The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling

Daniel Schipani’s thesis is that “pastoral counseling must be reframed; it must be viewed, practiced, and taught in a new and different framework. Its normative biblical and theological base must be affirmed and stated afresh.” He further proposes: “we can accomplish this reframing well by reclaiming wisdom (wisdom in the light of God, that is) as the master metaphor for pastoral counseling.”

Praise for The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling:

Challenging the temptation to fall back on secular mental health terminology in pastoral counseling, Daniel Schipani proposes wisdom as a powerful biblical alternative. Rich case studies illustrate how pastoral counselors can center their counseling around the good news of Jesus and deepen the moral and spiritual intelligence of those in need.

—Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore
Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling
The Divinity School, Vanderbilt University

(See reverse side for more)

Praise for

The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling
by Daniel S. Schipani

Daniel Schipani’s groundbreaking book relocates pastoral care and counseling where it rightly belongs—within the mainstream of the Christian theological tradition. He recovers a biblical understanding of wisdom and moves beyond a medical paradigm to an understanding of pastoral ministry that facilitates growth in wisdom in the context of the natural vulnerabilities and celebrations of lived experience. Bringing both biblical and psychological insights to bear on engaging case studies, this book embodies all that is best in contemporary practical theology.

—David Lyall
Senior Lecturer, Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh

The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling is a significant contribution to the pastoral counseling literature, a creative trajectory for future work. Daniel Schipani argues persuasively that pastoral counseling is problematic when separated from the norms and context of the church (as happens both in church and agency settings), and that it is best understood as part of the wisdom tradition of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. He shows us how to recover our roots by retrieving the wisdom tradition; in two constructive chapters he demonstrates that the way of wisdom functions effectively as a structure and context for doing pastoral counseling.

—James N. Poling
Professor of Pastoral Care, Counseling, and Theology
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Schipani’s work takes us in the vitally important direction of deprofessionalizing pastoral care and moving beyond the predominance of the psychotherapeutic paradigm for its practice. His accent on wisdom will lead to a restoration of pastoral care as a theological endeavor, to a reframing of the discipline, and to a clearer understanding of competency in the field.

—Daniel Louw
Dean, Professor of Practical Theology
University of Stellenbosch

Schipani’s clearly written, useful book introduces the way of wisdom, an organizing metaphor and thus provides a theological rationale for pastoral counseling at all levels which is has hitherto lacked.

—Stephen Pattison
Head of Department
Department of Religious and Theological Studies
Cardiff University

I am especially impressed with how Schipani draws on the collective wisdom of contemporary authors in the field in order to develop his own way of wisdom. By highlighting words like “reframing” and “reenvisioning” he makes clear that pastoral counselors try to help troubled people look at their situations in new ways, from new perspectives, and that this is a very human thing to do. It opens up new possibilities!

—Donald Capps
William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary

Contents include:
Reflecting on the practice
Four windows to pastoral counseling
An emerging vision for pastoral counseling
Reclaiming wisdom as the heart
The reign of God and wisdom in the light of God
Wisdom in the biblical tradition
Jesus and the wisdom of God
Interlude: Understanding and appropriating wisdom
Wisdom and pastoral counseling
Reframing pastoral counseling
Viewed and practiced pastorally
Contextualized ecclesiologically
Centered on Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God
Grounded in Scripture
Carried out as a re-creative process guided by the Spirit
Oriented toward the reign of God
Reenvisioning pastoral counseling
A distinctive way of walking with others
As they face life’s challenges and struggles
That they may live wisely in the light of God
Bibliography

DANIEL S. SCHIPANI (Dr. Psy., Universidad Católica Argentina; Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary) is Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. He lectures widely and is the author or editor of twenty books on pastoral and practical theology, and education.