

# EQUIPPING A NEW GENERATION TO SERVE

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After eight years as a licensed professional counselor, my responsibilities shifted from counseling families in distress to counseling the counselors who were helping them. I was tasked with developing graduate-level interns and not-yet-licensed counselors. Rather than counseling five or six families each day, I was mentoring young counselors during those hours, reaching even more families through them.

One afternoon I was visited by a former pastor. When I told him of my work as a counselor, he wondered if I'd thought about working with pastors and missionaries, helping them provide competent care to those they're tasked with serving. I told him that I was unsure if pastors and missionaries were interested in seeking out the input of a professional counselor. I was wrong.

After that discussion, I met with other church leaders. They acknowledged the need for counseling and consultation by those with specialized training and experience. I shifted the focus of my doctoral dissertation as a result. My investigation concluded that pastors indeed recognize the need for counseling.

Not long after that, God began to lead me to join the faculty of my undergraduate alma mater Hobe Sound Bible College.

In the Fall 2014 issue of *The Torch*, it was announced that HSBC had received approval to offer both associate and bachelor degrees on-campus and online. The Summer 2015 issue included an article titled "What's so Christian about Counseling?" that sought to explain how a counseling program fits the mission of HSBC to "prepare servant-leaders who think Biblically, live Spirit-filled lives, fulfill the great commission, and glorify God in all they do." It was noted that soul-care has been a central mission of the church since long before the advent of modern counseling. The unique qualities of Christian counseling were highlighted and the degree offerings at HSBC were introduced.

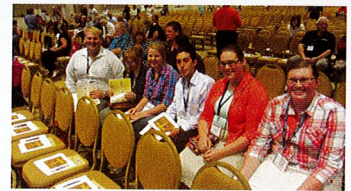
We had two students enroll in the Counseling Program in 2014-2015. In 2015-2016 we added twelve new students and two transfer students. This fall we added another eleven new students. We've officially merged the on-campus and online Counseling departments which added another nineteen students. Those numbers don't include the students in other HSBC departments who are minoring in Counseling.

In that Summer 2015 article, two key objectives were outlined: to provide information and skills-training for those who have the desire to provide competent Christian-based counseling and to provide the prerequisites needed so graduates could apply to graduate school, the next step

toward licensure. Not only did our first BA in Counseling graduate get accepted into one of the top Christian graduate counseling programs, but we've discovered our curriculum meets the educational criteria for the Certified Addiction Professional (CAP) credential in addition to Board-Certification as a Biblical Counselor (BCBC) or Pastoral Counselor (BCPC).

Our students learn about evidence-based strategies and how to implement them consistent with Christian principles. Assignments help them develop their skills both

## HSBC Counseling Students Scheduled to Attend AACC World Conference



*In 2015 I had the opportunity to take a van of counseling students to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the American Association of Christian Counselors' World Conference. We learned from some of the greatest leaders involved in Christian counseling: John Ortberg, Joni Eareckson Tada, Mike Huckabee, Matt Chandler, Diane Langberg, and many others. In fact I was able to meet Dr. James Dobson!*

*More than 7,000 counselors will return to Nashville this coming September. We've reserved two vans so even more of us can attend from Hobe Sound. We'll hear from Caroline Leaf, Anne Graham Lotz, Richard Blackaby, Mark McMinn, Eric Metaxas—and many more. It's three days packed full of workshops and interactions with others who are passionate about providing competent care and counsel.*

in and out of class. We're in the process of expanding the opportunities for students to gain experience working with local ministries (a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, and a home for pregnant teens) and international ministries (including Touching Lives for Christ, a short-term mission outreach ministry of Hobe Sound Bible Church). This coming September, our students have the opportunity to attend the American Association of Christian Counseling conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

I still have the opportunity to work with clients both here locally and through video technology—and I really did expand my counseling and consultation to include pastors, missionaries, and denominational leaders. But the most exciting thing has been to see how God is working in and through the Counseling program at HSBC to equip a new generation of students, both on-campus and online, to serve those in distress.