Joseph Jay Breish

Omega Graduate School

Dr. Schmidt

Submission Date: 5/30/23

60-Day Developmental Readings

Review 100-day assignment, course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

Each program and Core have specific grading criteria. Follow the FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Rubric for the required number of sources, comments, and quality criteria.

See the General Helps in AA-101 The Gathering Place in DIAL for the following resources:

* Refer to the “FALL 2022 Student Guide to Developmental Readings” for updated information on sample comments, grading rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.
* Download the “FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Assignment Template” Word document to begin writing your developmental reading assignment.
* For grading criteria, go to the “FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Rubrics.”
* Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA 7 Quick Guide) for in-text citations and Works Cited. Include page numbers.
* Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition.
* Submit through DIAL to the professor.

# Assignment

Topic idea 1: The Responsibility of the believer to be involved in congregational member’s families, especially concerning abuse, neglect, and sub-standard living conditions

**Source One:** Adebayo, R. O., & Govender, J. P. (2020). Marketing as an Enabler for Churches to Fulfill Their Social Responsibility. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, *19*(55), 3–19.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Marketing plays a vital role in enabling churches to fulfill their social responsibility among their congregants. The mission and objective of any organisation should be feasible, motivating, and distinctive. While outlining responsibilities and social roles, this study recognises that the unconventional application of marketing principles in different contexts has been extensively recognised. These include beliefs, values, standards, mission, vision, or rules of behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures, and systems of a church in a way that contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and that respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations. This study examines the role of marketing by churches as non-profit organisations in fulfilling their social responsibility.” (Adebayo and Govender, 2020, p. 1)

**Essential Element:**

This relates to course essential element #3: compare different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This is additive to my knowledgebase. I hadn’t previously considered how the communications from a church (or marketing materials) communicate key values such as core values, mission, and rules of behavior.

**Contextualization:**

From a leadership perspective, I’m very aware of the power and importance of the mission, vision, and key values. That said, I’m used to those things being communicated from an intentional leadership mindset rather than a less formal marketing methodology. Traditionally, the organization’s leadership team is acculturated, not the general public. I’ve never considered how the marketing language of an organization, namely the Church, impacts society.

In my mind, social responsibility is linked to mandated reporting, both in the preventative and reparative sense. That is, how the Church talks about problems, for example, sexual misconduct, will proselytize the congregation in how to feel about and respond to sexual misconduct. If a church never talks about family issues like abuse and neglect, then it is unlikely that its members will know how to prevent them or respond to them when they do happen. As I consider my dissertation, I need to consider how I go about marketing and casting vision for my research topic.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The Church’s relationship with the community has been understood in various ways. Those emphasising evangelism assert that evangelism is the only real responsibility of the Church with social action being an implication of conversion (Edgar 2010, 5). Those emphasising ‘social justice’ assert that this is the only real responsibility of the Church with ‘evangelism’ as either unnecessary or secondary (Van Riken 1999; Duncan 2002).” (Adebayo and Govender, 2020, p. 3)

**Essential Element:**

This relates to course essential element #4: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This is variant to my understanding yet familiar in that I’ve encountered these perspectives before. I believe there is a middle ground where social issues are addressed without the Church being “social justice” focused.

**Contextualization:**

Some well-meaning Christians believe that evangelism is the highest call of the Church. Other, more modern perspectives can focus strictly on the “social justice” side of morality in an attempt to represent God’s justice. I believe both of these perspectives are incomplete.

Jesus came to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is here now. That said, making disciples meant not getting people saved but submitting their entire lives to the new governing authority, namely his Holy Spirit. As such, God’s Kingdom would advance here on earth. This mindset impacted all spheres of society without becoming “dominion” oriented.

Considering the Church’s role and how to communicate as a whole, we need to avoid extremes. The Church is a social change agent in how it impacts indvidual’s lives and transforms them to a heavenly mindset, but not in the sense that it seeks to resolve all social wrongs. Why? Because “we will always have the poor.” Yes, we need to serve those in need, but externally motivating people to do “the right thing” in the name of “social justice” is not the same as a Kingdom mindset. Instead, if we teach people to “set their minds on things above,” they will minister to the poor and solve other social justice issues without becoming social justice warriors.

**Source Two:** Bahnsen, G. L. (2021). *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Third Edition, 2002). Covenant Media Press.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “During a time of increasing nominalism the medieval Church of Rome steadily divorced canon law from the revealed law of Scripture. This procedure facilitated the growing absolutism of the state, as did also the dichotomy between the realms of nature and grace posited by Aquinas.” pp. 1-2

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #1: Survey the history and significant development of ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding. I wasn’t aware of how Roman culture influenced both ethics and religion.

**Contextualization:** It seems evident that today’s culture impacts how we view ourselves, the world, and our faith. Furthermore, our faith and culture influence the way we view ethical issues. Transgenderism is a key example. Twenty years ago, it would never have been kosher to tolerate or even embrace a man playing women’s sports simply because he claimed to be a woman. We’ve come a long way in those twenty years.

From this text, I recognize that as the Roman state grew in power, the influence of the Scriptures decreased. Similar to Israel asking God to provide them with a human king, we as a society have surrendered our right to be ruled by God to being led by fallen men.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “God’s law is the only perfect ethical standard for any society. Dr. J. Gresham Machen urged that “a new and more powerful proclamation of that law is perhaps the most pressing need of the hour… A low view of laws always brings legalism in religion; a high view of law makes a man a seeker after grace. Pray God that the high view may again prevail.” Back cover

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential elements #1, 2, and 3.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This pendulum perspective on law, from legalism to grace, is new. This quote encapsulates both ethical methodology and traditional ethical systems. This is both additive and yet variant to my thinking.

**Contextualization:** I’ve always thought of people with a high view of the law as legalists. Here the author states something slightly different, which in a way, is variant to my thinking. He claims that if we don’t have a high enough view of the law, we tend to wield it legalistically. If we don’t see it for the impossible standard, we could end up having conversations like the passage “who is my neighbor?” Instead, the author argues we put more weight and value on scriptural law so that we might seek God’s grace. There is value in this statement, but I also think it is a low view of Grace. Grace is more than “unmerited favor.” It is also “the empowering presence of God, enabling us to do what God calls us to do.” Therefore, we aren’t seeking Grace as though it is some handout. We’re learning to abide in Christ and therefore walk under the power of His spirit, which is grace.

As a pastoral counselor, this would make a great lesson for a mentee: that is, a proper view of law and grace. Secondly, we can help people think ethically by helping them see God’s standards and “laws” rightly and live by them.

**Source Three:** Bekink, M. (2021). Reversing the “syndrome of secrecy”: Peremptory reporting obligations in cases of child abuse and neglect. *SA Crime Quarterly*, *70*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2021/vn70a774>

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “As is widely acknowledged and was highlighted by this incident, the system of mandatory reporting of child abuse in South Africa is far from perfect. Mandatory reporting is only effective to the extent that it gives rise to effective services and provides data for planning and policy development. As the South African Law Commission put it” p. 7

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #5: Evaluating secular ethical standards concerning current world events and responding with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my knowledge base. I hadn’t previously considered the tail-end of mandated reporting and that without structures in place, the reporting can do more harm than good.

**Contextualization:** While it refers to South African Law, it seems relevant to policies and procedures here in America. Rarely have I heard anyone talk about what happens after a report is made and what services and systems are in place for the child and family in harm’s way. My experience after making a report has varied. Some families found the help they needed, while other families became a target and were nearly broken up. In one instance, I watched a dad removed from a home for weeks, guilty until found innocent, by the social system he worked for professionally. It was a witch hunt that ended in a sheepish apology from a foolish adopted child.

In other professional and governmental agencies, we have quality control procedures to evaluate the entire process from start to finish. I’m unaware of anyone looking at the big picture in the counseling and family services arena. This is an area that needs improvement.

**Source Four:** Carrie, L., Jumarali, S. N., Nnawulezi, N. A., Williams, E. P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 255–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00103-w>

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Qualitatively, survivors described the involvement of CPS, much like the criminal-legal system, as primarily a negative experience. Most survivors described severe consequences of CPS involvement, primarily the removal of their children from their care and home. One survivor explained how “CPS was brought in, and my kids were taken away and that was almost life ending.”” (Carrie et al., 2020, p. 264)

**Essential Element:** #4: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding. I wasn’t aware of how negative CPS and mandated reporting were to Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence.

**Contextualization:** I believe we can learn a couple of important takeaways from this research. Firstly, just because a program is in place to help people doesn’t mean that the end result is practically supportive. Similarly, just because a tool is in place doesn’t mean it will be used effectively. Lastly, programs developed to support vulnerable populations can do more harm if not monitored and evaluated from a big-picture perspective.

An ongoing theme of my ethics research is that we can’t fix society from a behavior-modification mindset. Said another way, we can’t fix the condition of men’s hearts by modifying the external environment. Programs have their place and value, but if we really want to make a difference in society, we have to work from the inside out through intimate communities that support individuals and their families.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Survivors Were Afraid to Ask for Help” (Carrie et al., 2020, p. 260)

“Survivors Feared Help Would Lead to Criminal Legal Involvement” (Carrie et al., 2020, p. 260)

“Survivors Feared Help Would Lead to Child Protective Services Involvement” (Carrie et al., 2020, p. 261)

“Survivors Feared Help Would Lead to Homelessness” (Carrie et al., 2020, p. 261)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #6: use ethical concepts to develop and facilitate progress toward educational objectives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and informative to my understanding. I have experienced some of these fears and concerns with those I counsel.

**Contextualization:** In my experience working as a counselor and in residential programs, people are afraid of the authorities because many of them have been abused by powerful people. Post-COVID, where the world experienced even more abuse of power within governing bodies, people are less likely to trust the government and medical systems. Do they really have our best interests in mind? As counselors, we must create safe environments for people to talk, process, embrace new ideas and heal. To do this, we will need to apply a high standard of love. Only Biblical love can create the space to overcome these fears. Another key component would likely be trust.

For my action research project, I continue to consider what it would look like for me to bring this grace-based discipleship and counseling to our local Church(es). How can we make the Church a safe place for people to grow and heal?

**Source Five:** Cox, M. R., Bowens, B. D., & Newman, T. D. (2022). Children’s Social Workers’ Views on Cultural Sensitivity in Mandated Reporting. *Child Welfare*, *100*(3), 55–80.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “This study examined the perceptions of children’s social workers (CSWs) about cultural sensitivity in mandated reporting. The study revealed that most child abuse referrals were received from teachers and most unsubstantiated cases were from teachers.” (Cox et al., 2022, p. 55)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #4: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** It is additive to my understanding that teachers were the most common reporters of suspected abuse. It is also additive that they are the most commonly unsubstantiated cases that Social Workers receive.

**Contextualization:** There are a few observations that I’m making from this resource. Firstly, parenting has been relegated to teachers who are frequently outnumbered 10 to 1. Often parents go to work and don’t have time to “parent” their children. Therefore teachers provide the child with fundamental life-lessons. Secondly, society is so disconnected that it isn’t extended family or neighbors that would detect if a child is undergoing abuse or neglect. The teachers end up with a great deal of this responsibility.

A concern I have is the amount of liberalism in American classrooms. Many purple-haired minority figures have taken up the call to train our children with their ideals. In doing so, parents risk being singled out for their traditional conservative values. CSW receives most of its unsubstantiated claims from teachers, which suggests they are unable to identify when there is a real problem appropriately. This compounds the problem as social works must chase illegitimate leads instead of real ones. We need to return to traditional Biblical values and ask how we can resume our roles as Christian parents.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Corporal punishment may be used as an approach by parents to correct their child’s behavior. However, some may perceive it as physical abuse, while others perceive it as an effective form of discipline. Interactions with law enforcement can be dangerous or even lead to death for Black children, so Black parents may apply corporal punishment as a preferred method of choice to prevent criminalization.” (Cox et al., 2022, p. 63)

**Essential Element:** This relates to #3: Compare the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding. I had not previously considered parenting styles, especially spanking and giving consequences, and how mandated reporters might perceive them.

**Contextualization:** There is a general problem with lack of relationships in these cases. Teachers don’t truly know or understand the parents’ home environment, and sometimes not even the children. Teachers may not have children of their own and therefore don’t know how to raise them. Similarly, parents don’t necessarily have relationships with anyone else who can vouch for them if falsely accused. Children don’t have advocates close enough to their families to spot abuse and neglect before it becomes problematic. Relationship within close communities is a missing part of our society.

I also think of the multi-cultural nature of American society and how what is acceptable is quite different from one cultural group to another. Who decides what is permissible and what is not? Currently, it is the lawmakers. Parents have abdicated their societal role to the legal system in many ways.

Teaching Biblical worldview and love, whether in the counseling office, Church, home, or even schools, is essential. Furthermore, building a community is necessary to understand other cultures better.

**Source Six:** De Villiers, D. E. (2020). Does the Christian Church have any guidance to offer in solving the global problems we are faced with today? *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, *76*(2). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i2.5852>

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “In his latest book, 21 Lessons for the 21st century, historian Yuval Noah Harari has devoted an entire chapter to address the question whether traditional religions can provide guidance in solving the momentous global problems confronting us today – problems such as nuclear war, ecological collapse and technological disruption. He draws a rather negative conclusion: ‘when it comes to solving, rather than stoking the global problems of the twenty-first century, they don’t seem to offer much’ (Harari 2018:138). The first reason he provides for his conclusion is that traditional religions are largely irrelevant when it comes to the all-important technical and policy problems involved.” (De Villiers, 2020, p. 1)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #3: Compare the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The author’s perspective is variant to mine for two reasons: firstly, he doesn’t believe religion can offer valuable ethical input to help solve world problems, and secondly, he implies solutions will be found in technology and policy.

**Contextualization:** This is variant to other research that I’ve seen. Other reach notes the significant positive impacts religion, namely Christianity, has had on society. They also note how influential Christianity has been on social norms and the reduction of social problems. It seems short-sighted to think that technology and policy alone can create an atmosphere that will resolve global social ills. Certainly, technology has a role to play, but many societies exist outside of much use of technology. Likewise, policies are specific to governments and regions. There is no global policy for what is ethical (outside of a religious position.) It seems implausible to say that you can find a holistic solution without religion or a global governing body.

As Christians role-model a Godly, Kingdom mindset, global ills will naturally be mitigated. Not that they will all be resolved entirely, but the turmoil they create will be reduced. Why? Because the God who created all things knows how to cause all things to work well together. Even though we live in a fallen world, God’s plan is our best option to cause all things to work together for our good.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** [In reference to traditional religions]

“The second reason is that the relevance they do have with regard to identity problems specifically causes them to obstruct rather than contribute to the solution of the global problems. As institutions with expertise in building strong mass identities, they today allow themselves to be used by governments to preserve unique national identities. As handmaids of modern nationalism, they make it even harder to transcend national differences and find a global solution to the threats of nuclear war, ecological collapse and technological disruption (Harari 2018:137–138).” (De Villiers, 2020, p. 1)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #4: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is both additive and variant to my understanding. I hadn’t previously considered the role of religion in identity problems or national identities. That said, I don’t believe all religion caters to nationalism or obstructs solutions to global issues.

**Contextualization:** On one hand, I realize that America was and is strongly influenced by Christian values, and therefore our identity as a nation has Christian themes. On the other hand, I don’t believe true Christians are tools in the hands of our government to push a national agenda. Wherever America has attempted to do this with Christianity, it has failed. Just like forcing democracy on other nations has failed, religion outside of the life transformed by Christ will fail. To me, this is another external versus internal change agent. (Behavior modification vs. true heart change.)

On the other hand, it is important to note that religions impact our national and personal identities, very strongly in fact. Therefore, the gods we follow are the gods we become like. Noting this, it is vital that we choose who we will follow: the one true God or the god of this age.

**Source Seven:** Dermott, E., & Fowler, T. (2020). What Is a Family and Why Does It Matter? Social Sciences, 9(5), 83. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050083

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The paper proposes that theorists could gain from adopting the sociological ‘family practice’ framework, which we argue can form the basis of a distinct and plausible ethical theory of family. This can provide a fruitful basis for further research and engagement in political debate because it better conceptualizes contemporary family life. The paper therefore also illustrates how research from empirical social sciences can be helpful to the development of normative principles.” (Dermott et al., 2020, p. 1)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number 4, cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding in that I’m not familiar with the “family practice” framework but variant in that it seeks to deconstruct traditional families in favor of new ideals.

**Contextualization:** Whenever I see deconstructive or the redefining of “family,” I get worried. While the authors attempt to do something noble and capture how families practically work in society today, they are leaving a significant back door open for other problems. Immediately my concern is, are they promoting a form of communism or “the government is the parent” to our children? When we shift the responsibility off of those that daily sacrifice for the children onto others who have less interest in the children, we blur lines and remove the authority true parents have.

Good leadership practices note that authority needs to be delegated with responsibility. God established this principle for parents. That said, sometimes in today’s society, non-biological or traditional familial relationships raise children. I am ok with that. But when institutions begin defining who are parents I get concerned. Will biological parents lose their right to care for their own children? How do we move back toward traditional families as God intended rather than opening the door further for variations? Wouldn’t it make more sense to invest in men being good fathers than trying to say a child having two moms is the new norm?  I think this is one important reason to have Christian researchers who are involved in social research. People need to hear a different, non-deconstructive post-modern view.

**Comment 13:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “This gendered division of labour has to be managed by institutions and therefore interest turned to clearly defining what constitutes a family (amongst other institutions). The definition developed by the social anthropologist, Murdock (1949, p. 11): “A social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction, including adults of both sexes, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults” brought together the importance of blood/biological relatedness, living arrangements, heterosexuality and generations. Given these similarities, it is important to note that the reason why over time this definition became discredited is not only its focus on blood ties or heteronormative assumptions.” (Dermott et al., 2020, p. 3)

**Essential Element:** This relates to number five: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to my understanding and shows strong signs of a post-modern perspective. While correct in aligning with a heternormative perspective, it assumes that since families can look different, we need to change the definition instead of changing how we behave.

**Contextualization:** Changing definitions instead of changing behavior to fit the definitions is like police officers increasing the speed limit by 5 miles an hour because everyone drives at least 5 miles an hour too fast. Clearly, if the speed limits are too slow, we need to change them. But it seems reasonable that, generally speaking, the people who set speed limits know what is safe and have set them accordingly. The issue isn’t that the limits are wrong but that the people are ignoring the boundaries. Similarly, humanity is denying the plans of God and instead rewriting the standards to fit what they are already doing. In other words, we are grading ourselves by ourselves, which is circular reasoning.

I value the challenge of an alternative perspective, but eventually, all those who challenge God’s ways will reap the consequences of their defiance. While a car can drive on a spare tire, it ultimately wasn’t designed to do that long term and the consequences of ignoring the fact that you’re actually driving with a deficit could lead to your spare blowing out and even more damage happening on the highway.

**Comment 14:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “What matters is whether two, or more, people together create a set of practices that are properly thought of as familial. Family must thus be (i) enacted, (ii) displayed, and (iii) recognised. Enacted means that family is not a status that a person has, but is created and sustained through action. This need not mean though that family is only created by grand gesture, practices are typically sustained by mundane everyday activities, such as phone calls, sending cards, making a cup of tea.” (Dermott et al., 2020, p. 6)

**Essential Element:** This relates to number five: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to my current understanding and yet new.  I’m unfamiliar with this line of thought.

**Contextualization:** One problem I see with this line of thinking is that the “doing” determines the “being.” That is, a family is a group of people that agree, display and practice family externally. If we take that at face value, many of the families in this country probably won’t qualify. Certainly, parents are failing to support their children regularly and often don’t “act” like family. Nevertheless, we hold them accountable, as we should, to their responsibility to rear their children.

For the sake of trying to capture the complexities of our society, I believe we are not only redefining but eroding the definition. Just as we have with “what is a woman,” in feminism, we are now questioning who the parents are. Biblically speaking, God has already established these things. Evaluating how we can realign ourselves with God’s standards would be more fruitful than trying to fit every conceivable outlier into a new definition.  That said, I believe there is some value in recognizing the great degree of divergence in society today.

**Source Eight:** Doré, A. J. (2004). Theology’s Responsibility and Tasks in Today’s Church and World. *Theological Studies*, *65*(4), 699–713.

**Comment 15:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** As a matter of principle, theology must not keep itself at a distance from these disciplines and their way of proceeding, secular though they may be. In the same way, as it agreed to dialogue with philosophy because faith has to do with discourse, thought, and understanding, and then with the science of history because Christianity has no place outside of history, so too theology today must engage in conversation with sociology, psychology, linguistics, etc., because, no less certainly, faith is a reality of an institutional order, because it follows the contours of the human psyche, and because it is set forth in texts, etc. (p. 701)

**Essential Element:** Course essential element #5:Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and agreeable to my belief system. Theology and our faith must continually engage with society to bring reformation to it.

**Contextualization:** This is eloquently stated by the author, and I agree. Just as Christianity has embraced philosophical dialogue, we must be engaged with sociology and ethics. To me, doing so is a representation of love. Love is focused on someone else and their best interests. If we truly care about those around us in society, we will take time to get to know them and understand them. We build relationships with people we love. Then, when storms come, we can offer genuine hope and influence because we both understand the individual and how God’s Word applies to that individual’s situation. In this way, our Christian ethic doesn’t violate the person’s individual freedoms or perspective but shines a light on it, which they can choose to agree with or not.

**Comment 16:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Let me insist on this, to be absolutely clear: faith and thus theology give attention to the world, not only in order to reply to the attacks and the resistance of non-believers against faith and against the Church, and not only in order to compensate for the insufficiencies and infidelities of Chris-tians in their witness to the faith. Faith and thus theology must also, and even primarily, be interested in the world as world, at least in the way God loves it (John 3:16). For it is truly the world of human beings-of human life and its conditions-that faith and theology must illuminate and transform in order to lead them toward the salvation that God offers them.” p. 707

**Essential Element:** Course Essential Element #4: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my perspective. It is particularly interesting to note that this author suggests theology needs to enhance our faith and be lived out, a distinction, I believe, the Church has too often lost sight of.

**Contextualization:** Our beliefs and our life lived out need to be attentive to the world while not being in it. Growing up in conservative churches, I’ve seen how a common strategy of the Church is to remove themselves and create mini-Christian cultures. While this appears beneficial, it actually causes more damage in the long run. When you remove the salt and light from society, society rapidly degrades. To once again become a voice in that society it takes more work and time to reconnect. As believers, we need to stay involved in society and wrestle with real-time present-day issues. These are our issues, too, after all. The world and all that is in it is the Lord’s. We need to live as though He cares about it right now. Christian ethics naturally get shared as we engage with the cultures around us. In a way, it becomes an afterthought instead of the point. People will know us by our love.

**Source Nine:** Eckhoff, A., Baker, P., Faulkner, D., John, R., Tilhou, R., & Ed, M. (n.d.). *Child Maltreatment in Virginia:*

**Comment 17:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or person in a custodial role. Multiple forms of abuse against children include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse as well as neglect. Children less than one year of age experience the highest victimization rate, with rates steadily decreasing with age. Neglect is the most frequently reported type of child maltreatment, however all forms of maltreatment cause significant negative consequences to an individual’s immediate and long-term health. All forms of maltreatment can impact the health and future of children, families, and the community as a whole.” (Eckhoff et al., p. 2)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and furthers my understanding. I wasn’t aware of Virginia-specific laws regarding abuse, neglect, and maltreatment.

**Contextualization:** It’s helpful to have research showing maltreatment’s long-term effects. The article notes both the physical and psychological effects of childhood maltreatment. The life-long financial burden to support someone with maltreatment is over $200,000. As the adage goes, it is better to pay now than pay later. As any counselor will tell you, the cost of working through abuse and neglect is significant. Even more so, the collateral damage it causes.

This argues for good preventative measures and early spotting of problems before things get too bad. I’m wondering what it would look like for schools to teach a basic class on kindness and appropriate touch as a way to help students conceptualize when to ask for help. This could be designed in a “G” rated way to help remove adoption resistance by schools and parents.

**Source Ten:** Elliott, A. (2013). *Concepts of the Self* (3rd edition). Polity.

**Comment 18:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Some sociologists of the media have argued that today’s good quality newspapers - such as the Los Angeles Times or the Guardian - contain as much information as an individual might have encountered over the course of their entire lifetime in a pre-modern society.” p. 3

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #6: Use ethical concepts to develop and facilitate progress toward educational objectives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and something I haven’t previously considered. The amount of information consumed daily by young people is extraordinary.

**Contextualization:** It concerns me that not only do young people have nearly unhindered access to information, but that it is frequently unfiltered due to lack of technological and parental safeguards. I can remember a time when youtube didn’t exist, and if I wanted to learn guitar, I needed to use books and practice with other people. Today that is not the case. While advantageous in that teens can learn from a multitude of sources, without the protection of intact, loving families, children can be indoctrinated easily by what the masses say. And they can do it in beautiful packages of sound and video.

My only solution to this problem is to rebuild and restore families: help them return to their roots of God’s design and function out of a loving, healthy place. We need to be kingdom-minded people who “think on things above” rather than about comfort and pleasure.

**Source Eleven:** Goodman, L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 217–223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00132-w>

**Comment 19:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “When intimate partner violence survivors seek help from public institutions, including domestic violence programs, they necessarily submit to the scrutiny of staff who are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the state child protective system. This prospect would frighten anyone but has particular weight for survivor-parents who – during a period of enormous stress, chaos, and trauma - are often held responsible for the conditions of abuse they are trying to end or escape.” (Goodman and Fauci, 2020, p. 217)

**Essential Element:** This relates to Course Essential Element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my perspective as I hadn’t considered how victims coming out of abusive systems could easily be held responsible by those same systems.

**Contextualization:** As I read this, the first thing that comes to my mind is that the Law of God and the laws of men will never solve problems caused by the condition of their hearts. You can’t externally solve a problem that originates internally. As such, at some point, we need to stop creating more layers of legislation and start working within the personal spheres of society. As such, sociology is a great tool to have.

As we consider structural functionalism, we begin to understand that there are layers of causation and, therefore, layers of restoration that are needed. We tend to look for “the culprit” with the mindset that one person is responsible when in reality, there are systems built upon one another that feed problems in people. Consider the fatherlessness rate among African American homes and how that leads an entire people group into the welfare system, poverty mindset, and expecting the government to provide for them.

In these victims’ cases, we need advocates who are not legally responsible to the state system but are loyal to the people to teach, guide, and correct without the injection of the law. Again, we need loving communities.

**Comment 20:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Centering these broader legacies of violence and other harms expands our capacity to ask the right research questions and support survivors more effectively as they seek help from systems they need for safety and healing, but that they also rightly fear.” (Goodman and Fauci, 2020, p. 217)

**Essential Element:** This relates to Course Essential Element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and valuable to giving me perspective as a social researcher and minister to the Gospel. The more we can understand the greater context, the better we can support people within those contexts.

**Contextualization:** We tend to be single-minded about subjects. It takes much more work to consider “the other side” than to consider things from your current viewpoint. As social researchers, however, we need to become involved in various sides and perspectives and consider what others are saying and why they have the vantage points they do. It is only from a place of understanding that we can effectively support these groups of people.  A secondary advantage to a broader mindset is that we can begin to represent alternative views well to those who don’t understand, thereby becoming advocates for them. Ultimately, it is easier to love people well when you understand their motivations and situations.

**Source Twelve:** Goodman, L. A., Fauci, J. E., Hailes, H. P., & Gonzalez, L. (2020). Power with and Power Over: How Domestic Violence Advocates Manage their Roles as Mandated Reporters. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 225–239. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00040-8>

**Comment 21:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Domestic violence (DV) advocates aim to restore survivors’ choice and control, a process that involves sharing power with survivors, to the extent possible. At the same time, as mandated reporters, they are legally required to observe, evaluate, and potentially report survivors’ parenting to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), an activity that involves exerting enormous power over survivors.” (Goodman et al., 2020, p. 225)

**Essential Element:** Course Essential Element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is new and additive to my understanding. I hadn’t previously considered the dual role that the advocates have as both advocates and also Mandated Reporters.

**Contextualization:** This provides a natural conflict of interest and ethical dilemma.  How can you advocate for a family while simultaneously reporting them if they are not up to expected parenting standards? The weight falls on the MR as to how much and how frequently they would report, but in doing so, you put the MR at risk of legal response.  On the other hand, if the MR are legally fastidious, then there is little room for mercy on the family as they learn new parenting skills.

An additional concern arises because of the amount of power DCF has over families. Frequently DCF goes unchecked by any other authority. I’ve witnessed DCF remove a father, guilty until proven innocent, at the claim of their adopted daughter. Months later, she confessed to being angry and making false allegations, but the damage to the family had already been done. It seems we need a system of checks and balances for DCF.  From a Christian perspective, we need churches that are more engaged with their members and can conduct their own investigations, train, and respond to allegations before the state programs get involved.

**Comment 22:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Despite their thoughtful and strategic efforts to minimize “power-over” dynamics, however, advocates report that navigating this tension often exacts an emotional toll on them, causes irreparable damage to their advocacy relationships, and harm survivors. A number of actionable recommendations follow, including the need to establish opportunities for survivors to talk with each other, outside the earshot of staff, about their parenting challenges.” P. 237

**Essential Element:** Course Essential Element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is new and informative. It is understandable that the “power-over” dynamic would strain relationships.

**Contextualization:** The last line about allowing survivors to talk with one another is crucial. It speaks of community, which I believe is critical to our healing and growth journey. Human beings are not supposed to “be alone.” We need others to see and catch our blind spots, and those who have been through trauma and tragedy need safe places to work out their kinks. Community groups are probably the answer.

**Source Thirteen:** Hedberg, T. (2018). Toward a Small Family Ethic: How Overpopulation and Climate Change Are Affecting the Morality of Procreation by Travis Rieder (review). *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *28*(4), E-8-E-13. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.2018.0028>

**Comment 23:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “With the nature of the problem established, Rieder turns to the main question of the book: in light of the impacts of human population growth, what obligations do individuals have with respect to their procreative decision-making? More specifically, might there be an obligation to limit one’s number of biological children? Ultimately, while Rieder does not affirm the existence of obligations to limit one’s biological procreation, he does conclude that “something disconcertingly close to this suggestion is true” (10). Or at least, he believes so with respect to wealthy individuals with large per capita ecological footprints.” (Hedberg, 2018, p. 9)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to my perspective and yet consistent with much of the global view of child-bearing and global warming (now called climate change).

**Contextualization:** The enemy is always antithetical to the views of God. When God said, “Be fruitful and multiply,” Satan responded with, “Have fewer children” and “Children are bad.” God has established a world with great resiliency, to floods and famines. Earth still remains. And yet, many are saying it will all come to a terrible end unless we change how we live, how many children we have, and tax those who use too much carbon (one of the most abundant sources on earth).  This is utter nonsense. You can tell a tree by its fruit. If the same media personalities promoting climate change warnings are buying beach-front properties, we probably don’t have to worry about the ocean levels rising too much. Instead of limiting how many children we can have, we should invest time in promoting critical thinking and creative new solutions to world problems. Human capital is the most valuable capital on the planet.

**Source Fourteen:** Hong, P., Li, S., Yu, Y., & Deng, Q. (2022). How to Enhance the Motivation for Drug Detoxification: Consciousness Guidance and Behaviour Restriction of Family Intergenerational Ethics. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(1), 366. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010366>

**Comment 24:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “On the other hand, disciplines such as intergenerational responsibility and obligation and mutual assistance can correct the actual behaviour of substance users in ethical practice. In contrast to Western countries, which focus on external environmental factors such as family function, family relationships and family support, the motivation for drug rehabilitation in China places more emphasis on their identity and role as family members and corresponding responsibilities, which provides inspiration for developing social work services for substance users from family cultural norms.” (Hong et al., 2022, p. 1)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #3: Compare different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian Ethics as well as #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and insightful to my current understanding. I wasn’t aware that Western societies view ethical issues differently than Eastern societies.

**Contextualization:** I find it fascinating that China focuses more on the internal motivations that lead to ethical decisions while Americans focus more on the external. Indeed, we live in a performance (external) driven society. As a Biblical counselor, I have found it true that if we can help a person understand their identity (and similarly responsibility), they are more likely to overcome their struggles. Apparently, this is true for drug-addicted people as well.

As I continue my research into communities that heal, I believe teaching personal identity as well as group identity will be critical. Along with identity, we can teach about what motivates us as a way to bring self-awareness and, hopefully, intimacy with God as the Christian’s highest motivations for living ethically.

**Comment 25:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Lack of motivation is considered to be one of the most common causes of relapse [9]. In view of the key role of detoxification motivation in the change of addictive behaviour, researchers have accumulated much evidence to prove the relationship between detoxification motivation and rehabilitation [10], and how to enhance the motivation of substance users [11]. T” (Hong et al., 2022, p. 2)

**Essential Element:** This relates to #6: Use of ethical concepts to develop and facilitate progress toward educational objectives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and agreeable to my experiences. Motivation, or willingness, is critical to growth.

**Contextualization:** As a counselor, I often ask myself, “Is this person willing to take the steps necessary to heal?” I haven’t found a tool to identify this, yet, but I believe there must be something that has already been developed to this end. Jesus even used the question, “Do you want to be well” to the man at the pool of Bethesda. The sad reality is some people are not willing.  On the other hand, those that were willing at all costs (like the woman who touched the hem of his robe) were healed quickly.

I believe there is a connection between motivation and willingness. If we can help people identify their motivation, we can weed out those who will likely not change, or help them see that their motivations are wrong.

This subject is also linked to identity. Identity and personal responsibility are related to one’s internal motivating factors for how we respond.

**Comment 26:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “A large number of studies have discussed the important role of family in the enhancement of motivation for drug rehabilitation, but there are controversies in the research conclusions; in other words, research on the relationship between family factors and detoxification motivation has not generated a consistent conclusion.” (Hong et al., 2022, p. 4)

“…found that the positive support and positive social network of the family system was only a secondary curative factor, and the real main predictors were the high self-efficacy, self-help participation, readiness to change and depression of substance users [73].” (Hong et al., 2022, p. 4)

**Essential Element:** This relates to my doctoral research and aligns with course objective #6.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This diverges from my previous understanding and yet adds critical insights I haven’t previously considered. It presents as both variant and additive perspectives.

**Contextualization:** This study identifies that while generally helpful, having a favorable family structure was not the most significant cause for change. The strongest indicators of change are the individual’s desire, participation, and readiness to change.

This reminds me of Jesus’ parable about casting seeds on different soils. Not everyone who watched Jesus perform miracles or listened to him preach responded. Some responded quickly with few long-lasting results. Others were permanently changed. This strengthens my view on willingness (brokenness) but challenges my thoughts on the role and integrity of the group.  I’ll have to consider if I’m putting too much emphasis on the group in my research.

**Source Fifteen:** Hutchings, K. (2018). *Global Ethics: An Introduction* (2nd edition). Polity.

**Comment 27:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “In fact, ethics in its original meaning refers to codes of behavior or sets of values that set out what is right or wrong to do within particular contexts. An ethical person is therefore someone who aims to act according to such does or values. When we discuss ‘professional ethics’ or ‘medical ethics’, we are discussing what the appropriate guidelines are for practitioners to follow in order to fulfill the aims and goals of their profession.” p. 5

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #2: understanding ethics as a philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and agreeable to my perspective. It provides a simple definition with which I can wrap my head around. It also helps broaden my perspective about what professional ethics are in the workplace.

**Contextualization:** Counselors have strong ethical standards by which they have to follow or lose their license. Pastoral counselors also have ethical standards to follow; however, there is not as much oversight as there is with clinical counselors. The author notes the idea of values, which I think is particularly significant, both in leadership circles as well as for counseling. Values help focus and ground you to particular ideals. In the workplace, values provide unity between employees. Values can help provide ethical guidelines for what we do or do not do in counseling. Unfortunately, values are rarely talked about in Christian counseling!

At times, Christians see professionalism to be at odds with Biblical morals. They are not. In fact, Biblical morals promote workmanship and excellence. Part of our job as Christian scholar-practitioners is to mediate and transfer the wisdom of one discipline to others, in this case, secular and faith-based perspectives.

**Source Sixteen:** Itzkowitz, M., & Olson, K. (2022). Closing the Front Door of Child Protection: Rethinking Mandated Reporting. *Child Welfare*, *100*(2), 77–98.

**Comment 28:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Using existing and emerging data, the authors argue that mandated reporting as a universal strategy contributes to racial disproportionality in the child welfare system and that anti-racist practices should begin with an examination of our reliance on mandated reporting.” (Itzkowitz and Olson, 2022, p. 77)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number 1: Survey the history and significant development of ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to my understanding. I have never heard anyone question the value of mandated reporting or associate it with racism and racial disproportionality.

**Contextualization:** As I consider this idea further, I find my perspective beginning to change. I don’t think I would recommend removing mandated reporting, but between this and other articles, I can see that it can become a hindrance to people getting help. Victims of abuse who have previously had to deal with social services and former criminals alike (even if they were “straight now”) could find mandated reporting a roadblock to them getting the help and support they need for their families.

I see a theme arising: the best people to serve another family are those closest to, but just outside of that family: neighbors, fellow church members, and extended family. Those closest to the individual or family who are struggling are most likely to be supported in appropriate ways and not have racial or other biases. The more institutionalized the help, the less likely the individual will receive the care that they need.

How can I help create natural bonds between “neighbors” who could step in and help, whether financial, parenting, or even just with a babysitter when needed? Developing healthy communities is vital to societal health.

**Comment 29:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The belief that “making a report will not hurt anybody, but not making one might,” even without certain reasonable belief of maltreatment, ignores the harm that children and families can and do experience when involved in the child welfare system. There is substantial research indicating that child removal is traumatic for any child, often leading to difficulties in normative cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development (Baldwin, 2019; Conn, 2015; Cote, 2018; Doyle, 2007; Lawrence, 2006; Maclean, 2016, Yoon, 2018).” (Itzkowitz and Olson, 2022, p. 86)

**Essential Element:** Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and informative to my research. I believe many have this unspoken bias, and the assumption behind mandated reporting is that it will cause no harm. More research is pointing to the outcome not being so clear.

**Contextualization:** Much like doctors swear to “do no harm,” social workers and sociologists have the desire to help and not hurt those in their care or influenced by their programs. And yet, if we don’t understand where these people are coming from and how they view us and our programs, we may find that we are causing some distress. Consider how many doctors signed off on COVID vaccines without having the raw data on their outcomes. Now, many have suffered and even died from COVID vaccine side effects.

This is a challenging ethical issue. How do we determine what level of legitimate harm or pain our programs can cause? Shots always hurt, but we understand that temporary pain provides some greater relief. Similarly, there will be some pain when working with clients with emotional hurts. The goal, however, is to help them transition into a healthier lifestyle. At this moment, it seems that follow-up feedback loops are the best way to determine if we helped someone and if the amount of pressure/pain was appropriate to the situation.

**Source Seventeen:** Khan, S. R., Hirsch, J. S., Wamboldt, A., & Mellins, C. A. (2018). “I Didn’t Want To Be ‘That Girl’”: The Social Risks of Labeling, Telling, and Reporting Sexual Assault. *Sociological Science*, *5*, 432–460. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v5.a19>

**Comment 30:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Using ideas of social risks and productive ambiguities, it argues that not labeling or reporting assault can help students (1) sustain their current identities and allow for several future ones, (2) retain their social relationships and group affiliations while maintaining the possibility of developing a wider range of future ones, or (3) avoid derailing their current or future goals within the higher educational setting, or what we call “college projects.”” (Khan et al., 2018, p. 432)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number four: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and informative. I didn’t realize that not reporting abuse could have some “benefits,” albeit unhelpful in resolving their trauma.

**Contextualization:** This reminds me of Stockholm syndrome in that victims cannot see the potential threat in front of them. In this case, victims do not get help because they believe they have something to lose. Ironically, their misplaced identity and priorities can keep them vulnerable to future assaults while allowing the perpetrator to continue hurting other people.

As counselors, we must remember the attitudes and beliefs of those we counsel. If they aren’t willing, we won’t be able to get far in our sessions. Instead, we need to address the root belief systems and look at the pros/cons of the possible outcomes of their decisions. If we can help them slow down and process on this level, they might be open to alternative ways of thinking and behaving. Prayer ministry is a great tool for these situations.

**Comment 31:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Labeling, telling, and reporting concretize thoughts, feelings, relationships, affiliations, and experiences in ways that many students believe can negate or harm their current identity and limit access to current or future opportunity structures.” (Khan et al., 2018, p. 432)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number four: Cultivate a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my knowledge base but variant to how I understand identity. Following this mindset, you are what you do and vocalize, which is a worldly way of seeing things.

**Contextualization:** Scripture says you are who God says you are. Or in other words, you are born into your identity. (Which is why we need to be born again.) In the world’s eyes, you are what you do. e.g., you steal because you’re a thief.  God, however, looks at the heart. A thief is a thief before they ever steal anything. Sin is, after all, conceived in the heart.

As believers, we are Saints and are called to live out of that intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. If we can “walk by the spirit,” we won’t “gratify the flesh.” While we have the capacity to steal, it isn’t in our true “new” nature. Part of my doctoral work will be training people to think this way: inside out rather than outside in.

A person’s identity can be nailed down by labeling and telling. That is, what is spoken and named has weight. Things like elementary school name-calling or medically diagnosing someone with autism come to mind as other forms of labeling. How can we help our children reject false labels and embrace Godly ones? How do we, counselors, identify issues without prematurely labeling someone and pigeonholing them?  I’m not sure at this point.

**Source Eighteen:** Kwan, S. S. (2007). Clinical Efficacy of Ritual Healing and Pastoral Ministry. *Pastoral Psychology*, *55*(6), 741–749. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-007-0079-9>

**Comment 32:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Some theorists of psychotherapy contend that a meta-model of psychotherapies can be constructed by highlighting the common underlying structure of rites and psychotherapies (e.g., Morris 2003); others claim that therapy is by and large a ritual performance not dissimilar to, for instance, alchemy (e.g., Rowan 2001); still others, especially those involving themselves scientifically in the study of complementary and alternative medicine, argue that healing rituals may be conceived as health care systems that rely on placebo effect (e.g., Kaptchuk 2002). All this obviously hints at the intriguing relationship among ritual, religion, spirituality, and health.” (Kwan, 2007, p. 742)

**Essential Element:** This relates to #5: Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** In general, this article is variant to my thinking, and yet thought-provoking with many new ideas. The author proposes that healing isn’t spiritual in nature but natural and that we can activate the body’s innate healing mechanisms through religious or other ritual practice. At the same time the author promotes and encourages healing rituals for Christian counselors.

**Contextualization:** This is a fascinating article that seems short-sighted. On the one hand, an enhanced version of the “placebo effect” is offered as the causitive factor for personal healing. Simultaneously, Christian counselors and pastors are encouraged to use this understanding to promote further healing. Ethically this sounds questionable. Theologically this just seems wrong.

This study seems to come from a “religious” author with a Christian bent. That said, they clearly don’t believe in the supernatural healing ability of God. At least, that is not what they promote.

Interestingly, they note the body’s innate ability to heal itself on several levels. The author provides various research to back this up. As such, they encourage us to posture ourselves (getting into the right mental framework) to activate those systems. There is something that seems true about this regarding charismatic healing. Even Biblical healings seemed to occur more readily when a person gave everything to get their healing.

I obviously can’t remove the supernatural from the equation, but I believe something is to be said about our mental and heart posture to being healed.

While this article is older, it bridges a few gaps between my doctoral work on “safe communities that heal” and this current ethics class. I haven’t seen much research fit that criteria.

**Comment 33:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “1. When one is providing pastoral care and counseling, one should not neglect the usefulness of rituals, such as prayer, meditation, and so forth; however, 2. When one is relying on rituals to generate healing effects (in whatever sense), one should make an effort to get them appropriately performed, including how the participants are postured and how the postural sequences proceed.” (Kwan, 2007, p. 748)

**Essential Element:** This relates to number four: cultivating a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is both additive and variant to my perspective. On the one hand, I agree we need to consider how to appropriately perform healing rituals and be postured to receive what God has for us. On the other hand, I do not take a humanistic stance and leave God out of the healing process.

**Contextualization:** Practically, I believe we need more than a doctrinal statement to determine what our counseling practice should look like. Whether we are a single pastoral counselor or part of a larger group, there needs to be an ethical framework by which we conduct our work. As with any profession, we need to know when to take on a client and when to refer them. We must also know when and how to address a counselee’s particular issues in a session. All of these concepts should be discussed and ideally trained for beforehand. While we don’t need 613 rules to do this, our core values should give us the framework by which we make our decisions.

**Source Nineteen:** Scher, S., & Kozlowska, K. (2018). Ethics and the Self. In S. Scher & K. Kozlowska (Eds.), *Rethinking Health Care Ethics* (pp. 71–81). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0830-7_6>

**Comment 34:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Clinical ethics, like all ethics, has its foundation in the self—in a full conception of the person whose thoughts, emotions, and actions must be understood as an integrated whole. It is from that foundation that one can then start building, for all health professionals as individuals, a mature professional ethic that incorporates each person’s own history and experience and that integrates those with each person’s growing knowledge of a particular field of health care. And because this conception of ethics is so thoroughly grounded in the self, it is a conception that inescapably connects with all health professionals as individuals and that enables them to understand, appreciate, and elaborate their own ethical thinking” (Scher and Kozlowska, 2018, p. 71)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #2: Understanding ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive. The idea of an “integrated self” and its connection to ethics is entirely new to me.

**Contextualization:** The term “dissonance” is commonly used within the counseling world. In part, it relates to the harmony between our thoughts and emotions (or lack thereof.) Similarly, this book talks about the need for the self: thoughts, emotions, and actions, to be integrated and understood as a whole. That is agreeable to my understanding. They continue; ethics flow out of an integrated wholistic perspective of our life experiences. From this stance, the authors claim we can ethically and empathically care for those in our care. This is helpful and agrees with other authors like Peter Scazzero’s emotionally healthy leadership.

Practically this seems to imply that we need to begin by removing disunity and dissonance from within the individual before or while we teach ethics if we want them to be able to care for others empathically. Without doing so, we could make hypocritical legalists who know ethical codes but have no heart connection to them.

**Comment 35:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “We are more likely to be conscious of our reasoning, ethical or otherwise, when we encounter some sort of conflict, either within ourselves or with other persons. Conflicts within ourselves are ones that we can work out on our own or through discussions with others, but conflicts with other persons are different. They typically demand that we make explicit our reasons or feelings in an effort to work through any differences.” (Scher and Kozlowska, 2018, p. 73)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #4: cultivating a desire for students to read situations in the context of their Christian faith.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my current understanding. I hadn’t previously considered tension’s value in our lives and how it brings about ethical thought.

**Contextualization:** As ministers of the Gospel, it is evident to me that brokenness (an awareness of our need for healing and life) is the key to being receptive to the Gospel. If you don’t know your need, you won’t look for anything else. These authors are taking a similar idea and suggesting that conflict does the same thing for ethical thought. Specifically, interpersonal conflict forces us to be more aware of our motivations and then communicate them. In this way, we think ethically when considering how others might be affected by our choices.

**Source Twenty:** Shoemaker, D., Witt, K., & Dufner, A. (2021). Personal Identity and Ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/identity-ethics/>

**Comment 36:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “There are four general accounts of personal identity that have been taken to have some relevance to ethics by contemporary theorists: psychological, biological, narrative, and a new one to be labeled “anthropological.” After discussing these four, as well as a fifth view that identity doesn’t matter for ethics, we will evaluate the views in light of a challenging thought experiment: fission. After that, we will discuss the relevance of both souls and a four-dimensionalist ontology to the issues at hand. “ Section 2

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #2: understanding ethics as a philosophy and methodology.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding but variant to my viewpoint. As these authors continue, they seem to promote a humanistic view of personal identity, to which I cannot subscribe.

**Contextualization:** It is thought-provoking to consider how our ethics methodology changes based on how we view ourselves and humankind overall. If we take the Darwinist perspective, survival of the fittest, then it makes sense to consider ourselves first and foremost in every situation. Conversely, if we consider a Christian view of personal identity, made in the image of a loving creator, we consider the needs of others above our own. These authors offer intermediary options between these two extremes, but never-the-less, the point being made is our identity relates to our moral and ethical perspectives. This suggests that we need to put Biblical identity at the forefront of our teaching to live ethical lives. Furthermore, the Biblical standard of love supersedes simple ethics and considers my decisions’ value and impact on all man kind.

**Source Twenty-One:** Stephens, A. L., Bruce, C. R., Childress, A., & Malek, J. (2019). Why Families Get Angry: Practical Strategies for Clinical Ethics Consultants to Rebuild Trust Between Angry Families and Clinicians in the Critical Care Environment. *HEC Forum*, *31*(3), 201–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10730-019-09370-y>

**Comment 37:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “An experience that undermines their trust in the clinicians’ abilities to provide what families see as competent care can, therefore, generate frustration and undermine the therapeutic alliance. As a result of these concerns about competence, families may ask many questions about the care plan and administration of treatment or ensure a family member is consistently present to supervise the care provided.” (Stephens et al., 2019, p. 208)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number six: using ethical concepts to develop and facilitate progress toward educational objectives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and helpful. The term “therapeutic alliance” is used strictly in the medical setting here; however, I think we can borrow this term as we talk about how the Church can care for its members.

**Contextualization:** This article hits on various topics and provides valuable insights into my line of work. Here we talk about alliances between patients and medical professionals. In other places, we talk about establishing trust. Still in others, they discuss how professionals should apologize when they make a mistake. These are simple human curtseys, yet they often get overlooked and left out. Biblically speaking, we’re talking about how we can love others well and have unity within diversity, especially within the Church.

Building a team and establishing trust seem like considerable issues to me. Whether it be in counseling or creating a small discipleship group, people need to feel like equal members and be able to trust those in the group. The challenge is not everyone trusts in the same ways or at the same rate. I need to do more research on how trust gets established in different contexts.

**Comment 38:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “It is well-known that communication styles vary amongst clinicians (Lilly et al. 2000; Nagpal et al. 1960; Lautrette et al. 2007). The use of complex clinical terminology and stylistic differences in how information is delivered can result in families misunderstanding the team’s recommendations regarding the goals of care. Additionally, in the critical care setting, the involvement of multiple specialists and the rotation of on-call clinicians can create opportunity for discontinuity in the coordination of care among clinicians themselves, further increasing the potential for communication of mixed messages—or no message at all—between families and clinical team members (Henrich et al. 2011).” (Stephens et al., 2019, p. 210)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number six: using ethical concepts to develop and facilitate progress toward educational objectives.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This sounds similar to how various temperaments communicate differently. It is additive, particularly as it comes from a medical context.

**Contextualization:** As pastors, we need to know different “languages,” that is, ways of speaking. The most effective pastors, teachers, and evangelists know how to speak Biblical truths in a variety of consumable ways for the audience. Internal to the organization, the more people we have on the team, the more challenging communication may become. We must have team building exercises where we spend time together and learn common vernacular. During these team-building times, we learn to speak each other’s language. We also need to invest in each other’s lives so we begin to rub off on each other. Regarding our clients, we need good listening skills to understand where they are coming from before making suggestions.

**Comment 39:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Family members who are experiencing a sense of loss of control over the management of their loved one’s care may perceive this loss as a threat to their identity as primary caregivers.” (Stephens et al., 2019, p. 214)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element number 4: cultivating a desire to read situations in the context of their Christian faith and respond with decisions indicative of a Christian approach.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and agreeable to what I’ve seen before in group dynamics and counseling sessions. Loss of control can be a significant threat to some people.

**Contextualization:** This becomes challenging when talking about lie-based beliefs, and God is trying to expose and replace the lie. It can be challenging for them to move forward depending on how much of their lives are tied up in the lie. This is especially true if their identity is wrapped up in a lie.

I recently worked with a young man who believed he was “an asshole.” That was his identity. He felt terrible about it and yet used it to justify his addictions. It took prayer and counseling to help him see the cyclical system where his feelings led to behaviors that reinforced beliefs and restarted the cycle.

As counselors, we need to be sensitive to the emotional state of our clients. Depending on what they are dealing with, we may need to do some initial training or provide care so that they can make a mental shift when the time comes.

**Source Twenty-Two:** Zigan, K., & Grys, A. L. (2018). Towards an Understanding of Social Responsibility Within the Church of England. *Journal of Business Ethics: JBE*, *149*(3), 535–560. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3104-z>

**Comment 40:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “We therefore chose the Church of England as our empirical context because it takes a leading role in the UK in discussing and defining ethical issues in society although recent incidents such as the Church’s involvement in Wonga have raised a number of questions about the relationship between public rhetoric and actual practice.” (Zigan and Grys, 2018, p. 536)

**Essential Element:** This relates to course essential element #3: comparing the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive and informative, yet, discouraging. The Church is wrapped up in the same financial scandals as secular institutions, making it no better than them.

**Contextualization:** While we don’t live in England, the reality is that the American Church isn’t much better. Often the same social ills found on the streets are also found in our churches: additions, promiscuity, alcoholism, divorce, and so forth. The disparity between what we say and how we act can be quite different.

Part of this problem can be addressed from a leadership perspective by addressing the mission, vision, and core values. Sometimes the issue within institutions, or the Church for that matter, is that we don’t clearly communicate what we stand for and therefore everyone within that organization does their own thing.

On the other hand, sometimes the issue is that we’re more focused on outside performance than internal heart change. Jesus intentionally talked about the importance of the man’s heart. “It is not what goes into a man that defiles him.” As church leaders, counselors, and Christian coaches, we need to address behaviors and mindsets from a heart perspective. Its easy to tell someone to “stop doing that,” but unless we address the underlying motivations we remain humanistic at best, and unethical religious hypocrites at worst.

# Works Cited

Adebayo, R. O., & Govender, J. P. (2020). Marketing as an enabler for churches to fulfill their social responsibility. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, *19*(55), 3–19.

Bahnsen, G. L. (2021). *Theonomy in Christian ethics* (Third Edition, 2002). Covenant Media Press.

Bekink, M. (2021). Reversing the “syndrome of secrecy”: Peremptory reporting obligations in cases of child abuse and neglect. *SA Crime Quarterly*, *70*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2021/vn70a774>

Carrie, L., Jumarali, S. N., Nnawulezi, N. A., Williams, E. P., & Burk, C. (2020). The impact of mandatory reporting laws on survivors of intimate partner violence: Intersectionality, help-seeking and the need for change. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 255–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00103-w>

Cox, M. R., Bowens, B. D., & Newman, T. D. (2022). Children’s social workers’ views on cultural sensitivity in mandated reporting. *Child Welfare*, *100*(3), 55–80.

De Villiers, D. E. (2020). Does the Christian church have any guidance to offer in solving the global problems we are faced with today? *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, *76*(2). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i2.5852>

Dermott, E., & Fowler, T. (2020). What is a family and why does it matter? *Social Sciences*, *9*(5), 83. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050083>

Doré, A. J. (2004). Theology’s responsibility and tasks in today’s church and world. *Theological Studies*, *65*(4), 699–713.

Eckhoff, A., Baker, P., Faulkner, D., John, R., Tilhou, R., & Ed, M. (2017). *Child maltreatment in Virginia: support for further advocacy efforts*.

Elliott, A. (2013). *Concepts of the self* (3rd edition). Polity.

Goodman, L. A., Fauci, J. E., Hailes, H. P., & Gonzalez, L. (2020). Power with and power over: How domestic violence advocates manage their roles as mandated reporters. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 225–239. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00040-8>

Goodman, L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The long shadow of family separation: a structural and historical introduction to mandated reporting in the domestic violence context. *Journal of Family Violence*, *35*(3), 217–223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00132-w>

Hedberg, T. (2018). Toward a small family ethic: How overpopulation and climate change are affecting the morality of procreation by travis rieder (review). *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *28*(4), E-8-E-13. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.2018.0028>

Hong, P., Li, S., Yu, Y., & Deng, Q. (2022). How to enhance the motivation for drug detoxification: Consciousness guidance and behaviour restriction of family intergenerational ethics. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(1), 366. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010366>

Hutchings, K. (2018). *Global ethics: An introduction* (2nd edition). Polity.

Itzkowitz, M., & Olson, K. (2022). Closing the front door of child protection: Rethinking mandated reporting. *Child Welfare*, *100*(2), 77–98.

Khan, S. R., Hirsch, J. S., Wamboldt, A., & Mellins, C. A. (2018). “I didn’t want to be ‘that girl’”: The social risks of labeling, telling, and reporting sexual assault. *Sociological Science*, *5*, 432–460. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v5.a19>

Kwan, S. S. (2007). Clinical efficacy of ritual healing and pastoral ministry. *Pastoral Psychology*, *55*(6), 741–749. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-007-0079-9>

Scher, S., & Kozlowska, K. (2018). Ethics and the self. In *Rethinking health care ethics* (pp. 71–81). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0830-7_6>

Shoemaker, D., Witt, K., & Dufner, A. (2021). Personal identity and ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/identity-ethics/>

Stephens, A. L., Bruce, C. R., Childress, A., & Malek, J. (2019). Why families get angry: Practical strategies for clinical ethics consultants to rebuild trust between angry families and clinicians in the critical care environment. *HEC Forum*, *31*(3), 201–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10730-019-09370-y>

Zigan, K., & Grys, A. L. (2018). Towards an understanding of social responsibility within the Church of England. *Journal of Business Ethics: JBE*, *149*(3), 535–560. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3104-z>