

2022

Expanding Our Horizons

Haley R. French

Oral Roberts University, hfrench@oru.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/salubritas>

Recommended Citation

French, H. R. (2022). Expanding our horizons. *Salubritas*, 2, 1-6.

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Theology & Ministry at Digital Showcase. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Salubritas: International Journal of Spirit-Empowered Counseling* by an authorized editor of Digital Showcase. For more information, please contact digitalshowcase@oru.edu.

2022

Expanding Our Horizons

Haley R. French

Oral Roberts University, hfrench@oru.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/salubritas>

Recommended Citation

French, H. R. (2022). Expanding our horizons. *Salubritas*, 2, 1-6.

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Theology & Ministry at Digital Showcase. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Salubritas: International Journal of Spirit-Empowered Counseling* by an authorized editor of Digital Showcase. For more information, please contact digitalshowcase@oru.edu.

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

HALEY R. FRENCH

With the publication of this second issue of *Salubritas*, the editorial team and I are grateful for the opportunity to continue developing a distinctive space for research, scholarship, dialogue, and reflection on the practice of Spirit-empowered counselors. As has been observed in recent years, and will be touched on in this issue, there is an abundance of Christian counseling literature that speaks to a more universal, etic perspective on being a Christian practicing in the fields of psychology and counseling, but yet, there remains a dearth of information at the more local, emic level that would help us to understand what it looks like to practice as a Christian counselor from a particular stream of Christianity (Johnson et al., 2013). The growing body of scholarship on the integration of religion and spirituality (R/S) in counseling (for the sake of properly integrating and honoring the client's beliefs and values) is necessary and encouraging, but there remains a need for counselors to self-reflect and critically inquire into their own worldviews, theologies, and ecclesial practices, to know how those things might be shaping their clinical work in distinctive ways.

As part of the apparent changing of the tides in the broader area of integration studies—concerning the relationship between psychology/counseling and Christianity—there is, and continues to be, a movement away from a top-down application of typologies, models, and the understanding of integration in abstraction. Instead, the newer generation of integrators is asking what integration looks like from the ground-up; personally, contextually, practically, and with attention to embodied practice (see Neff & McMinn, 2020). This move will necessitate a greater level of reflection on the spiritual formation, identity, and practices of the counselor, and, as such, certain questions may arise: Who am I as an integrator? How am I already integrating? How does my worldview shape how I counsel? How do my specific theological values and beliefs mold what I do in the counseling session? So on and so forth. To really answer these questions in a meaningful way, we must be aware and critically reflect on the formative influences in our lives.

To this point, this is an opportune moment in time for this journal to be in existence. We are carving out a space for Christian counselors—and especially for those who self-identify, broadly speaking, with Pentecostal or Charismatic (P/C) Christianity (i.e., Spirit-empowered Christianity)—to develop a greater self-understanding of the relationship that exists between their spirituality and their

clinical practice as counselors, and to, in turn, offer truly distinctive counseling approaches, methods, and treatment implications.

Spirit-empowered Christians are known to attune to their lived, affective experiences and willingly share testimonies from the life of faith, especially concerning their encounters with the Spirit of God (see Smith, 2010). But, historically, they have been less inclined to systematize their thoughts and articulate them in academic prose, perhaps due to residual, anti-intellectual sentiments from early Pentecostalism that saw intellectual endeavors as being in opposition to things of the Spirit (e.g., see Nel, 2016). While this has dramatically changed in recent decades due to the devoted work of P/C scholars in the theological and biblical disciplines, there is far more ground to cover for Spirit-empowered practitioners in other disciplines, including counseling. We need more Spirit-empowered clinicians thinking and writing about their professional work, their practices, and their professional identity and formation in a theologically informed way that considers their specific spiritual and religious contexts, and the traditions and practices that constitute them.

To this point, this second issue of the journal is an exercise in expanding the horizons of what we know and understand about counseling, psychology, and related research from a Spirit-empowered perspective. To borrow a concept introduced by hermeneutic philosopher, Hans Georg Gadamer (1975/2004), it is through genuine conversation between dialogue partners that we have the potential to experience a ‘fusion of horizons’; that through which the distinct vantage point that constitutes our reality (contextually, culturally, theologically, etc.) is broadened, expanded, and transformed because we have been enabled to grasp the ‘otherness of something’ (Finlay, 2011, p. 59). This is where a co-construction of knowledge can occur. I see the articles in this second issue as conversation partners—for one another, for readers, for the broader community of P/C Christians, and those from many other Christian traditions—to assist us all in experiencing the broadening of our horizons, and specifically our understanding about what it means to be Spirit-empowered counselors and caregivers.

In particular, this issue brings the following to the conversation: an overview of specific elements of P/C spirituality and their relationship to counseling, a model of healing and transformation effected by the Spirit, a particular intervention for use by Spirit-empowered counselors, a possible method of measurement for spirituality and its relationship to personality traits, and implications for issues around professional ethics, diversity, and counselor education.

The issue begins with an article by Edward E. Decker, Jr., Haley R. French, and Stephen Parker, in which specific elements of Pentecostal spirituality are explored in relationship to counseling. Acknowledging the inexistence of a formalized Pentecostal approach to psychotherapy, along with the contextualization of all clinical work (both theologically and psychologically), the

authors introduce five organizing elements from a Pentecostal spirituality that significantly shape the work of the Pentecostal counselor. These include: a pneumatological imagination, narrative structures (prayer and Scripture), counselor affections (gratitude, Godly love and compassion, and courage), Spirit empowerment, and Spirit-directed change. This article serves as a launching point for the issue and a hopeful means of advancing the conversation about what type of relationship exists between Spirit-empowered spirituality and the work of the counselor.

In the next article, Bill J. Buker furthers his exploration of ‘Spirit-centered counseling’—counseling that is sought to be guided by the mind of the Holy Spirit—wherein God’s redemptive patterns are brought forth and realized through the transformative wisdom of Jesus. He presents the CPR model—connection, perception, and redemption—as a means for facilitating this transformative wisdom of Jesus in the counseling process, and to assist counselees in exiting repetitive cycles of struggle. Central to the model is the concept of second-order change, wherein a marked shift occurs from one’s taken-for-granted epistemological assumptions (particularly as informed by broader cultural norms), to the construction of new perspectives informed by the wisdom of Jesus. Resonating with these ideas, the third article by Angela L. Watson explores the potential for using self-affirmation interventions that are biblically-based and guided by leading of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of effecting change in clients’ schemas and identity. With the increase in mental health needs across the globe, changing norms, and recent dramatic events, people may identify their need for change but find the prospect psychologically threatening. Watson discusses the potential of self-affirmation theory and practices that can aid counselors in helping Christian clients to seek a renewed mind, and to develop the ability to respond adaptively to change.

The fourth article by Jayne Ann Harder, Andy S.I.D. Lang, LeighAnne Locke, J. Bryan Osborne, Aleksandra Turtova, Enrique F. Valderrama-Araya, Stephen R. Wheat, and H.R. Wörner explores the relationship between spiritual intelligence and personality traits. New observations in this study show that the personality trait of honesty-humility (H-H) in the HEXACO model of personality demonstrates a statistically significant negative correlation between honesty-humility and negative emotionality/neuroticism; and honesty-humility as a significant negative factor in determining overall spiritual intelligence, including personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. These findings indicate the potential for managing negative emotional states (e.g., anxiety) through the practice of spiritual disciplines, and indicate a need for additional research that explores the relationship between the

development of spiritual intelligence traits and the impact on personality change, such as might occur through the counseling process.

The next three articles explore important dimensions of counselor ethics and counselor education. In the fifth article, Edward E. Decker, Jr. issues a critical call for ethical practice amongst Spirit-empowered counselors. Due to the experience of 'Spirit-enablement', as occurs through the subjective (and fallible) human sensation and perception system, Decker reminds Spirit-directed counselors that they must proceed with caution in their professional work, being certain not to assume exemption or inoculation from ethical pitfalls in the name of being 'led of the Spirit'. Decker discusses counseling ethics, generally, including the differences between aspirational value ethics and practice-oriented, principle ethics. Additionally, Decker explores the distinctiveness of Christian counseling ethics which result from the reading of Scripture and associated theological perspectives. The example of Jesus and selected Pauline admonitions are discussed. Practical strategies are presented for how to cautiously and ethically act upon the perceived leading of the Spirit in the counseling process.

In the next article, Sandra K. Richardson, Yasmine A. Godinez, and Lemuel J. Godinez highlight injustices that are being experienced by People of Color within the United States, and the shifting cultural and racial landscape across the country. They provide a thorough overview of the developments that have taken place within the mental health field to address these concerns, including, but not limited to, the establishment and implementation of many professional codes of ethics, required counselor education courses on diversity in counseling, etc. While emphasizing the value of these efforts, the authors address persisting concerns and areas of weakness in counselor education and training. Along with a call to improve this dimension of counselor education programs, the authors appeal specifically to Spirit-empowered counselors who have a greater mandate to love and serve their neighbors. Highlighting the scriptural precedent for this mandate, the authors focus upon the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit as the means for empowering the Christian counselor to fulfill the mandate to love one's neighbor. The article concludes with practical strategies by which the Spirit-empowered counselor can achieve or demonstrate greater competency in serving diverse clientele.

The final article was co-authored under my supervision by two current ORU graduate counseling students, Jessica P. Vetel and Kyle N. Stueber, and recent alumna from the counseling program, Jaymi E. Davis. It explores the importance of counseling education that emphasizes the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Noting the recent challenges of COVID-19, widespread sociopolitical tensions and volatility, the authors reflect on the challenging, but unique opportunity they have as emerging counselors at this time in history. In light of these tenuous times and the challenges they pose for new counselors, Vetel, Stueber and Davis discuss the distinctives of Christian counseling education programs that prioritize excellent

professional training and Christian spiritual formation. Moreover, they present three theological realities and concepts that have significantly shaped their own educational journeys and preparation for entrance into the counseling profession. These include the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through the counseling process, which they feel aids them in bridging the gap from education to practical application; the *imago Dei* as a guiding framework for understanding the counseling process as a participation in the redemptive work of God; and the *missio Dei* as the hermeneutical lens through which they can truly and effectively value all counselees as those who are made in the image of God.

Again, this issue is an effort to continue expanding our horizons and to meaningfully contribute to the Spirit-empowered community and beyond. With growing readership in over 35 countries, exceeding 1,500 downloads of various articles and/or whole copies of our inaugural issue of *Salubritas* in 2021, we celebrate the future of this publication and the unique contributions that are being published now, and are yet to come.

Haley R. French (hfrench@oru.edu) is the Editor of *Salubritas* and Assistant Professor of Professional Counseling at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK, USA.

References

- Finlay, L. (2011). *Phenomenology for therapists: Researching the lived world*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004). *Truth and method* (2nd rev. ed.) (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans.). Continuum. (Original work published 1975).
- Johnson, E. L., Worthington, E. L., Hook, J. N., & Aten, J. D. (2013). Evidence-based practice in light of the Christian tradition(s): Reflections and future directions. In E. L. Worthington, E. L. Johnson, J. N. Hook & J. D. Aten (Eds.), *Evidence-based practices for Christian counseling and psychotherapy*. InterVarsity Press.
- Neff, M. A., & McMinn, M. R. (2020). *Embodying integration: A fresh look at Christianity in the therapy room*. IVP Academic.

Nel, M. (2016). Rather Spirit-filled than learned! Pentecostalism's tradition of anti-intellectualism and Pentecostal theological scholarship. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 37(1), 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v37i1.1533>

Smith, J. K. A. (2010). *Thinking in tongues: Pentecostal contributions to Christian philosophy*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing.