other supervision methods (Borders & Brown, 2005:57). That is because direct access to the actual work of the supervisee can only be granted through the supervisor assessment methods of recordings and observation. According to the *ACES Supervision Best Practices Guidelines* (2011:4), best practice involves a blend of self-assessment and direct observation:

the supervisor's feedback is based on direct observation of the client and the counseling session (e.g., live observation, audio or video recording) as well as the supervisee's self-report and analysis of the session.

It is to these supervisor-assessment methods of direct observation that we now turn.

5.4.2 Supervisor assessment methods

"Supervision best practices require a review of the supervisee's actual clinical work" (Watson, 2018:154). In view of this best practice approach, and in view of the weaknesses regarding self-assessment mentioned above, it is clear that a direct evaluation by the supervisor is essential. In fact, one of the reasons these methods are so important is because of the contrast they have with the self-assessment methods (Borders & Brown, 2005:57). Unlike the self-assessment methods, these methods provide the supervisor with direct access to the raw data of the supervisee's counselling.

The two primary direct supervisor assessment methods that emerged in the descriptive-empirical research consisted of recordings and live observation. Each will be considered, as well as the method of co-counselling.

5.4.2.1 Recordings

Many theorists and practitioners argue for the value of recordings: "Thoughtful use of audio or videotaped sessions in supervision is an essential practice for the development of an accurate assessment of the clinician's developing skills, abilities, and the impact of clinical interventions on the client" (Watson, 2018:154). Indeed, this practice is actually "ranked as one of the most preferred and valuable formats for supervision" (Goodyear & Nelson, quoted in Watson, 2018:154). The use of recordings can, therefore, be extremely valuable in enabling the supervisor to assess the supervisee accurately.

As mentioned, the two options are audio recordings or video recordings. The reasons influencing which to use will depend upon economic resources – for example, an audio-visual recording is much more resource-intensive – as well as therapeutic factors. In the researcher's view, an audio recorder, placed on a coffee table in the counselling office, is ideal because it is an unobtrusive manner of recording.

This raises the questions: how might recordings be wisely used in supervision sessions? Several aspects are worth commenting on, from securing permission for a recording onwards. The supervisor ought to keep the following in mind:²²

- Guide the supervisee on how to obtain informed consent regarding the recording.
- Ensure the supervisee knows how to use the technology accurately. Some advocate that it is important that the recording device does not have an internet connection. Others may disagree. However, what is essential is that the supervisee must ensure that the recording remains absolutely safe at all times. The handling of the data must correspond with what the counselee has provided informed consent for.
- Require supervisees to review their recording before supervision, and come to the supervision session with a self-assessment. Others advocate that both the recording and the self-assessment be delivered to the supervisor in advance.²³ It is helpful if the self-assessment includes what the supervisee had hoped to accomplish prior to the session, as well as whether the supervisee thought that those goals had been accomplished (Borders & Brown, 2005:53).
- Supervisors, having reviewed both the recording as well as the supervisee's self-assessment, can determine what issues need to be discussed in the supervision session. Importantly, the supervisor is noting observations and making comments about the supervisee rather than the counselee. Alternatively, supervisees can be asked to choose a segment of the recording that highlights a particular supervision goal or theme.²⁴
- Supervisors ought to keep in mind that "your supervisee can hear a maximum of three points during a supervision session" (Borders & Brown, 2005:53) and so care must be taken to make good choices, with a least one point related to the supervisee's developmental goals.
- Pause the recordings at appropriate places, so that the supervisor can explore the thoughts and reactions of the supervisee.

One of the things for the supervisor to consider after reviewing the supervisee's recordings is whether there is an apparent discrepancy between what the supervisee has been self-

²² The process below is a blend of steps from both Watson (2018:154-155) and Borders & Brown (2005:53-67).

²³ "In a typical scenario, you receive an audiotape or videotape of a counselling session and the supervisee's self-evaluation of the session several days before the supervision session is scheduled" (Borders & Brown, 2005:53).

²⁴ While focusing on a segment is helpful, the researcher recommends that a supervisor does listen to, or watch, full-session recordings as well.

reporting thus far and what the supervisor witnesses. These discrepancies could become a fertile ground for exploration, particularly in the character and competence dimensions.

5.4.2.2 Co-counselling

Co-counselling is another helpful supervision method, and it contains several additional benefits. In addition to observing the supervisee as they counsel a counselee, co-counselling provides a useful way to introduce supervisees gradually into the practice of counselling.

Co-counselling is, therefore, perhaps especially beneficial for counsellors-in-training or counsellors who are still in the early stages of their development.

The practice of co-counselling works in the following way:

- Supervisees join their supervisor in a session (informed consent is required from the counselee).
- Their initial goal is simply to observe and learn from the supervisor.
- Having observed the approach and interventions of their supervisor, supervisees may find it helpful to notice their own reactions to the counselee and their own thoughts on the interventions chosen by the supervisor.
- In time, the supervisee is invited to “gradually participate as they develop comfort and greater expertise” (Watson, 2018:155).
- As the supervisee counsels, the supervisor is then able to observe how they counsel directly.

The additional benefit of co-counselling is that after the session, the supervisor can model reflexivity for the supervisee. As the supervisor models how to evaluate the session, the reflexivity is not only taught; it is also caught by the supervisee.

Furthermore, the researcher thinks that co-counselling, when done well, can demystify the counselling process for the supervisee. As the supervisee sees the supervisor struggling to connect God’s Word wisely with the struggles of the counselee, the realities of how counselling ministry works are available for him to see. Furthermore, observing the supervisor counsel can also – in a helpful way – de-throne the supervisor as a counselling guru. The researcher thinks that this approach is very much in line with the biblical emphasis on discipleship and relationship.

In light of this research, the author would recommend co-counselling as a legitimate and helpful supervision method to consider.

5.4.2.3 Live observation

Live observation is “observing a session as it is happening” (Borders & Brown, 2005:64). Of course, live observation can be done in either direction. The supervisor can counsel, while the supervisee observes. Alternatively, the supervisee can counsel, while the supervisor observes. The difference between this and the co-counselling method is that the counselee is not shared among the supervisor and supervisee.

Live observation is the preferred method when the supervisor wants to gain a “more immediate and full view of the counsellor, client, their interactions, session dynamics, and feel of the session” (Borders & Brown, 2005:64).

Live observation may, therefore, like co-counselling, be especially helpful in the early stages of counsellor development when the supervisor wants as comprehensive and accurate a view of the supervisee as possible.

One participant strongly advocated for this live observation method. This is how they explained their experience and use of this method:

I would have the trainee sit in on sessions. That's the ideal way to do it. That's how I learned. They're just going to listen and observe and take notes. And so when the counselee is done and dismissed, we'll spend another 15-20 minutes together talking about that session: "Did you see how I did this? Did you notice how the counselee responded to that? What could have been a better question?" You know, I learn things from them as well. "What do you think about the direction I went with that? What other questions do we need to ask this counselee?" So we're going to spend 15-20 minutes discussing the session together.

Live observation can work very well when used with an awareness of what the supervision goals are. It might be tempting, having observed a supervisee counselling, to provide multiple points of correction and feedback.

However, in all likelihood, this would overwhelm the supervisee. Instead, upon careful reflection, the supervisor could discern carefully which specific feedback would be most germane—particularly in light of the supervisee's development as well as the agreed-upon supervision goals.

In addition to the previously mentioned methods, live observation provides the supervisor with an excellent means of assessing the counselling competencies and characterological maturity of the supervisee.

5.5 Summary

A model for promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor has been presented as the final outcome of the research project. This multidimensional model has been presented with four supervision dimensions and three supervisory roles. Each supervision dimension consists of sub-divisions, and the researcher has suggested specific sub-divisions that supervisors can use when seeking to promote the development of supervisees.

Furthermore, in addition to the model, five supervision methods have been suggested, consisting of a blend between self-assessment and supervisor assessment.

The model, incorporating the sub-divisions, can be visualised in the following diagram:

4x3 Matrix	Supervisor's Role		
Supervision Foci (Dimensions)	Teacher	Counsellor	Co-worker
Content • Theology • BC Model • Specific Issues			
Competence • Attending skills • Teaching skills • Confronting skills • Application skills			
Character			

• Faith • Hope • Love • Wisdom • Justice • Temperance • Courage			
Community • Supervisee & counselee • Supervisee & others • Supervisee & supervisor			

Figure 5.6: The multidimensional model – the dimensions and roles along with their sub-categories

These dimensions and roles can be summarised as follows:

a. The supervision dimensions

- **Content:** supervisors seek to evaluate and promote growth in the realm of theological and biblical counselling knowledge. Particular areas of focus include theology, biblical counselling models, and rightly conceptualising specific issues. The supervisor wants to assess whether the supervisee is thinking biblically.
- **Competence:** supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the development of biblical counselling skills and interventions. Particular skills that supervisors must seek to promote in supervisees consist of attending skills, teaching skills, confronting skills, and application skills. These skills enable the supervisee to become an effective biblical counsellor. The supervisor wants to assess whether the supervisee is practising skillfully.
- **Character:** supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the spiritual and moral formation of the supervisee by being attentive to internal realities. Among a

variety of legitimate character maps, the researcher decided to focus on the classical theological and cardinal virtues of faith, hope, love, wisdom, justice, temperance and courage. The supervisor wants to assess whether the supervisee is growing characterologically.

- Community: supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the quality of the supervisees inter-personal relationships. In addition to being attentive to the supervisee's relationships generally, the researcher suggests a particular focus on the relationship dynamics that exists between the supervisee, the counselee, and the supervisor. The supervisor wants to assess whether the supervisee is healthily relating to others.

b. The supervisory roles

- Teacher: this role, especially relevant for novice biblical counsellors, focuses on providing instruction and tends towards being more directive.
- Counsellor: this role focuses more on the intra-personal and inter-personal dynamics of the supervisee. This is also more of a focus for supervisees who have become more comfortable and competent with regards case conceptualisation and effective intervention skills. It thus may follow, developmentally, from the teacher role.
- Co-worker: this role emphasises the agency of the supervisee, and works to develop a relationship of mutuality and collegiality between the supervisor and supervisee. In this role, the supervisor tries to help the supervisee generate their own solutions. Because of this, the researcher suggests that the co-worker role be adopted after sufficient supervisee development. Of all the roles, it comes last in terms of supervisee development.

c. The supervision methods

- Self-assessment methods. These methods are the most popular, and the researcher affirms the value of both verbal and written self-assessments. However, supervisors need to be aware of the weaknesses of these methods.
- Supervisor assessment methods. The recommended methods include recordings, co-counselling, and live observation. The researcher recommends the value of each, but the discerning supervisor should know which to use when—a decision that will be shaped by various factors

Thus the multidimensional model provides the supervisor with a matrix of options. It helps the supervisor to take note of the relevant supervision foci, as well as the possible supervision approaches.

For example, the supervisor could decide to focus on the character dimension in the counsellor role. The next supervision session, the supervisor could focus on the content dimension with a teacher focus. And in the third session, the supervisor could focus on the competence dimension with a co-worker approach. Whilst, for supervisee developmental reasons, a supervisor may stay in the same role for a while, the model does envisage the supervisor having the freedom to focus on different roles as the needs of the supervisee necessitate it.

Therefore, the multidimensional model seeks to provide both guidance but also offer flexibility. By highlighting the four dimensions of supervision focus, as well as the three supervisory role options, it guides the supervisor—reminding them to focus on the whole picture as time goes by. This is an antidote to overly narrow supervision, where only one dimension or role is used. Nevertheless, with twelve choice-points, it leaves enough flexibility for the supervisor to be responsive to the needs of the supervisee in any given session.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has conducted the pragmatic task of considering how to respond to the main research question (see 1.6.1): What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

The Multidimensional Model was designed as an action plan for equipping biblical counselling supervisors as they sought to develop biblical counsellors in a multidimensional manner. It was based on research conducted in the earlier chapters and tasks and provided both a theological and practical foundation for multidimensional biblical counselling supervision.

The ultimate aim of the multidimensional model is to stimulate genuine renewal in biblical counselling supervision practices.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

The primary research question of this study was: What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

Secondary research questions, emerging out of this primary research question, were also asked. These subsidiary questions were:

- What supervision methods, models, and activities are currently being practised to promote multidimensional counsellor development?
- Why are these methods, models, and activities being used?
- What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?
- What counselling supervision model can be proposed, and what counselling supervision methods can be suggested, that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors?

The research aim of this study was to develop a multifaceted BC supervision model with the goal of promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors.

The objectives were, therefore, the following:

- To identify the major supervision methods, models and activities that are currently being used to develop biblical counsellors. This objective drew on the descriptive-empirical task and was achieved in chapter two of the current study.
- To understand why these different BC supervision methods/models are being used. This objective was achieved through the interpretive task in chapter three.
- To ascertain the relevant biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development. This objective, rooted in the normative task, was achieved in chapter four of the research project.
- To propose a new BC supervision model, which would include suggested supervision methods, which effectively promotes the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. This objective, the culmination of the project, was achieved in chapter five.

Furthermore, the central theoretical argument of this study was that proposing a new multidimensional BC supervision model could assist BC supervisors in promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. These research questions were identified and articulated in Chapter 1, along with several other elements related to research design.

This concluding sixth chapter seeks to do three things:

- Provide an overview of how chapters 2-5 (and corresponding practical-theological tasks) interacted hermeneutically to result in the formulation of a proposed BC supervision model.
- Provide a reflection from the researcher about his role and experience of this process.
- Present some recommendations for using the model. These recommendations will provide users of the model with guidance. Additionally, this chapter will provide recommendations regarding possible further research.

6.2 Overview of the research methodology: Osmer's hermeneutical interaction

6.2.1 Osmer's model

Throughout this research project, Osmer's practical theology model (2008:11) has been followed. Osmer's model consists of four tasks, each of them connected to a chapter of the research project. Each task has sought to answer a question that then led to another, therefore facilitating a sequential and logical movement through the four hermeneutical tasks.

The four questions and their associated tasks were the following:

- What is going on? This question was answered by the descriptive-empirical task. This task involves paying careful attention to the situations, contexts and lived theology (Ward, 2017:64) of the research participants. Osmer wonderfully describes this as "priestly listening" (2008:35).
- Why is this going on? This question was answered by the interpretive task. This task seeks to discern why things are happening the way they are. Osmer describes this as "sagely wisdom" (2008:81). It involves interpreting why the present situation exists by drawing on history, theology and the social sciences.

- What ought to be going? This question is answered by the normative task. In this project, in which the researcher has a reformed metatheoretical orientation, the Bible is seen as the normative standard. The Bible, therefore, engages with the normative task directly. Scripture provides the basis for assessment and for determining what renewal in praxis looks like. Osmer describes this task as one of “prophetic discernment” (2008:129).
- How might we respond? This is answered by the pragmatic task. This task takes all of the previous tasks into account in order to propose models or strategies of action. Osmer describes this task as one of “servant leadership” (2008:175). This task ultimately seeks to promote renewal in the life and ministry of the church.

The four tasks of Osmer’s practical theological method (2008:11) are represented in Figure 6.1 below. While the tasks are represented sequentially and logically, there has also been reciprocity between them as the research has unfolded. The researcher has found this interaction helpful, as new data gleaned from a task provides potentially new insights into other tasks. Indeed, Osmer’s suggests that this is ideal, for “Practical theological interpretation often circles back like a spiral as insights emerge.” (2008:11).

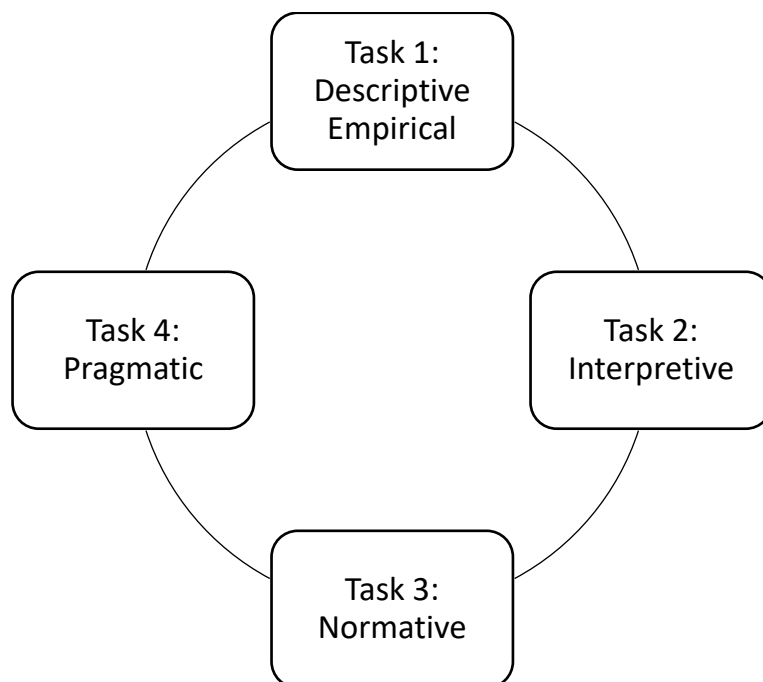


Figure 6.1: Osmer’s (2008:4) Four Tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation

6.2.2 Summary of chapters 2-5

The structure of chapters 2-5 followed the four tasks of practical theological interpretation. Each task was dedicated to a chapter, although there was—inevitably—some overlap and synergy between the sections. A summary of each chapter will be provided below.

6.2.2.1 Chapter 2: The descriptive-empirical task

The descriptive-empirical task sought to answer the first subsidiary research question. This first question was: what supervision methods, models, and activities are currently being practised to promote multidimensional counsellor development?

The objective of this chapter was to identify the supervision methods, models and activities that are currently being used in supervision. This chapter was divided into three sections: research design, research results, and research headlines.

The first was the research design of the project: the purpose of the project, the strategy of inquiry, the research plan, and the issue of reflexivity were all discussed. Importantly, the researcher explained why a pragmatic qualitative approach was selected.

The second section of the chapter focused on the research results. These consisted of two components: qualitative data from supervisees (obtained through an extensive questionnaire via Google Forms) and qualitative data from supervisors (obtained through semi-structured interviews). The results from the Google Forms were highlighted through visual data displays, and the results from the interviews were, through a process of coding, placed into themes. When coded, the data from the interviewees yielded four themes and twelve sub-themes.

Table 6.2 provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes:

Themes	Sub-themes
The nature of supervision	• Accountability • Discipling • Mutuality • Experience
The practice of supervision	• Methods • Focus • Frequency

The challenges of supervision	• Model • Resources and logistics • Distance
The importance of supervision	• Quality • Care

Table 6.2: The themes and sub-themes of the descriptive-empirical research

The third section of the chapter focused on the research headlines. Research headlines refer to particularly relevant issues that emerge because of the research question and qualitative data (Saldaña, 2013:257).

The research headlines that emerged from the descriptive-empirical task were:

- No widely known biblical counselling supervision model exists or is being used.
- The practice of biblical counselling supervision differs widely but tends to focus on Content and Competence (that is, it is rarely multidimensional).
- Biblical counselling supervision is considered by participants to be important.

The chapter concluded by noting that it would be essential to understand why biblical counselling supervision was underdeveloped—which, of course, was the task of the following chapter.

6.2.2.2 Chapter 3: The interpretive task

Chapter 3 sought to explain why biblical counselling supervision is currently being practised in the way that it is. This task, therefore, moves from the question of what is going on? To the question: why is this going on? In other words, this chapter attempted to answer the subsidiary research question: Why are these methods, models, and activities being used?

It was, in other words, seeking to understand some of the reasons behind the data captured by the research headlines. The answer was a result of research in areas of church history, especially with a focus on the history of the BCM, as well as a survey of the secular field of supervision, and a brief reflection on theological themes.

The researcher sought to remember that “wise interpretation is deeply contextual” (Osmer, 2008:96). The chapter, therefore, tried to explain the lack of development regarding biblical counselling supervision under three primary factors: historical factors, logistical factors, and

theological factors. These three categories, taken together, provide insight into the current underdeveloped state of biblical counselling supervision theory and praxis.

Historical factors considered, firstly, how the care and cure of souls was traditionally the domain of the clergy (and not the laity). This meant that pastoral care was rarely delegated to the laity, which also meant that the laity required no pastoral care supervision. This lack of delegation is one historical reason why there has been minimal theological reflection on biblical counselling supervision. Additionally, the modern psychology movement displaced soul care from the realm of the church to the realm of the trained psychotherapist. This displacement is a second historical reason there are underdeveloped theory and practice regarding biblical counselling supervision. Finally, the fact that the BCM was an anti-psychiatry movement meant that it developed amid an apologetic battle with the prevailing psychologised secular psychological culture. What's more, the BCM had an ongoing debate with the evangelical psychotherapists, who played a key role in psychologising the mainstream evangelical movement. This was a debate that, institutionally at least, the BCM lost—with significant institutional implications. Far less resourced than its evangelical neighbour, the BCM has not been able to direct its energies towards the development of literature in the area of biblical counselling supervision.

Logistical factors impacted both the micro-level and the macro-level. Macro-level challenges include the lack of financing, the lack of sufficient education and supervision opportunities, as well as the fact that there are no routinised career tracks yet available to would-be biblical counsellors. Micro-level challenges correlate with these macro-level challenges in some way. The key issues that emerged from the data were: time and busyness, geography, skills and training, money, and the challenge of e-supervision. Together, these challenges pose a significant obstacle to the development of supervision theory and practice.

Theological factors comprised the third category in the interpretive task. Critical issues here had to do with the nature of the pastoral office—for the Scripture does teach that the pastor is the one responsible for the care and cure of souls. The nature of the church was also considered, with a focus on 1 Corinthians 1-2. In the providence of God, He has chosen to use the 'weak' and 'foolish' things of the world to shame the 'strong' and 'wise.' This, of course, has practical implications, both financially and institutionally. Finally, the nature of biblical counselling supervision was also reflected on theologically, and it was acknowledged that the supervision need not be formal to be effective. And yet this lack of required formality may also be a factor in preventing further work from being done on it.

In summary, in engaging in the interpretive task, the researcher drew on church history, descriptive-empirical data, secular literature and theological truth. This multidisciplinary

approach, it is believed, provides a more nuanced answer that is sufficiently aware of the various contextual factors behind the issue being investigated. Specifically, it provided a deeper understanding of why the current methods, models and activities are being used in biblical counselling supervision.

6.2.2.3 Chapter 4: The normative task

Chapter four was dedicated to the normative task, which consisted in answer the following subsidiary research question: What are the biblical principles regarding BC supervision that can be used to promote multidimensional development?

This question was answered—through biblical exegesis—in the following syllogistic proposition:

- d) BC supervision is a form of discipleship.
- e) Discipleship is multidimensional.
- f) BC supervision, therefore, ought to be multidimensional.

The chapter followed the logical flow of this syllogism.

First, it was noted that both supervision and discipleship are developmental relationships. Indeed, it was argued there that supervision within the biblical counselling endeavour ought to facilitate discipleship. This view, already attested to in the previous chapters, was also seen to have normative validity. Thus, the first premise of the syllogism was noted.

Secondly, various passages from both the Old and New Testament were then examined regarding the second premise—namely, to see if discipleship could rightly be described as multidimensional. The four dimensions, as articulated by Kellemen (2011:179-200; 2015:77-94), are character, content, competence and community. The survey of biblical data revealed that discipleship is consistently understood as a developmental and multidimensional relationship. A variety of texts, from a variety of genres, from both Testaments, all reinforced a multidimensional perspective.

At this point, the following principles regarding discipleship became clear: discipleship is—

- Relational
- Developmental
- Multidimensional (the biblical data affirms Kellemen's 4C paradigm)

The third and final aspect of the syllogism is its conclusion: the convictions regarding this view of relational, developmental and multidimensional discipleship have implications for

how we think about BC supervision. Specifically, a multidimensional understanding of discipleship should lead us towards a multidimensional understanding – and praxis – of supervision.

The normative study in chapter four of this research project provided a normative framework for biblical counselling supervision. Having answered the normative question by ascertaining the relevant biblical principles, the project was then able to propose a practical and theological model for biblical counselling supervision.

6.2.2.4 Chapter 5: The pragmatic task

Chapter five presented the culmination of the research by proposing a practical and theological model for biblical counselling supervision. This chapter, which addressed the pragmatic task, moved from the normative question to the practical question, how might we respond? The objective of the chapter was, therefore, to propose a model that could to promote renewal and improvement in the practice of biblical counselling supervision.

This model aimed to answer the primary research question: What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

This model was developed in view of the previous tasks. The logic of the research project is thus: if BC supervision is currently focused primarily on two dimensions for historical, logistical and theological reasons, and if Scripture mandates a multidimensional approach, then what BC supervision model might be employed to improve current BC supervision praxis?

Additionally, this chapter also sought to answer the subsidiary research question: What counselling supervision model can be proposed, and what counselling supervision methods can be suggested, that effectively promote the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors?

The MULTIDIMENSIONAL model was proposed, and figure 6.3 presents the model visually below.

4x3 Matrix	Supervisor's Role		
Supervision Foci (Dimensions)	Teacher	Counsellor	Co-worker

Content			
Competence			
Character			
Community			

Table 6.3: The multidimensional model

The multidimensional model was developed through the integration of the data gleaned throughout the research project. Empirical research, supervision literature, church history, biblical counselling literature and theological exegesis were brought together—with Scripture exercising normative control—in producing this model.

Chapter five presented the model in detail, with each dimension receiving an explanation, as well as each role. Importantly, it was said that the supervisor ought to collaborate with the supervisee in setting goals with the supervisee in each dimension. These dimensions and roles are summarised briefly below:

The Supervision Dimensions

- Content: supervisors seek to evaluate and promote growth in the realm of theological and biblical counselling knowledge.
- Competence: supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the development of biblical counselling skills and interventions.
- Character: supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the spiritual and moral formation of the supervisee by being attentive to internal realities.
- Community: supervisors seek to evaluate and promote the quality of the supervisees inter-personal relationships.

The Supervisory Roles

- Teacher: this supervisory role focuses on providing instruction to the supervisee and tends towards being more directive.
- Counsellor: this role focuses more on the intra-personal and inter-personal dynamics of the supervisee.

- Co-worker: this role emphasises the agency of the supervisee, and works to develop a relationship of mutuality and collegiality between the supervisor and supervisee. In this role, the supervisor tries to help the supervisee generate their own solutions. Like the counsellor role, this role is less directive than the teacher role.

Furthermore, chapter five also suggested several supervision methods that may prove useful in promoting multidimensional supervision. Self-assessment methods consist of either verbal or written self-assessments, potentially with the aid of a template. Supervisor assessment methods include recordings, co-counselling and live observation.

It was recommended there that these methods are used with an awareness of the supervision goals, which help guide the feedback from the supervisor to the supervisee.

6.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity plays an essential role in both research design and research integrity. In Osmer's model (2008:57), reflexivity involves the researcher's self-awareness and personal reflection on the project.

Throughout the project, I have tried to keep this in mind as I have designed the project, gleaned the data, and presented the model. Furthermore, I acknowledge that—as both a supervisee and a supervisor—I am deeply invested in the task of biblical counselling supervision. I have been involved in biblical counselling ministry for almost a decade, and am committed to promoting it in South Africa and beyond.

As I reflect on the past three years of working on this project, the primary reflections that come to mind are the value of priestly listening, the challenge of renewal and the importance of conservatism, the value of a practical theological model, and God's desire for a hidden church. Each will be considered briefly below.

6.3.1 Priestly listening

One of the biggest things I have appreciated about this research project has been reflecting on—and try to practise!—what Osmer describes as “priestly listening” (2008:35). This is about the quality of attentiveness we give to others. And by attending, Osmer means “relating to others with openness, attentiveness, and prayerfulness” (2008:34).

Firstly, I appreciated this as a counsellor. In my biblical counselling ministry, this is a form of spirituality that I seek to practise with my counselees. I thoroughly appreciated how this same attitude should not only describe the biblical counsellor but could also describe the practical theologian. Nevertheless, whilst I appreciated it, I also found it challenging. Am I sufficiently prayerful? Am I sufficiently open when gathering data? Am I willing to understand this person in their unique otherness? I found these evaluative questions searching my heart and mind as I worked on the descriptive-empirical task.

Secondly, and following on from this, I found the attitude of openness very helpful in the descriptive-empirical task, in the actual gathering of the data. Instead of trying to correct or teach or console the participant, this reminder of priestly listening made it easier for me to get to know and understand the participants “in all their uniqueness and otherness” (2008:34).

Finally, I appreciated the emphasis on prayer. Perhaps practical theologians are especially prone to wanting to leap into action and renew the church. Osmer’s model is extremely helpful in combating a purely pragmatic approach because he grounds the first task, that of descriptive-empirical research, “in a spirituality of presence” (2008:34). Furthermore, my conception regarding the role of prayer was further deepened when I read Pete Ward, who argued that “faith seeking understanding offers a theological framework for doing practical theology” (2017:28). This challenged me and helped me to change my attitude to the research project as a whole—was I open to God teaching me in this? Was I seeking to understand through being prayerfully attentive?

Ward’s words have been personally meaningful as he reflects on the nature of practical theology. Doing practical theology, Ward (2017:34-35) argues, is fundamentally about having an orientation towards God:

Faith seeking understanding suggests that practical theology is best seen as a deep and enduring spiritual practice. The basis for seeking lies not primarily in theological method, although this will have its place, nor does it lie in particular forms of reason or theory, though these also will have a place; rather, it lies in an orientation toward God.

Ward’s emphasis on prayer strengthened and developed Osmer’s view on priestly listening. I found this helpful – and helpfully challenging – throughout the project. Combining their insights, I realised that priestly listening must emerge out of faith seeking understanding. The quality of my attentiveness to my participants is influenced by my orientation towards God.

6.3.2 The challenge of renewal and the importance of conservatism

The second concept that I became aware of in the process was the tension between renewal and conservatism, indeed between the challenge of renewal and the importance of conservatism.

The challenge of renewal is precisely this: will the suggested interventions and strategies proposed by the practical theologian actually foster genuine renewal? That is, will they be sufficiently cognizant of both the situational challenges and the theological principles? Or will the suggested interventions and strategies unwittingly make things worse? Will the suggested strategies of action produce positive outcomes? It is not apparent that just because someone wants to change something, or propose a model, that the suggestion will be a good one. Suggesting strategies of action must be done with humility, and with an awareness of how these strategies could have negative consequences. Promoting renewal in the life and ministry of the church is far harder than one realises. Many people want to change the world and make it better, not many succeed. Achieving genuine renewal is complicated and challenging.

Contrastingly, the importance of conservatism is this: things are currently the way they are for a reason. It has been said that traditions can be thought of as solutions to problems.

“Conservatism starts from a sentiment that all mature people can readily share: the sentiment that good things are easily destroyed but not easily created.” (Scruton, 2014:viii).

Conservatism should caution the practical theologian. The practical theologian may say that they want to improve things, but before any large-scale changes are made, the practical theologian needs to understand why they are the way they are. Furthermore, the practical theologian, being deeply aware of the contextual realities of phenomena, needs to attempt to perceive what else might be impacted by proposed changes. Because God gives His people wisdom, it must be assumed that there is some wisdom in the current *status quo*. Traditions, practices, lived theologies, etc. all exist for a reason – even if those reasons have not hitherto been adequately articulated. There is, therefore, a value in conserving the useful elements already present in the life and ministry of the church. There is value in conservatism. As the research project has unfolded, I have become more persuaded of that than I had been previously.

These two realities – the challenge of renewal and the value of conservatism – became genuine tensions within my heart and mind throughout this research project.

6.3.3 The value of a practical theological model

The third aspect I became aware of as it relates to my personal reflexivity is how valuable a practical theological model can be. While affirming Ward's comment above that the theological method is an insufficient ground for practical theology, a method can be enormously helpful in the systematic execution of a given practical theology project.

Osmer's four-part method has been useful in providing a structure for the research project. Indeed, as the research project unfolded, I become increasingly grateful for how Osmer suggests the four tasks of practical theology be pursued. They have provided both sequential and logical steps to follow, and thus provided coherence and a structure to the project. I am planning on using this model for future projects.

6.3.4 God's desire for a 'hidden' church

The fourth component in my reflection has been God's deliberate intention for a church that is weak and foolish. This issue was explored in 3.5.2.1. In 1 Corinthians 1-2, we learn that God has chosen to have his church comprised of the weak and the foolish. God's gospel and God's church is, by design, unimpressive to the world. This certainly has implications the practical theologian needs to wrestle with. For example, one implication could be that the church will never be able to compete with the resources available in the secular culture. For biblical counsellors, this means that there is every chance that – compared to psychologists and secular counsellors – they will feel inadequate. In comparison with the professional mental health field, the entire field of biblical counselling may feel inadequate. And yet apparent weakness and folly are not a problem – for God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world to shame the strong (cf. 1 Cor 1:27).

The lingering question for the biblical counsellor and the biblical counselling supervisor is: can we be content with this?

6.4 Recommendations and further research

This research has proposed the MULTIDIMENSIONAL model for promoting the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. What follows are recommendations relating to how the model might be best used (with a few warnings on how *not* to use it), as well as recommendations for areas of potential further research.

6.4.1 Recommendations for using the model

What recommendations might prove useful as this model is deployed in churches and para-church agencies? The following recommendations are offered to biblical counselling supervisors who would seek to use the multidimensional model in their practice of biblical counselling.

6.4.1.1 Subordinate the model to various higher goals

The first recommendation is to keep in mind that the model is simply that—a model. It must always be subordinated to various higher goals. These include such things as the supervisee's particular need of the moment, an emphasis of a biblical truth the supervisor discerns is necessary, or any other number of exigencies that may arise in the source of biblical counselling supervision ministry. Powlison (2017:33), writing about sanctification, made a point that fits well with how this model can be used:

Ministry 'unbalances' truth for the sake of relevance; theology 'rebalances' truth for the sake of comprehensiveness. Put another way, because you can only say one thing at a time, a timely word must be a selective word focusing on the need of the moment. And this selective focus produces a kind of imbalance. But stepping back from the need of the moment, many things can be said, and this larger theological picture helps us maintain balance.

In this sense, the model can be used to maintain balance and comprehensiveness. The model helps the supervisor keep the multidimensional picture in view. However, it must not override the value of a timely word from the supervisor to the supervisee that focuses on the need of the moment. Both comprehensiveness and relevance are essential in supervision ministry.

Thus, the model must be used with humility and wisdom. It aims to help and guide the supervisor; it does not seek to control or dictate the supervisory relationship. It is certainly not intended to be used in a rigid, authoritarian manner.

6.4.1.2 Maintain the tension between guidance and flexibility

In light of the previous comments, the researcher recommends maintaining a healthy tension in the use of this model. On the one hand, the model provides guidance—the empirical research suggested that many supervisors do not have a multidimensional focus. This model, therefore, aims to help supervisors think in a more multidimensional manner.

Supervisors are going to be stretched as they explore supervision foci that they may have heretofore ignored. In fact, supervisors may need to make a particular effort to focus on dimensions that are typically uncomfortable with. On the other hand, supervisors must, of course, remain flexible so that they can respond to the emergent needs of their supervisees.

There may be a temptation to resolve this tension, but the recommendation is, perhaps counterintuitively, to maintain it. As mentioned above, as in sanctification so too in discipleship: there is value both in relevance that is flexible and in a comprehensiveness that provides guidance. The researcher thinks that there is something healthy in maintaining the tension between guidance and flexibility. It is a tension to be maintained rather than resolved.

6.4.1.3 Respond to the supervisee in the moment but keep long term goals in view

Building off the previous recommendations, this one encourages both spontaneity and long-term planning. There is enormous value in responding in the moment to the expressed needs of the supervisee. In certain situations, this is precisely the right thing to do as supervisees may enter supervision sessions feeling burdened or overwhelmed. In biblical counselling ministry, crises do emerge, and the wise supervisor will respond to the supervisee who is in the midst of a pastoral crisis.

However, by using the goal-setting version of the multidimensional model, the supervisor can also keep the supervisees longer-term goals in view. Keeping longer-term goals in view enables the supervisor to promote multidimensional development, rather than merely responding to the crises or focusing on what the supervisor feels comfortable with. In other words, it prevents the supervisor from being overly reactive and overly complacent. It ensures comprehensiveness, rigour and balance over the long-term. In this way, the model helps promote multidimensional development.

6.4.1.4 Develop goals early and collaboratively

It is also recommended that the supervisor works with the supervisee early on in the supervision process in determining goals. For assistance with this, the goal-setting version of the model has been created: *the biblical counselling supervision development planner*. This document enables the supervisor and supervisee to identify goals in each dimension, as well as a date by which each goal seeks to be met.

As in counselling, so too in supervision: it is wise to develop these goals collaboratively. Collaborative planning increases the supervisee's sense of ownership in pursuing the identified goals. Collaboration is also valuable for other reasons, too. For example, many goals are too vague or overly ambitious—the supervisor can assist the supervisee in identifying specific and realistic goals.

The setting of goals needs to be accompanied by identifiable and realistic action steps and supported through monitoring and assessment.

Doing this with a supervisee can bring focus and momentum to the supervision experience. For too many supervisees, supervision seems to drift along or be narrowly focused on what has been happening in the last few sessions. Identifying goals in all four dimensions enable both the supervisee and the supervisor to see the big picture of the supervisee's development.

6.4.1.5 Get out of your comfort zone

The final recommendation is to encourage supervisors and supervisees alike: get out of your comfort zone! It may be that utilising this model creates a level of discomfort because both supervisor and supervisee had become comfortable in their supervision sessions. It may be that they had become comfortable with their supervision methods.

Utilising this model, and incorporating one or two of the suggested methods, may initially create a sense of disorientation or discomfort. However, persevering through that enables both supervisor and supervisee to become more precise and more goal-focused in their supervision. It facilitates more significant multidimensional development. Furthermore, ultimately, it should lead to better counselling care for the supervisee's counselees.

6.4.2 Recommendations for further research

After spending much time reading the secular supervision literature, interviewing BC supervisors, reading church history, and working through the biblical material on discipleship, the need for further research into various topics has become evident. These research recommendations can be grouped under three sub-headings, although the researcher does recognise how interconnected they are.

The three categories are further empirical research, further historical research, and further theological research.

6.4.2.1 The need for further empirical research

In the researcher's opinion, it would be beneficial to do further empirical research regarding the impact and effectiveness of BC supervision. There is no empirical research available thus far on whether, or how, or in what ways, BC supervision is being effective. There seems to be, in general, a lack of empirical research in the BCM. Particular questions worth exploring through empirical studies could include the following:

- What makes multidimensional supervision difficult?
- Within each dimension, which issues tend to come up most frequently? For example:
 - Within the content dimension, what theological concepts or issues do supervisees commonly ask for help with?
 - Within the competence dimensions, what skills or interventions to supervisees need the most help to develop?
 - Within the character dimension, which character qualities get addressed most frequently?
 - Within the community dimension, which relational dynamics or struggles most often manifest themselves?
- What barriers prevent supervisors from utilising live observation and recordings?
- How does the culture of a church influence the praxis of supervision?

Further suggested questions could be multiplied. It appears to the researcher that this would be an extremely fruitful area of inquiry.

An additional area of study could be to explore how multidimensional supervision can be done effectively in an online environment. Many of the participants indicated how geographic distance played a role in limiting a multidimensional approach. However, in a world where supervisors and supervisees are separated by vast distances (as well as pandemics),

learning how to do multidimensional supervision through online teleconferencing platforms will be increasingly important. However, how can this be done well? The topic has started to be written about (Kellemen, 2020), but more work should be done to develop this further. The researcher would have a particular interest in how e-supervision impacts the praxis of the multidimensional model.

There are a variety of ways that further empirical research could be done. One approach could be to base an empirical study on the use of this multidimensional model. If this model is used for the next 5-10 years, a longitudinal study could then be done on its effectiveness.

As this short sample evidences, there is much more empirical research that could be conducted on the nature and praxis of BC supervision.

6.4.2.2 The need for further historical research

Another area that the researcher thought would be valuable to explore is in the area of historical theology. In particular, further research into the various historical movements that successfully—and responsibly—delegated soul care to the laity. The particular focused area, then, would be historical examples of delegated pastoral care.

One of the interesting points to consider, both historically and sociologically, is the tendency of church movements towards institutionalism and clericalism (Hill, 2007:19). This tendency directly inhibits the ability and willingness of churches to delegate the practise of soul care.

A striking example of this clericalisation tendency is seen in the Anabaptist movement. Although there is considerable debate as to the origins and nature of the Anabaptists, what does seem clear is that they had a more radical commitment to restoring the church to the ideals of New Testament Christianity (Cairns, 2002:19). An interesting element in the movement seems to have been on their ecclesiology, where they highlighted the role of the laity. Despite this initial anti-clericalism, however, the weight of ministry practices and leadership eventually did revert to the clergy. Hill (2007:19) writes,

Anabaptists rejected distinctions between clergy and laity. Rather than having no clergy, it could be said that they had no laity. However, even when a church polity attempts to exclude the possibility of clericalism, professionalism makes inevitable inroads and Modern American Anabaptist congregations have not uncommonly reverted to a clerical pattern by emphasising the need for pastors, pastoral counsellors, and psychiatrists so that the ministry roles in the community of faith have atrophied.

Another question worth exploring in church history is how pastors historically received supervision. An additional historical investigation into the vision and praxis of curacy in Anglicanism may yield valuable insights into the nature of pastoral supervision.

The researcher, through email correspondence, made enquiries regarding the supervision of curates and was told that he had potentially given Dr Gerald Bray²⁵ “the idea for his next book!” (Rockwell, 2020). Certainly, then, this seems like an area worthy of further research.

6.4.2.3 The need for further theological research

Finally, the researcher thinks that there could be value in doing further theological research. That supervision can be conceptualised as discipleship was one of the assertions of the project. However, other theological formulations could perhaps be made regarding how to think through supervision. Options could possibly include:

- Supervision as oversight.
- Supervision as teaching.
- Supervision as mentoring (and differences between mentoring and discipleship).
- Deeper reflections on the developmental dimensions of discipleship.
- The role of Scripture in BC supervision.

These issues and others—for example, the role of spiritual gifts in delegating pastoral care—could provide interesting and potentially helpful contributions to the theology and praxis of BC supervision.

6.5 Conclusion

The research question addressed by this study was: What would a proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor look like?

Through engaging in practical theological research, proceeding from a reformed meta-theoretical perspective, the researcher thinks that a practical and theological model for the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors has been provided. This model, named the MULTIDIMENSIONAL model, aims to provide guidance and help to biblical counselling supervisors as they seek to develop their supervisees.

²⁵ Dr Gerald Bray is a British theologian, ecclesiastical historian, and ordained priest in the Church of England.

ANNEXURES

Below are the various annexures that have been referred to in this study:

ANNEXURE A: Informed consent form

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear participant

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled ***“A proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.”***

The research is conducted by Pastor Kyle Johnston, a PhD student in Pastoral Studies from the North-West University, Faculty of Theology. The study is supervised by Professor Gert Breed and Doctor Robert Kelleman.

Upon the completion of this research project, the researcher aims to develop a practical counselling supervision model that promotes the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.

One aspect of this research is to determine what supervision is currently taking place within the field of biblical counselling. The researcher would want to determine which different counselling supervision methods/models/activities, if any, are being used by the participants of this study. The researcher also seeks to understand why these existing methods and models are used. The researcher wants to establish whether the development of a multidimensional biblical counselling supervision model would be beneficial to the training and development of biblical counsellors.

Two aspects of research are being explored: personal interviews (via Skype) and questionnaires. The personal interviews are directed towards those who currently supervise biblical counsellors. The survey forms are directed towards those biblical counsellors who are currently receiving supervision.

Thank you for considering to participate in this research. It is important that participants understand the following before agreeing to take part in the project:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- If you decide to take part, you may—at any stage of the process—change your mind and withdraw from the research. There will be no penalties or negative consequences if you decide to do this.
- If any questions arise, you are welcome to contact the researcher, Pastor Kyle Johnston, at ktgjohnston@gmail.com or on +27 82 053 6108.
- The process itself will involve completion of a structured questionnaire or a personal interview as part of a qualitative study.
- With the nature of this study being a questionnaire or interview, the potential harm or risk involved for the participant is minimal.
- The potential benefit is indirect rather than direct. This is because the development of a multidimensional supervision model could be beneficial to the wider biblical counselling community, which will likely have indirect positive consequences for the participant.
- Your identity will not be disclosed in the publication of the research.
- All information will be safeguarded by the researcher and supervisors.
- There will be no remuneration for participants.
- After having completed the interview or questionnaire, participants are welcome to contact Pastor Kyle if they wish to discuss anything that the questionnaire or interview raised for them.
- The whole process is monitored by the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) to protect the dignity and rights of the participants. The ethics number for this project is NWU-00646-18-A6.
- If participants have any queries or complaints about the process, they can contact the supervisors.

By signing this informed consent form, I declare that I have *read and understand* the information contained in the invitation to take part in the above mentioned study or that it has been *explained* to me. I also have had the opportunity to thoughtfully consider the information, ask questions, and I am confident that I understand the entire process satisfactorily.

Contact number and email of Pastor Kyle Johnston (Researcher): +27 82 053 6108 and ktgjohnston@gmail.com

Contact number of Prof Gert Breed (Supervisor): +27 018 299 1029

Contact email of Dr Robert Kellemen (Co-supervisor): bob.kellemen@gmail.com

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study entitled: **A proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research goal was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions by emailing or Skyping Pastor Kyle. If I have asked questions, my questions have been satisfactorily answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised, in any way, to take part.
- I am aware that I may choose to leave the study at any time, and I will not be treated negatively in any way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) __/__/201__

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I, Kyle Johnston, declare that:

- An independent person was appointed to initially contact the participant.
- I am satisfied that the participant adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.
- I am satisfied that the participant is participating in this project voluntarily and is able to leave at any time, should they so choose.

Signed at (*place*) on __/__/201__

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of witness

ANNEXURE B: Ethics approval certificate



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900

Faks: (018) 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by **Research Ethics Committee of Theology (TREC)** on **10/09/2018**, the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) hereby **approves** your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-RERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: A proposed biblical counselling supervision model aimed at promoting the multidimensional development of the biblical counsellor.																											
Project Leader/Supervisor: Prof G Breed & Dr R Kelleman																											
Student: K. Johnston																											
Ethics number:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>8</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Institution</td> <td colspan="3">Project Number</td> <td colspan="3">Year</td> <td colspan="3">Status</td> </tr> </table>	N	W	U	-	0	6	4	6	-	1	8	-	A	6	Institution			Project Number			Year			Status		
N	W	U	-	0	6	4	6	-	1	8	-	A	6														
Institution			Project Number			Year			Status																		
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation																											
Application Type: Full Single Application																											
Commencement date: 2018-09-01	Expiry date: 2019-08-31																										
Risk:	Minimal																										

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the TREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project;
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project;
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the TREC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-RERC via TREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-RERC and TREC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the TREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately; and/ or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- TREC can be contacted for further assistance via Rudi.Denton@nwu.ac.za.

The TREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU-RERC or TREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Rudy Denton

Chair NWU Theology Research Ethics Committee

ANNEXURE C: Biblical counsellor (supervisee) questionnaire

BIBLICAL COUNSELLOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The goal of this questionnaire is to evaluate your experience of being supervised as a biblical counsellor. My Research Focus is on how supervision facilitates the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. I am using the term *multidimensional* to refer to counsellors who are being developed in four dimensions: in their theological understanding, in their personal character, in their practical counselling skill, and in their various relationships. These *four dimensions*: content, character, competence, and community, are what I am referring to by the term *multidimensional*.

Below are operational definitions of the 4Cs as they relate to supervision:

Dimension	Relevance to Supervision
Content: theological knowledge and depth.	Does my supervisor assess my theological knowledge and help me grow in biblical faithfulness and precision regarding how I conceptualise counselling problems and solutions?
Character: maturity, wisdom, empathy, and love.	Does my supervisor know my heart/soul—my hopes, fears, sins, and sorrows? Does my supervisor help me experience spiritual growth? Does my supervisor know how to apply the Gospel to me?
Competence: practical counselling skills.	Does my supervisor seek the development of my counselling skills? Through supervision, have I become a more skilful counsellor?
Community: embedded within a network of nourishing relationships.	Does my counsellor help me faithfully live out the implications of the gospel in my relationships—not just with my counselees, but also with my friends, family, and church?

Particularly, this questionnaire seeks to ascertain how the supervision you received facilitated your multidimensional development as a biblical counsellor. This questionnaire also seeks to be sensitive to the particular context in which you minister, and so the questions will explore how your ministry context has influenced the supervision you have received. Finally, please feel welcome to add any additional information you think might be helpful.

Question 1

Please indicate with an “X” the primary capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire.

a.	Capacity	X
	Pastor or Minister	1
	Pastoral Ministry Staff Worker (Youth Pastor, Student Pastor, para-church gospel worker etc.)	2
	Biblical Counsellor	3
	Biblical Counselling Student / Trainee	4

b.	Gender	X
	Male	1
	Female	2

Please indicate with an “X” your gender.

Please indicate with an “X” your age group.

c.	Age group	X
	20-30 years	1
	30-40 years	2
	40-50 years	3
	50-60 years	4
	70+ years	5

Please indicate with an “X” your ministry context:

d.	Ministry Context	X
	South Africa	1
	America	2
	The United Kingdom	3

	Other	4

If other, please specify:

Question 2

Please indicate with an "X" which method you were primarily supervised with.

	Supervision Method	X
	Self-assessment: verbal reporting	1
	Self-assessment: written session reports	2
	Live Observation	3
	Video Recordings	4
	Audio Recordings	5

If another method of supervision was used,

please indicate what it was:

Question 3

Why do you think your supervisor chose to use this (these) particular method(s)?

Question 4

What role do you think your ministry and geographic context, or the ministry and geographic context of your supervisor, had in shaping which supervision method they chose to use?

Why?

Question 5

What do you think are the strengths of the supervision method(s) you have experienced?

Question 6

How have these strengths helped further your multidimensional development?

Question 7

What do you think are the weaknesses of the supervision method(s) you have experienced?

Question 8

How have these weaknesses hindered your multidimensional development?

Question 9

Please indicate with an "X" in what medium your supervision takes place **primarily**.

	Medium of Supervision	X
	In-person	1

	Through written communication (emails/written reports, etc.)	2
	Through audio-visual communication (Skype, FaceTime etc.)	3
	A blend of in-person, written, and audio-visual communication.	4

What impact do you think this medium of supervision has had on your multidimensional development as a biblical counsellor?

Question 10

Please indicate with an "X" which time frame most accurately captures the frequency of your supervision sessions.

	Supervision Frequency	X
	Once a week	1
	Once every two weeks	2
	Once a month	3
	Quarterly	4
	Annually	5
	Other	6

When considering the influence it had on your

multidimensional development, do you have any comments regarding the frequency of supervision you received?

Question 11

Please indicate with an “X” your perception of your supervision: is it formal (planned, systematic, structured with specific learning outcomes etc.), informal (unplanned, ad hoc), or a mixture?

	Formality of Supervision	X
	Formal	1
	Informal	2
	A mixture of formal and informal	3

Do you have any comments regarding the formality/informality of the supervision you received?

Question 12

Please indicate with an “X” the duration of your supervision.

	Supervision Duration	X
	One Year	1
	Two Years	2
	Until certification or graduation	3
	Three-to-Five Years	4
	I receive ongoing supervision	5

Do you have any comments regarding the duration of your supervision?

Question 13

Please indicate with an “X” the group size of your supervision meetings.

	Supervision Group Size	X

	One-to-One (Supervisor-Supervisee)	1
	One-to-Two (Supervisor-Supervisees)	2
	Group Supervision (three or more supervisees)	3

Question 14

Was there an identified supervision model that your supervisor used? If so, what was it, and how did it facilitate your multidimensional development as a biblical counsellor?

Question 15

Please rank from 1-4 (with 1 referring to the most frequent, and 4 to the least frequent), what your supervision sessions tend to focus on.

Supervision Focus	X
a. Content (hermeneutical and theological issues, case conceptualisation, ethical and/or legal issues, etc.)	1
b. Character (this includes the supervisor providing pastoral care for you, exploring your heart, your relationship with God, your practice of the spiritual disciplines etc.)	2
c. Competence (listening skills, process dynamics, etc.)	3
d. Community (the supervisee's relationships and friendships)	4

If you would like to add further comments or elaborate on anything, please do so here:

Question 16

How do you think the particular supervision focus you have received has facilitated and/or hindered your multidimensional growth as a biblical counsellor?

Question 17

What else, in your opinion, could have been included in your supervision to facilitate your multidimensional development?

Question 18

How effective has the supervision you have received been in developing your multidimensional competence as a biblical counsellor?

Multidimensional effectiveness of supervision	X
Ineffective (unhelpful in all four dimensions)	1
Somewhat effective (helpful in one or two dimensions)	2
Quite effective (helpful in three of the four dimensions)	3
Very effective (effective in all four dimensions)	4

Please explain why you think this is the case:

Question 19

Please indicate with an “X” which supervision methods, according to you, will best facilitate development in the four different dimensions:

Supervision Methods	Dimensions			
	Content	Character	Competence	Community
Self-assessment: verbal reporting				

Self-assessment: written session reports				
Live Observation				
Video Recordings				
Audio Recordings				
A blend of the above methods				

Please explain why you think this is the case:

Question 20

Which of the following spiritual resources were used regularly in your supervision?

Spiritual Resources Used in Supervision	Very little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	A great deal
1. Bible reading and/or study				
2. Prayer—for the supervisee (you)				
3. Prayer—for the counselee				
4. Exhortation / Admonishment / Correction / Rebuke				
5. Encouragement / Affirmation / Praise				
6. Exploration (the supervisor seeking to explore / understand the supervisee's psycho-spiritual condition) via asking questions and listening				

7. Quiet moments of reflection				
8. Discussion of a bible-based counselling / pastoral skill				
9. Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit				

Are there any other spiritual resources used in supervision that you would like to mention?

Question 21

Are there any concluding comments, about anything you think is relevant, you would like to make about your experience of being supervised as you sought to develop as a biblical counsellor?

ANNEXURE D: Supervisor interview questions

BIBLICAL COUNSELLING SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and answer my questions.

The goal of this interview is to understand how you practice and conceptualise the task of Biblical Counselling (BC) supervision. My Research Focus is on how supervision facilitates the multidimensional development of biblical counsellors. I am using the term *multidimensional* to refer to counsellors who are being developed in multiple dimensions: in their theological understanding, in their personal character, in their practical counselling skill, and in their various relationships. These *four dimensions*: content, character, competence, and community, are what I am referring to by the term *multidimensional*.

Operational definitions of the 4Cs as they relate to supervision:

Dimension	What this might look like in supervision
Content: theological knowledge and depth.	The supervisor assesses the theological knowledge of the supervisee, and helps him/her grow in biblical faithfulness and precision regarding how counselling problems and solutions are conceptualised.
Character: maturity, wisdom, empathy, and love.	The supervisor seeks to know and understand the heart of the supervisee—their hopes, fears, sins, and sorrows. Does the supervisor know how to apply the Gospel to the supervisee?
Competence: practical counselling skills.	Does the supervisor seek the development of the supervisee's counselling skills? Through supervision, has the supervisee become a more skilful counsellor?
Community: embedded within a network of nourishing relationships.	Does the supervisor help the supervisee faithfully live out the implications of the gospel in his/her relationships—not just with his/her counselees, but also with his/her friends, family, and church?

In this interview particularly, I would like to find out how your supervision facilitates the multidimensional development of those you supervise. Additionally, this interview seeks to be sensitive to the particular context in which you minister, and so the questions will also seek to explore how your particular ministry and geographic context has influenced the supervision you provide.

Question 1

How do you conceptualise the task of BC supervision? What are your reasons for conceptualising supervision in this way?

Question 2

Can you articulate a theological rationale for conceptualising BC supervision in the way you do?

Question 3

Do you use a particular counselling supervision model when supervising biblical counsellors? Why/ why not?

Question 4

If yes, what model do you use, and why did you select this particular counselling supervision model?

Question 5

In what areas, specifically, do you seek to develop the biblical counsellors you are supervising? Please explain.

Question 6

What supervision methods do you tend to use? Examples include: self-assessment, audio recordings, live observation, etc. Why have you chosen these particular methods?

Question 7

What do your supervision sessions tend to look like? Why do the supervision sessions take this form?

Question 8

What do you think the strengths and weaknesses of your practice of Biblical Counselling supervision are?

Question 9

As you reflect on your supervision of biblical counsellors, in which of the four dimensions do you tend to focus on most—and which dimensions do you tend to place less of an emphasis on? Why do you think this is?

Question 10

How frequently do you provide supervision to the biblical counsellors you oversee?

Question 11

What are the various reasons or factors that determine the frequency of your supervision?

Question 12

How is your practice of supervision influenced by the limitations, needs, or benefits of your particular geographic and ministry context?

Question 13

What spiritual resources do you primarily seek to use when providing supervision? Examples of spiritual resources include: Bible study, prayer, the spiritual and personal exploration of the supervisee's soul, commenting on the supervisee's case conceptualisation, etc.

Question 14

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the supervision you provide to Biblical Counsellors and the issue of multidimensional development? Please feel welcome to add any further information you think is relevant.

ANNEXURE E: Supervision development planner

BIBLICAL COUNSELLING SUPERVISION DEVELOPMENT PLANNER

This supervision development planner²⁶ can be incorporated into the supervision relationship at its commencement, introduced for a short period of time for specific planning, or used as an ongoing tool. It is designed to help both the supervisor and the supervisee decide upon which areas to work on in each dimension. As the same dyad may use multiple development planners, they can also be used to track progress and planning over the long-term.

Dimension	Developmental Goal	Action Step(s)	Date (by when?)
Content			
Character			
Competence			
Community			

²⁶ This is inspired, with some adjustments, by the 'Apprentice Development Planner' created by Colin Marshall (2007:107)

Steps in creating a development plan

4. Set goals

The supervisor and supervisee can collaboratively set goals that are specific and realistic. Due to the need for counsellors to develop in a multidimensional way, it is important that goals are identified in each of the four dimensions: content, character, competence, and community. Many goals are too vague or overly ambitious—the supervisor can assist the supervisee in identifying specific and realistic goals.

5. Monitoring and assessment

Supervisees require ongoing monitoring and assessment. The monitoring refers to the gathering of data, that data is then used to assess the supervisee. This monitoring and assessment is often done informally, but a formal review of the development plan can be helpful. This will enable the supervisor to assess the supervisee regarding their long-term development.

It is important for monitoring and assessment to happen regularly and in a loving, gracious way. Here are some questions suggested by Colin Marshall:

- What was (and what was not) achieved?
- What factors have been at play impacting the supervisee's progress?
- Are these goals still the right goals to work on? Any changes needed? Why?
- If goals have not been achieved on time, what needs to be adjusted so that they can be achieved?

6. Identifying action steps

Remember that the action steps are going to be somewhat shaped by the due date. These action steps need to be realistic and achievable, keeping in view the supervisee's time, skills, and resources. It is important for the supervisor to consider whether they are able to do anything that will help their supervisees achieve these goals.

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