

Pastoral Counseling
Case Studies
2021

Case Study A

This case study will be used to help students learn how to assess and establish goals for the counselee.

Sue came for counseling after she had been fired from her job for stealing. She had not, in fact, stolen money from her company, but had often borrowed money and had replaced it at a later time. Before she could replace the last amount borrowed, however, the company audited the books. She confessed her misdeed and was fired from the company. As a result, Sue began to experience shame, guilt, depression, fear and discouragement.

Sue is a thirty-four-year-old woman. She was pleasant during the initial interview. Open and honest with her answers, she had been reared in Georgia by her unmarried mother. She attended college in North Carolina but had to leave after her sophomore year because she had become pregnant. Seeking better employment opportunities, Sue left North Carolina for New York. There she met and married her husband. He recently lost his job due to COVID related restrictions.

Sue attended Sunday School as a child and considers herself a Christian, but her religious commitment is not related to her ethics.

Case Studies B-G

Group Project

Directions:

The following case studies present some of the issues that many emotionally wounded people face and seek counseling for.

Students will partner with another classmate(s) and discuss together how they will resolve the problems presented in their case. Students will role play the parts of the counselor, counselee, or another character, keeping in mind the characteristics of a Christian counselor, the goals and aims of the early stages of counseling, and Jesus' style of helping others.

1. Students will first counsel the counselee
2. A profile and goals on their counselee will then be established based on what was learned in the class as if the counseling process will continue.
3. Students will discuss the goals that were established for the counselee after making the presentation.

Presentations will be made on **Thursday, April 29, 2021**

CASE STUDY B

Pressing Problem: Victimization

2-3 Characters: Counselee - Geraldine

Church Member Ms. B

Christian Counselor

Background Information

Geraldine is a fourteen-year-old girl who looks older than her age. She is one of eight children. Her mother is single and the family lives in a housing project. A member from her church (Ms. B) took her to a Christian counselor after she had been raped by three neighborhood boys. As she sat in the counselor's office, she held tightly to Ms. B's hand and only looked furtively at the counselor. She spoke almost in a whisper. At one-point Ms. B asked if she wanted to speak to the counselor alone and Geraldine shouted, "**Oh No!**"

Counseling Session

Geraldine related that one of the boys had invited her to go for ice cream one evening. She was flattered. He was an older boy and she felt "grown up" to be in his company. On the way, he told her that he had to stop to see a friend and asked if she would accompany him. They went into an apartment building, which was only partially occupied, and proceeded to the basement where they found two boys drinking beer and smoking marijuana. The three of them stripped her, and while two held her down, each raped her in turn, leaving her naked and screaming for help that never came. Geraldine managed to get dressed and went to the church, where she found Ms. B getting ready for Sunday service. Ms. B. took her to the local emergency room where she was treated and released.

At that point, Geraldine did not want to go home, nor did she want her mother to know. She blurted through her sobs: "*she always blames everything on me.*" Ms. B. thought of the serious ramifications of withholding such a matter from Geraldine's mother and convinced her to tell her mother, promising to go with her. True to Geraldine's prediction, her mother began to berate her and even went so far as to accuse Geraldine of voluntarily having sex with the boys. Ms. B. was shocked but tried to maintain her composure. She explained Geraldine's condition when she had come to the church and stated that it was not possible for Geraldine to have voluntarily engaged in such a heinous act. Geraldine's mother had grudgingly admitted that her daughter probably had been raped.

The boys rounded up by the police, were placed under arrest. At their trial, the defense attorneys put Geraldine through a grueling cross examination, and like Geraldine's mother,

blamed her. They told her to “admit that she did it for money.” The upshot of the case is that the boys were treated as youthful offenders and were remanded to a youth facility. Geraldine was referred to a rape counseling agency run by the police department and staffed by female police officers and social workers. Her recovery has been slow but steady.

Geraldine is experiencing feelings of fear, depression, anger, vulnerability and helplessness. She alternates between denial and acceptance. She is also dealing with feelings of revenge. As Geraldine’s Christian counselor, how can you encourage and help her put her life back in order.

After the initial counseling session with Geraldine, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on her. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions?

CASE STUDY C

Pressing Problem: Sexual Abuse/Suicide Attempt

2 Characters: Counselee – Carmen

Christian Counselor

Background Information

Carmen is a bright, articulate eighteen-year-old high school senior who was referred for counseling because of a suicide attempt. After being seen at the local hospital, she was released to the care of one of the members of her church. Up to this time, Carmen had lived with her mother and her stepfather. The attempt at suicide was Carmen's cry for help. From age eight to aged fifteen, she had been sexually abused by her stepfather.

Carmen's mother worked a mid-night shift job, leaving Carmen alone with the stepfather. In the beginning, the sexual contact between Carmen and her stepfather was innocent. He hugged Carmen and held her close, which made her feel special. He always told her that their relationship was their "secret" and that she was not to tell anyone. It soon disintegrated into ugly sexual abuse.

However, before Carmen's stepfather had started abusing her, he had fathered two children with her older sister, Irene. The girls' mother would not believe that her husband had impregnated Irene, but rather blamed Irene's boyfriend for the pregnancies. Later, Irene decided to begin legal proceeding for statutory rape against her stepfather. Her mother attempted to dissuade her from doing so, but Irene persisted and as a result was thrown out of the house. The stepfather was convicted and spent a year in prison. While her stepfather was in prison, Carmen and her mother moved to another part of town. However, Carmen's mother eventually reconciled with her husband supposedly because she was afraid that he would harm her if she didn't.

Carmen had never told her mother about the sexual abuse she had undergone. Her mother had not believed Irene. How could she expect her mother to believe her? Carmen had been able to repress most of the memories of her sexual abuse until the issue of sexual abuse came up in her high-school health class. Shortly, thereafter, she became clinically depressed and made an attempt at suicide. The first-person Carmen confided in, after being released from the hospital, was a counselor at her church. Her hurt was especially painful because she had so badly needed to be loved, but the love she had received turned out to be something ugly and dirty.

Carmen is experiencing feelings of anger, betrayal, hatred, depression, rejection, fear, being misunderstood and loneliness.

As a Christian counselor, how will you assist Carmen in resolving these issues? How can you help her feel the love and acceptance that she longs for?

After the initial counseling session with Carmen, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on her. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions?

CASE STUDY D

Pressing Problem: Addictive Behavior

2 Male Characters: Counselee – David

Christian Counselor

Background Information

David has been a Christian since the age of ten. He came in for counseling because he was trapped in the dual web of workaholism and sexual addiction. A visit to a prostitute two weeks earlier had precipitated his entrance into counseling. Feeling greatly distressed and trapped, and with his stomach in knots, he wondered if he was developing an ulcer. He had difficulty sleeping, even though he was tired after consistently working twelve to fourteen hours days, six days a week.

David has always worked hard, and during counseling, realized that he has a deep inner sense of having to prove himself. He also has a need to let others know of his accomplishments.

David was introduced to pornographic material as a little boy by uncles who seemed to talk more about sex than about anything else. It was clear that they viewed sexual activity as the sign of manhood. David's mother frequently commented that all of the men on her side of the family were womanizers.

As a junior in high school, David was given pornography by other boys and his sexual fascination grew. As a high school student, he watched pornographic videos at his friend's house, and began going with that friend to strip joints.

These addictive behaviors continued even after his marriage, though he expressed great appreciation for his wife's love and talked of her in loving tones. She, however, was not aware of his problem. David described his state of mind when engaged in these behaviors as "numbness, a compulsion, an almost uncontrollable urge." He began to discover that his workaholism and sexual addiction were interrelated.

During Counseling, David began to realize that television viewing frequently triggered temptation for him. In the early phases of counseling, David frequently remarked about the intense pain and inner void he felt. He commented several times about a deep sadness that he felt whenever he thought back to about age five. He felt that he simply could not overcome the strong urges of his addiction, yet he wanted to be free.

David is experiencing feelings of distress, shame, guilt, sadness, loneliness, emptiness, inadequacy and powerlessness. As David's Christian counselor, how will you help him resolve these issues?

After the initial counseling session with David, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on him. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions?

Case Study E

Pressing Problem: Divorce Recovery

2 Characters – Counselee – Liz

Christian Counselor

Background Information

Liz came for counseling because her husband had announced that after fifteen years of marriage he wanted a divorce. Liz was devastated. They had experienced some disagreements over the years, but she had never really expected their marriage to end even though she had, in moments of anger over the years, told him to divorce her if he was dissatisfied. She had never intended, however, for him to take her seriously.

During the counseling session, Liz stated that her major concern in coming for counseling was that “I have always been Bill’s wife and I have no identity of my own.” She had never developed an identity of her own because, until the day she married, she had lived with her mother (Liz was thirty years old when she got married).

The separation has had a negative effect on the family. Liz says the two children are always at each other’s throats. Bill has moved out but sees the children on alternate weekends. At those times, he does not seem to do anything special with them. They apparently just sit around the apartment, although he sometimes takes them out to eat.

Liz feels ashamed of the separation. She feels that if she had acted differently, Bill would not have left even though she admits that he was not much of a support of her either emotionally or economically. He had worked only sporadically and had not contributed very much to the household budget. Thus, Liz had to look elsewhere for her support, which came from her girlfriends, with whom she is very close. Despite the fact that Bill never supported Liz emotionally, he resented Liz’s relationship with her girlfriends.

The whole situation has affected Liz’s health and job productivity. She has had headaches and insomnia off and on since Bill left. Liz does not want her friends and coworkers to know about the separation and the impending divorce (only some of her very close friends know). She feels very much supported by her close girlfriends, who invite her on weekends to stay overnight and accompany them to church. She feels that her employment, which is very critical, is suffering because she is just going through the motions.

Liz is experiencing feelings of inadequacy, anger, helplessness, abandonment, depression and stress. As her Christian counselor, how can you help Liz resolve her issues and bring healing to her emotional pain? After the initial counseling session with Liz, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on her. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions?

Case Study F

Pressing Problem: Substance Abuse/Legal Troubles

2 Characters – Counselee – Gladys

Christian Counselor

Background Information

Gladys is an intelligent, bright and pleasant woman. She is thirty-three years old and the mother of a three-year old son. At age twenty-three, she owned a dry-cleaning establishment that employed eight people. She is a Phi Beta Kappa college graduate in the top ten percent of her class. She grew up in a comfortable, middle-income home as an only child, and describes both parents as being alcoholics. Her mother, a registered nurse, has just stopped drinking in the last year. Prior to that, she had consumed half a bottle of gin a day for as long as Gladys could remember. Her father, recently retired as a captain in the fire department, has drunk a fifth of scotch per day all of Gladys's life.

Gladys loathed her parent's drinking and vowed never to touch alcohol. To this day she does not drink. A year ago she was invited to a party where guests were smoking marijuana. Influenced by a boyfriend to try "just a little," she at first resisted, but eventually she gave in because she was afraid of losing him. Since marijuana use is legal in her state she thought it would be okay. The feelings of relaxation and calm she experienced was just what she needed with the stress and worry of the current pandemic. She loved the feeling. She began smoking marijuana nightly. With the numbers of COVID cases rising, Gladys has to reduce her store hours and lay off workers. The once nightly habit has become more frequent. She is using marijuana to cope. She is working while under the influence and is making poor business decisions. To help with her looming financial crisis she applies for a special government loan for business impacted by COVID. Gladys is smoking even more now and spends the loan money on unapproved expenses.

Gladys' family realizes she is under the influence of marijuana whenever they visit her at work and home. Her father looks through her mail and finds information that the loan she received has to be repaid because she used it for unapproved expenses. Gladys has no money to repay the loan. Her dad finds a drug rehabilitation program for treatment. He also talks to a lawyer friend who requests an extension for the loan payments. Gladys resents the fact that her father is involved in her affairs and does not think she has a drug problem. Marijuana use is legal and she denies that it is negatively impacting her life.

Gladys is experiencing feelings of depression, fear, and anger. As her Christian counselor, how can you help Gladys resolve her issues of denial and resentment to bring healing to her emotional pain?

After the initial counseling session with Gladys, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on her. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions?

Case Study G

Pressing Problem: Domestic Abuse

4 Characters – 2 Counselees (Richard and Marilyn) and 2 Christian Counselors (one for Richard and one for Marilyn)

Background Information

Marilyn had fallen asleep on the living room couch after an exhausting day. She awoke to hear her husband, Richard, yelling at her to come into the bedroom. When she did not immediately go, he went and dragged her to the bedroom. Richard tried to choke her. She managed to break away, but he grabbed her and continued choking her. Finally, in response to Marilyn's screams, her three teenage children ran downstairs, freed her from their father and took her upstairs to protect her. The next day she obtained a restraining order and her husband was not allowed to enter the home.

Richard came from a home with a highly critical and controlling mother and emotionally absent father, totally dominated by Richard's mother. His parents were obsessive-compulsive perfectionists, who were also physically and verbally abusive. After he became a Christian as a teenager, Richard's mother went into an intense, year-long rage over having lost control of him. Her verbal assaults at this time were merely a continuation of the way she had always treated him.

Richard's relationship with Marilyn is marked by a curious combination of control and dependency. He wants Marilyn to nurture him the kind of supportive, noncritical, caring, accepting, and warm responses that he never received from his mother. Because of the depth of his emotional deprivation and the fear of being controlled by a woman, however, he demands Marilyn's caretaking on an almost constant basis. By delivering his demands forcefully and incessantly, he can exercise almost complete control over Marilyn and by refusing to take "no" for an answer, he is able to avoid facing his feelings of rejection.

Richard has an explosive temper, although he comes across to the outsider as being very mild-mannered. Richard physically abused Marilyn by grabbing, holding, pushing, and hitting. His abuse began early in their relationship; he first hit Marilyn about a year after they began dating. Most of the abuse, however, is emotional or verbal. Throughout their courtship he was jealous and possessive. His jealousy showed even during their wedding reception – he became angry when he saw that Marilyn was talking to the best man.

Marilyn was a caretaker and a people pleaser. She had been conditioned from early childhood to be the nurturing mother type that Richard demanded. This caretaker role came naturally. Marilyn was born into a sickly family; her grandfather was dying, and her older sibling was extremely colicky. At a very young age, Marilyn began to carry a little doctor's kit

around to take care of other people's hurts. At school, she gravitated toward kids who were distressed and needed her help. Then she would come home and help her parents with chores every afternoon. During their marriage, Richard continually tried to get her to take care of him by showing utter helplessness over the slightest "ouchie" (as he called a cut he incurred during a counseling session and begged Marilyn to "help").

By the time they began counseling, Marilyn was filled with resentment toward Richard, although she was at the same time highly dependent on him. She had been unable of maintain any independence of identity, thought, or action from Richard, even during the time of their court-ordered separation of several months.

Richard had concluded early in the counseling that the counselor was an "enemy". It was suggested that Richard and Marilyn both start with individual counseling and later marriage counseling.

As a Christian counselor for Marilyn, how will you assist her in resolving her issues?

As a Christian counselor for Richard, how will you assist him in resolving his issues?

After the initial counseling sessions, create an analysis (BASIC ID) on both Marilyn and Richard. What goals will you set up for future counseling sessions for each of them?

Final Project

1500-2000 Word Counseling Paper

Due May 6, 2021

A Case Study on Crossroads: A Story of Forgiveness¹

**A Case Study prepared for
Pastoral Counseling**

¹ John K. Harrison, 2007. *Crossroads: A Story of Forgiveness* (Hallmark Hall of Fame Productions, Inc.). Details have been added to this story to help with the counseling purposes outlined in the lectures and presentations in this course.

INTRODUCTION

This case study is based on a true story of a family, which is thrown into the torment of living through the aftermath of an avoidable accident that took the lives of two of its members. As you read through the story, make mental notes on each of the primary characters: Bruce, Josh, Brody, and Justin. You will be asked to provide a counseling scenario for one of these four central characters. Your responsibility is to assign a presenting attitude or position (an attitude with which the client will enter counseling) to the client around whom you will create the Counseling Structure/Strategy in your paper. The three attitudes or positions are: **Willing, Blaming and Attending.**

THE FAMILY

The Murakamis are an upper middle-class family who live in a single-family home in the suburbs of a prosperous midsize city in California. Bruce and Cindy are the parents of two sons (Josh, 19 and Brody, 15) and an adopted daughter (Chelsea, 11). They are a Christian family who is active in church, known to those primarily within each member's economic and social status, and would be considered a caring and functional family by those who know them best.

Bruce and Cindy

Bruce is the owner of the Murakami Construction Company. Business is good but jobs are at a premium. This economic state of affairs forces Bruce to focus on getting and maintaining contracts so that his crews not only stay busy but have a steady income for the care of their families. A steady income for him is also a concern. His wife, Cindy, of twenty-one years, is a stay-at-home mom, which means that the family relies on him for financial

stability. He and his wife are extremely close and the addition of their adopted daughter, Chelsea, seems to have completed their family. Josh is in his first year in college. Although he has a partial scholarship, the expenses of college are still a pinch on the family income. The result of this financial responsibility is less time with the family. However, at this point in the family's life, Bruce's focus on the economic wellbeing of his family, though noticeable, has not caused any extraordinary pressure on the family's interpersonal relationships. The reason: mom takes up the emotional slack with her active nurturing style and close relationships with children.

Josh

Bruce and Cindy's firstborn, Josh, is 19 years old and in his freshman year of college. He is respectful of his parents, academically above average, and is dating a girl with whom he has a healthy and supportive relationship. People tend to see Josh as more mature than his age. He is an academic-minded young man who possesses his father's love for business. Josh demonstrates no resentment toward his father's business or the demands that it requires to be successful. He loves his mother and welcomes and enjoys the presence of his adopted sister. Though he is not now at home, Josh was a good big brother to Brody.

Brody

A small statured freshman in high school and interested in music much more than athletics, Brody relies heavily on those closest to him for approval or acceptance. Though a family friend of his mother (Melissa) is more like an aunt to Brody, his mother remains his primary source of stability and praise and his little sister is the free spirit and "full of joy" influence in his life. Both mom and Chelsea love to hear Brody's creative skills on the

keyboard, which is his place of solitude, calm, and reflection. With Mom and Chelsea around, he receives the support that he needs. While he deeply wishes he could get more attention from his dad and knows that Josh cannot give the attention now that he once did, Brody and his father, who is busy in business and has no ear or real interest in music, are able to avoid much conflict that would, otherwise, rise to the surface. Brody is not as self-confident or reliant as his brother, Josh. While Josh is able to focus on what he needs to do to move ahead in life, Brody requires more attention and support.

Chelsea

Adopted from a Korean family when she was four, she has been a joyous addition to the Murakami family for seven years. Chelsea and her new family were united in every way. Even Brody, who could have seen Chelsea as a threat to his mother's attention, gradually welcomed her and the love that she enthusiastically showed him.

THE ACCIDENT

It is late afternoon on a beautiful spring day. At the worksite, Bruce and his crew is concerned about losing the contract on the building with which they are presently engaged. Bruce consoles the crew and then, while in his truck on his way home, contacts the buyer to determine whether or not he received the bank's approval for funds that allow the job to continue. The buyer tells Bruce that it looks like the funding is going to continue, but he does not have the final word, yet should know within a half hour or so. It is about 4:00! Bruce arrives home and finds Chelsea having a tremendous time jumping on the backyard trampoline. Briefly, the two exchange niceties and a quick kiss and Bruce continues into the kitchen where Cindy is preparing to leave to pick up a few things at the Mall before serving

dinner at 6:00. They embrace and Bruce tells Cindy that he needs to go to the bank to see the buyer about bank funding. Cindy calls Chelsea in from the back yard and tells Bruce that she and Chelsea will be back in an hour. "The food is cooking in the oven and will be ready for a 6:00 dinner. Will you be back?" Bruce assures her that he will. "Brody!" Cindy calls upstairs to where Brody is playing his keyboard. "Chelsea and I are going to the Mall. We will be back in an hour; dinner is at six!" Okay, mom! When you get back, I would like you to listen to this music that I've been working on. I think it is pretty good and would like you to tell me what you think." "I am sure it is wonderful, Brody. I can't wait to hear it. Is after dinner a good time?" "You bet mom! Be careful out there! Hey, dad! would you be able to listen as well?" As Bruce follows Cindy and Chelsea out the door, he leans back in. "I'll try Brody, but I may need to talk with my project manager about the building I am working on. We'll have to see, Brody." Quietly Brody, while turning back into his room, says, "I guess it will be just mom and Chelsea."

Bruce gives Cindy and Chelsea each a kiss as they get into the van and begin backing out of the drive. As Bruce starts to get into his truck, the phone rings. It is the buyer who tells Bruce that the bank has approved the extra funds to continue the project. With Cindy and Chelsea heading to the Mall, Bruce determines that he has time to get back to the worksite before 5:00 to let the workers know that the contract has been extended. They will sleep easier and not have to burden their families if they know that the job is continuing. Bruce's drive will now take him past the Mall to which Cindy and Chelsea are heading.

He decides to inform Cindy of the great news. Chelsea answers the phone. "Hi Dad!". "Hello Chelsea! Answering mom's phone again, huh?" "You don't want mom talking on the phone and driving at the same" The phone is disconnected. Bruce redials but there is no

answer. As Bruce gets closer to the Mall, he hears sirens from any number of emergency vehicles. Then he notices the bellowing of black smoke a couple of blocks in front of him. As he draws even closer, he notices that the burning vehicle appears to be a van. He pulls to the side of the street, leaves his vehicle and begins running toward the accident. As his worst fear becomes more and more evident, the vehicle explodes sending a violent concussion and burning heat in all directions. Bruce is stopped in his tracks stunned by the realization that his wife and daughter could be dead. He frantically runs around to witnesses and arriving police asking if they saw anyone get away from the vehicle. It is painfully clear that hope was not an option onto which he could hold. Cindy and Chelsea were gone.

THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Initially, the investigation found that eyewitness reports were contradictory. Without clear evidence, the accident report concluded that Cindy had failed to signal before making a left turn into the Mall. An oncoming motorist, unable to stop, ran into the front right side of the car, which spun the car and caused it to overturn and eventually explode. The report showed, with some certainty that Chelsea was killed on impact, but was uncertain as to the time of Cindy's death. This initially and obviously caused the family an increase in emotional and mental suffering. Nonetheless, Bruce and Josh were especially concerned with the accuracy of the report. Their mother was the most cautious driver whom they had known.

“Mom does not use a turn signal! Impossible; she was constantly on us about being attentive and driving safely. There is no way that she failed to use a turn signal.”

Unconvinced about the findings of the investigation, Bruce started looking for a high-powered attorney, whom he once noted in a local news story was a stickler for getting to the

bottom of issues that could undermine justice. Bruce was determined to acquire the talents of this determined lawyer; whose schedule was anything but light. Eventually, because of Bruce's unwillingness to relent, she and her staff began investigating the accident. Through revisiting eyewitness reports and finding previously unviewed surveillance material, the lawyer was able to determine that the accident was not the result of failing to signal properly, but due to teenage street racers using local streets to challenge the power of one another's cars. The evidence showed that Cindy and Chelsea's vehicle was hit by a car moving at 80 miles per hour, which explained the severity and fatal nature of the impact. Charges were immediately filed against **Justin Gutierrez** (an 18-year-old high school senior). He pled not guilty!

THE TRIAL

Bruce's anger was somewhat more than simply wanting justice. He wanted justice on a person whom he assumed or imagined would be guilty of such a crime. You know the type: anti-social, long-haired, rebellious leather jacketed drug abusing high school dropout. When he saw the "killer" of his wife and daughter for the first time at the arraignment, Justin was anything but what expected. The only thing that could have upset him was that he pled not guilty. Justin looked just like one of his own kids and his mother and father seemed like replicas of Cindy and him. Bruce was in emotional turmoil but continued with the trial—though his prejudice was uncovered, justice was still an issue.

Justin's plea of not guilty was initially a response to his lawyer attempting to limit the degree of punishment that his client might receive. However, eventually, Justin's conscience got the best of him. Since the accident, his mind and heart had been relentlessly tormented

by the consequence of his actions. His foolishness had killed two people. He knew that he was guilty and convinced his parents to go along with his decision to change his plea. Not only was the evidence strong, but equally as strong was the conviction in Justin's heart. As Bruce watched this young man take responsibility for what had happened, his heart began to change. In time, the sorrow and repentance that he saw in Justin, and the turmoil in his parents was equal to the justice that he wanted melded out. To the surprise of the attorneys, the judge and his own children, Bruce decided to forgive the teenager for killing his wife and daughter. However, he still wanted a consequence placed on Justin that he thought would not only be sufficient for Justin but would also have a lasting influence on the community at large. Bruce talked with Justin and his parents to determine if Justin would join him in providing seminars in local high schools discussing the dangers of teenage street racing. After much soul-searching, Justin agreed, and with the approval of the presiding judge, Justin was awarded penalties related to his reckless driving and permitted to accompany Bruce on training seminars and local schools in lieu of a prison term.

THE REACTION OF JOSH AND BRODY

Josh's Reaction

Josh and his girlfriend immediately came home from college upon news of his mother's and sister's deaths. He remained home for approximately two weeks. Unable to say goodbye to his father, he told his mother's friend, Melissa, to let Bruce know that he needed to get back to college for midterms and that he would call when they were completed. Bruce took this well. Melissa suggested that Josh found it difficult to say goodbye because he equated this term with the emotion he experienced saying goodbye to his mother and sister

during the funerals. Josh simply wanted to get back to his schedule and move on the best he could; however, he did remain interested in the trial.

Josh believed that justice was required and wanted the young teen punished. But he also trusted his father to deal with the situation properly. Josh was supportive when he learned that his father decided to forgive Justin and have him travel to local schools to share the consequences of street racing. This would not bring his mother and sister back, but it would bring some closure or fortunate circumstance from an unfortunate and tragic accident.

Brody

Just after Josh went back to college, Brody left home and went to see Josh at his college. Brody and his father were not seeing “eye to eye” on anything. Everything that Brody would share with his mother or do with his sister was gone and Bruce was now busy with his business and “quest” for justice, which meant that dad would have even less time to think about Brody’s life and needs. Brody told Josh that he felt invisible and was merely pretending to be alive. He felt unnoticed and, subsequently, unwanted. There was no one home with whom he could share the interests of his heart, especially his music. When his mother and sister died, Brody died with them. He would have preferred to die rather than to be alive without them. Concerned about Brody and his father’s relationship, Josh called his father and told him what Brody was experiencing. Bruce dropped everything and went to pick up Brody.

Brody also felt that the trial was a waste of time. Justice was not going to replace his mother and sister; in fact, the only consequence of the trial and his dad’s traveling around with the killer of his mother and sister is even less time with dad. Though his father had done

an amazing thing in forgiving Justin, his actions did nothing to show his commitment and love for Brody, and this is what Brody needed now more than ever before. One could almost say that Brody not only lost his mother and sister, he was in the process of completely losing his father.

CONCLUSION

At some point in this story, you as the Christian counselor are asked to see one of these three characters. Possibly the family friend has encouraged one of the characters to come and see you, or one has willingly come to ask for counsel. It is your decision to decide how you want the client to come to you, how you will counsel the client, and at what point you will enter this tragedy: just after the accident, during the trial, or after the trial. You are to apply what you have learned regarding Christian pastoral counseling.