

What is a Pastoral Counselor?

The *American Association of Pastoral Counselors* (AAPC) describes pastoral counselors as “clergy who have received graduate training in both religion and behavioral science for a clinical practice and/or a counseling ministry that integrates psychological and theological disciplines.”

Pastoral counselors may practice/minister in private offices and institutions other than their local congregations and faith communities. They often do consultations for clergy in the community, and they may serve local law enforcement, health care agencies, hospitals, and educational institutions with the title “chaplain.”

In most states (including California), no license is required to perform pastoral counseling. However, clergy (i.e. ministers, priests, or rabbis) who practice/minister as “pastoral counselors” must maintain ministerial credentials/certification (e.g. ordination) within their established religious organizations, and they are accountable to their faith communities.*

*Non-clergy pastoral counselors are affiliated with professional associations, require certification, and are subject to state regulation. Moreover, they lack the rights and privileges which the federal government and most states grant to clergy (e.g. solemnize legal marriage, priest/penitent confidentiality privilege, administration of sacred rites such as “sanctuary,” death rites, spiritual proxy and mediation, tax/financial benefits and exemptions, etc.).

The Oldest Profession

Dr. Harold G. Koenig, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at *Duke University Medical Center* is the author of *The Oldest Profession*. He wrote:

For most of our country's history, counseling has been done by pastors. A tremendous amount of counseling is still conducted by clergy in one-on-one sessions with congregants and members of the community.

The estimated 350,000 clergy in the United States spend an average of 15 percent of their time on counseling. This adds up to more time spent on counseling than the entire membership of the *American Psychological Association* working 40 hours per week.

Public Opinion

Greenberg-Quinlan-Rosner Research conducted recent polls in America and stated:

The public sees a clear link between the strength of one's spiritual faith and the status of one's mental health.

✓ 83% agreed strongly that “spirituality is an important ingredient to mental health treatments including psychotherapy.

✓ an overwhelming number of Americans recognize a close link between spiritual faith, religious values, and mental health.

✓ 75% percent would prefer to seek assistance from a mental health counselor who recognizes and integrates their spiritual values into the counseling process.

✓ 69% mentioned “pastoral counselors” as the type of counselor they would seek out if they had a “serious problem” that required a mental health counselor.

The Gallup Poll has surveyed Americans' view on the counseling profession for many years. They've found that Americans continue to express a “strong level of support for pastoral counselors.”

✓ 66% said they would prefer to receive counseling from a person who represented their spiritual values.

✓ 81% said they wanted their own spiritual values respected and integrated into the counseling process.

✓ 75% said it was important to incorporate faith in the counseling process to overcome a “serious emotional or mental problem.”

For more: www.galluppoll.com & www.greenbergresearch.com.

Spirituality—Your Healing Resource

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Help From Above

Alison Buckholtz of *The Washington Post* wrote *HELP FROM ABOVE: In Times of Trouble, Growing Numbers of People Take Comfort in Faith-Based Therapy* (12/2005). The following exact quotes are selected portions of her article:

When Mary Bailey of Takoma Park sought help for stress and anxiety, one thing was clear to her: She didn't want to see a psychologist or psychiatrist.

A health care worker, mother and evangelical Christian, Bailey says that “being a Christian guides the choices I make and how I make sense of the world. I didn't think a psychologist or psychiatrist would be sensitive to that.”

So Bailey, like increasing numbers of people seeking help with personal problems, called a pastoral counseling center. She was matched with a therapist with an MA in psychology and “enough religious background to know what I was talking about and guide me,” Bailey said. While their discussions were not overtly religious, “we both knew that there's a purpose for the different challenges I was dealing with,” Bailey said. “We could say things like, ‘Let's leave it to God.’”

Pastoral counseling is often the choice of high-profile figures who find themselves in trouble. Seeing a pastoral counselor demonstrates that they are dealing with their lapses while avoiding the stigma often attached to treatment by psychologists or psychiatrists. When Bill Clinton, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, former U.S. House Speaker Bob Livingston and Fox TV personality Bill O'Reilly faced scandals prompted by their personal behavior, each sought help from pastoral counselors.

This entire article: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/02/AR2005120202402.html.

Rev. Jerry Seiden, M.A.
Pastoral Counselor

Jerry Seiden is an ordained minister and a former chaplain for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He is a farm boy from Illinois, a Vietnam veteran, an alumni of



Vanguard University, the father of two (Brooke & Timothy—both young adults), the grandfather of four, and the husband of one (Kathleen) for 34 years.

In his 28 years of ministry, Jerry has pastored congregations in Paramount, Ventura, and Costa Mesa. He is currently pastor of *Spirit of Hope Christian Fellowship*, a special ministry for those who struggle to fit in a traditional congregation due to a variety of emotional or behavioral needs, past abuse, problems with ADD/adhd, learning disabilities, addiction, recovery issues, or related problems.

As an inspirational speaker and small group facilitator, Jerry relies on spirituality as his primary healing resource. He teaches the effectiveness of the 12-Steps as a spiritual model for life. He focuses on the daily, practical, spiritual application of the steps, and teaches an easy-to-use method of mood management to stay “emotionally sober” and “spiritually connected” in the face of life’s craziness. Jerry knows from first-hand experience how the 12-Steps offer sobriety, spirituality, structure, safety, simplicity, serenity, mood-stability, improved self-esteem, and the support of others.

Those whom Jerry counsels, coaches, or mentors soon understand that he defines “**spirituality**” as *being in proper relationship to the truth*. Jerry teaches practical tools to guard hearts and heal souls. Participants and parishioners learn to use the common chaos of current crisis to discover the truth about themselves. They see how their own vexed values have confined their choices and redefined their identity as victims, survivors, and martyrs. Those who work Jerry’s **Reality Checkbook** rediscover their true values, find safety from spiritual and emotional abuse, learn to manage moods, and develop a new level of spiritual awareness.

Author, Writer, Editor, Publisher...

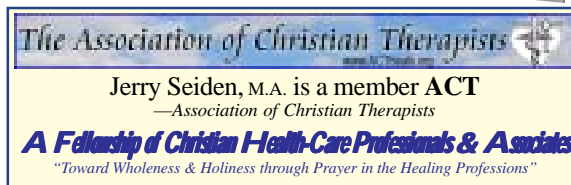
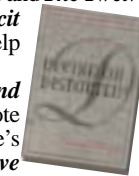
Although Jerry Seiden has written or compiled/edited some 60 published titles related to recovery, self-help, and spirituality, his work has most often been behind the scenes as a contract writer (ghostwriter) and development editor. Jerry worked with RPI Publishing to produce the best selling *The 12 Steps for Christians* and *The 12 Steps—A Spiritual Journey*. Jerry also worked with RPI to produce and *The Twelve Steps—A Guide for Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder* ... and many other recovery/self-help related books.

Divine or Distorted? God As We Understand God was the first book that Jerry Seiden wrote for himself as author (1993). More recently he’s authored *Born Losers or Leaders? A Positive*



Spiritual Perspective on ADD (2005), *The Reality Checkbook for Life in the StormTrack* (2007), *Wounded Hearts Walk In Circles* (2008), and *ADD, Christianity, & the Church* by Jerry Seiden & Jonathan Scott Halverstadt, MFT (2008).

In 1999 Jerry Seiden began the publishing outreach of *Spirit of Hope Publishing* as a means to share a spiritually based message of hope and to support the non-profit work of *Spirit of Hope Christian Fellowship*.



Jerry Seiden, M.A. is a member ACT
—Association of Christian Therapists

A Fellowship of Christian Health-Care Professionals & Associates
“Toward Wholeness & Holiness through Prayer in the Healing Professions”

Mended Hearts

The wounded heart won't lie
—pain has laid it bare.

The broken soul can't boast
—sorrow has stripped all airs.

The suffering man or woman,
cannot judge or scold.

The honesty of scars revealed
tell the story—bare the soul.

The torn, the tempted, the crushed
have found new ears to hear.

They listen now and understand
—in comfort, in care, in tears.

They will not fix, advise, or counsel.
No imperative, no sermon, no wind.

They are blinded by love and can only point
to the One who mended them.

JerrySeiden

Pastoral Counseling

What is it?
How does it help?



“In times of trouble, growing numbers of people take comfort in faith-based therapy. Pastoral counseling is often the choice of high-profile figures....”

Alison Buckholtz, *The Washington Post*
from “**HELP FROM ABOVE**”*

✓ **75% of Americans** said it's important to incorporate faith in counseling to overcome serious emotional or mental problems.

✓ **81%** wanted their own spiritual values respected and integrated into the counseling process.

Research by *The Gallup Poll**

“For most of our country's history, counseling has been done by pastors. A tremendous amount still is conducted by clergy. ...15 percent of their time on counseling adds up to more time spent counseling than the entire membership of the *American Psychological Association* working 40 hours per week.”

from *The Oldest Profession**

by **Dr. Harold G. Koening**, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at *Duke University Medical Center*

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