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## Some motivations and expectations of rural men regarding professional counselling services: 'You can't just go to town and get counselling'

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**Some Motivations and Expectations of Rural Men Regarding  
Professional Counselling Services:**

**"You can't just go to town and get counselling."**

by

Neil Stanley Lackey

B.Sc., University of Toronto, 1975

M.Div., Victoria University, University of Toronto, 1979.

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Theology in Pastoral Counselling

1995

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### **Abstract:**

A qualitative research report focused on interviews with twelve rural men between the ages of 30 and 55 living for at least 10 consecutive years in a community with a population of less than two thousand persons. Most were farmers.

Findings indicate that the rural male's motivation to use a professional counsellor may be greatly increased when the following three factors are attended to:

1. Professional Public Relations (PR) (advertising/marketing geared to the rural language and setting;
2. Individual men Naming their issue and Knowing someone who might be helpful (N/K)

AND

3. Normalization (via PR) of knowledge that rural males are using and benefiting from Professional counselling services.
- These findings suggest a narrative approach to PR and Normalization.

Findings also reveal an existing Informal Counselling network which often satisfies a rural man. Also demonstrated is the importance of known, trusted referring persons (non professional or Informal Counsellors) who can, using informal means, present a realistic picture to rural men of what professional counselling might offer.

For persons wanting to provide Professional Counselling services to rural men, the issue of whether to call oneself a counsellor or therapist is explored, each term carrying

motivational implications for rural male with "Counsellor/counselling" tending to be more accepted and less threatening.

Implications for the Church are indicated and Incarnation, making the word become flesh, is shown to be a vitally important motivational factor if rural men are going to consider steps toward asking a professional counsellor for help.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many people have cooperated and risked sharing their personal experience with me for this thesis. Tom O'Connor's class in Research Design and the feedback of class members was invaluable in helping me begin formulating the specific question I wanted to investigate. Dr. Peter VanKatwyk offered supervision throughout my project and the Seminary Ethics committee helped me firm up my proposal so that the well-being of my subjects was assured. My thanks to all these people whose involvement formed the basis for collecting my data and surveying the literature.

The service providers who offer counselling and support service to the rural community were extremely helpful. Thank you for the information you provided, and the access some of you were able to give me to names of persons who might participate in this project. I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Psychological Services, Stratford General Hospital (Rick Graff), Stratford Family Counselling (Donna Bach), Perth District Health Unit (Dr. Susan Tamblin), Perth District Health Council Mental Health (George Stock), Women in Rural Development (Carol Rock), The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (John Bancroft), and individuals with connections to the rural community, Alan Scott, Rev Todd MacDonald, Ms. Marion Jackson-Tyler, and Mr. John King.

The men I interviewed were patient with my sometimes wordy questions, and gave me much enjoyment as we explored questions together. I thank you for the time you gave, the thoughtful and revealing comments you offered, and especially for the informal conversations that preceded and followed our taped interviews. Your capacity to seek out appropriate consultants for your needs pleasantly surprised me. What you have shared has both informed and affected me. You changed my view about the location of professional counselling sessions and you offered me a brand new concept: Informal Counselling, as well as renewed my conviction of Incarnational reality. My gratitude to each of you.

To my readers, who in spite of overly busy schedules themselves, were able to put up with drafts of parts and then the whole of my thesis, offering comments that helped clarify the direction and content along the way. Thank you Peter VanKatwyk, Elizabeth Huss, Mary McIntosh, and John Henderson.

And finally, our children, Kristen, Eric and Alison, who received countless "I'm working on my thesis right now" excuses to many of their requests for games and TV watching times. Now we can play again! And to my wife Linda, who beyond the call of her marriage vows, put up with a messy living room and inaccessible dining room table for six months. Most of all I appreciate her comments, questions and support of my work. Thank you all.

Neil Lackey July 17, 1995.

## Table of Contents

Abstract . . . . .	i
Acknowledgements to Readers and Participants . . . . .	iii
Table of Contents . . . . .	v
Forward . . . . .	vii
Introduction . . . . .	1
<b>Chapter 1      Methodology . . . . .</b>	<b>2</b>
Recruitment of Subjects . . . . .	2
The Interview . . . . .	5
Coding the Data . . . . .	7
<b>Chapter 2      Literature Review . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>
What is Rural? . . . . .	13
What is Rural ... Therapy? . . . . .	15
How Are Men Involved in Therapy? . . . . .	16
<b>Chapter 3      Evidence from the Interviews . . . . .</b>	<b>20</b>
(a) Demographic Data . . . . .	20
(b) Themes . . . . .	23
PR - Public Relations . . . . .	27
N/K - Naming and Knowing . . . . .	35
Normalization . . . . .	39
Rural Men Describe Counsellors and Therapists . . . . .	53
Non Professional or Informal Counselling . . . . .	61

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Findings: A Discussion of the Data</b>	<b>68</b>
	Incarnation: the core assumption ...	74
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Summary of Findings</b> .....	<b>76</b>
	PR (Public Relations - information sharing) .....	76
	N/K (Naming and Knowing) .....	76
	Normalization .....	78
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Theological Reflection: "Please Incarnate Again"</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Implications for the Church</b> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Ways for Counsellors to Engage Rural Men</b> .....	<b>100</b>

**Appendices**

Appendix A	Letter of Introduction, Consent Form Proposed Interview Questions, and Demographic Information Request .....	103
Appendix B	Outline to Service Providers .....	110
Appendix C	Help List given to Participants .....	113
Appendix D	Transcript Editing Memo .....	115
Bibliography	.....	116

## FORWARD

As the son of a United Church Minister who served the church for 40 years in rural communities, I grew up in small villages (population less than 2,500). Except for a 7 year educational sojourn in Toronto, I have lived 36 years in 5 different rural communities, 4 in Canada, one in New Zealand. I have wondered how people in small communities could survive knowing almost everything about everybody. As a teenager, I often tried to "sneak in", attempting unsuccessfully to escape not only the notice of my parents, but also the penetrating eyes of neighbours, watchful beyond midnight.

I have marvelled at responses to emergencies - the burned out barn being cleaned up and rebuilt in a few days by dozens of busy neighbours. The entire fall plowing, completed in one day as a double trio of powerful tractors relentlessly turned the sod of one field after another.

As a rural United Church minister with 15 years of pastoral experience, I have also sensed the stressful, silent suffering of those who could not bring themselves to tell any other living being about the stress they were facing. In my study and at their kitchen tables I have heard women speak eloquently, passionately, tearfully of the needs of their menfolk, but I have seldom conversed as deeply with a rural man about his needs, or the needs of his friends.

I have been surprised at the depth of global knowledge rural folk need to survive in constantly changing market conditions. A rural farm man moved me deeply when he risked speaking, at my request, of his expectations dashed in the dry summer after expending his hope-filled labour to plant, till, tend and fertilize his crop. With accurate records he demonstrated the unrecoverable loss of more than fifty percent of the monetary investment he had paid out, and no financial reward for any of his labour. Pride moved through me as I listened to another farm man explain to a group of Seminary Students the costs of purchasing, maintaining and operating his harvesting equipment. The students later spoke of the difficulty they had to imagine making an investment of half-a million dollars, uncertain of either the rate or amount of income that would be generated, but knowing both the rate and amount of expenses that would have to be paid - on time! How does one minister to such men, often appearing strong and in control, yet in the special moment, revealing the vulnerability they risk in gleaning a living from the combination of weather, livestock, seeds and soil?

Rural Canada is in crisis (Sim 1988, p.1-94), in part because there aren't as many individuals who experience first hand what I've tried to sketch above. The community of those with whom a rural farm man can talk about issues and be understood is shrinking. The countryside is changing, and our

rural areas are increasingly populated with professionals and labourers who, rather than working the land, or working with the people who work the land, work instead, in the city which is an hour-or-more's drive away. Some of these professionals and labourers have rural roots, but increasingly, they are persons who have chosen to move into a rural area, while gaining their income elsewhere (Sim, p. 86-94).

In sketching my lived experience here, I have done something that many rural men would want to know before they would engage in conversation with me. It's part of their, "Who are you?" and "Where did you come from?" conversation. It's also a sketch of my concern for the well-being of rural men, strongly independent, carrying ever-increasing loads of stress, often silent - even with their spouses - and seldom seen in the counselling rooms of either clergy or therapist.

"WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS FOR RURAL MALES' INVOLVEMENT COUNSELLING OR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY?" is the question that underlies what follows. It may be read to imply a bias that men are already seeking therapy. That is not my meaning. Rather, I am interested in the rural man's already active problem-solving activity, and what I want to discover is what motivates rural men to involve others in their problem-solving, and to wonder with them, what would motivate them to involve a professional counsellor or therapist in their quest.

My own negative experience in seeking counsel came as a newly ordained minister serving five rural congregations. In one congregation there was a history of conflict over a church closing and amalgamation that had happened many years earlier. Though visiting in the homes of parishioners had been done, my lay assistant and I felt helpless to know what to do next. I thought the chairman of the Presbytery personnel committee would be helpful so we scheduled a joint interview. During the interview the lay assistant and I (both rural males) reported our efforts and feelings about the conflicted congregation. The Personnel chairman asked certain questions, and concluded our interview with the question, "Do you really love these people?" I hesitated to answer, as did my lay assistant. We had just revealed the turmoil the conflicts were creating in us. I spoke hesitantly of my cognitive attempt to love, and the difficulty I was having to feel love. The personnel chairman listened, paused thoughtfully, and then said, "You know, of course, that this will have to go down on your Personnel Record, Neil."

This experience in seeking counsel for my own professional well-being dramatically taught me to keep quiet about any struggles I might have for fear that speaking might jeopardize future work opportunities. From then on, I looked to continuing education opportunities as the only safe place

where I might silently learn what I needed to know to deal with the emotional challenges my church work was offering me.

In the experience I have had with rural men, it seems as though men are more comfortable on their own territory, (barn, outdoors, driving) or in talking while doing another task (placing bales in the hay mow, loading manure, common work bee) than in the church study or even across their own kitchen table. That leads me to speculate that rural men may be more drawn to a therapist who has some background knowledge of their rural situation (not too much, though), and who is seen to be actively involved in their community life. I also speculate that men will be more drawn to a therapist who shows flexibility in timing as well as in location of therapy sessions. Another conjecture I have is that men will relate more to the term "counselling", and will indeed, be threatened, and put-off by the term "therapy". Yet my sense of the trend of counselling centres and educational programmes is an increasing use of the terms "therapy" and "therapist" rather than the terms "counselling" and "counsellor".

Informal conversations I have had with therapists, clergy and rural folk between October 1994 and February 1995 have indicated that there is a high degree of interest in knowing what does motivate men to seek therapy.

## INTRODUCTION

The following pages will help you journey through the process and decisions I followed in preparing this research report. As indicated in the FORWARD, my personal rural background was a strong motivating factor for beginning this investigation. I also hoped that this research would be a resource so that agencies that provide counselling services, and churches (Pastors) could more effectively plan their service delivery for rural men.

The chapter entitled REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE provides an overview of related areas of work pertaining to men's issues and rural settings. The Chapter on METHODOLOGY addresses decisions I made which resulted in the collection of the data which gives rise to the EVIDENCE FROM THE INTERVIEWS. My DISCUSSION focuses on the implication of my findings for the Rural Church and for therapists desiring to provide their services to rural men. The chapter "Please Incarnate Again" offers a THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION. The concluding chapter takes both the THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION and the FINDINGS to summarize some IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH and SOME WAYS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS MAY ENGAGE RURAL MEN.

The following pages will provide a glimpse of the world of twelve rural men as they reflect on what they say prevents or facilitates their openness to make use of professional counselling services.

**Chapter 1**  
**Methodology**

(note: paragraphs in bold face type are used throughout what follows to indicate words spoken by the Subject being interviewed. The abbreviation "**OMAF**" used by subjects refers to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.)

Since Qualitative methods "allow the researchers to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives" (Berg, p. 6), it is the method of choice for me in discovering from rural men how they describe what would motivate them to engage in therapy/ counselling. Qualitative research has a basic assumption that some of the terms, themes and categories for analysis will emerge from the data collected.

**Recruitment of Subjects:**

Subjects sought were males between the ages of 30 and 55 who have lived at least 10 years in a rural area and had not experienced professional counselling or marriage and family therapy.

All potential subjects were contacted by letter (Appendix A) after I had interviewed selected provincial and local service providers connected with Mental Health Services and Farm Organizations in Perth County. The selection of these service providers was made based on my previous personal knowledge of their agencies or of them individually. Two

service providers were recommended during interviews as persons I should contact. In all, I talked with ten service providers, six of whom were personally known by me prior to contact.

By outlining my project to service providers (Appendix B) I was able to ask the service providers for their suggestions of rural men whom I could contact by letter. Four were understandably reluctant to identify particular names, but six did provide one or more names each. With this method a list of fifteen potential participants resident in three different counties was generated. Of the fifteen, one after receiving the letter, chose not to participate, and two, after receiving the letter did not meet the criteria of less than three sessions with a professional counsellor. Potential participants were told how they came to receive my letter, and the name of the service provider suggesting their name was indicated. Most service providers wanted to phone the potential participant before I sent the letter or made contact of any type. Two service providers wanted me to phone the potential participants prior to sending out the letter. This I did. There was no difference in response between the ones contacted by phone seeking permission to send the letter, and those who received the letter without preliminary phone call. In all cases, potential subjects were contacted by telephone within seven to twenty-one days after the letter was sent to learn of their response and set up a potential interview date.

### Risk and Benefits to Subjects Outlined

#### **Risks:**

Subjects were informed in the Letter of Introduction (Appendix A) that the main risk to them might involve potential uncovering of personal memories about times when they might have benefitted from counselling services by a therapist, but did not take action. This risk was minimized by providing a list of Agencies and Therapists (Appendix C) who could help a subject deal with such memories.

#### **Benefits:**

It was indicated in each interview that Subjects might benefit indirectly by providing information which could potentially restructure the delivery of counselling service so that rural men would more readily use them. This is an indirect benefit to rural community and family well-being. Direct benefits to the subjects might come from discovering and articulating more clearly whatever attitude and motivation, or lack thereof they have toward seeking therapy. Subjects could become more clear about their own assumptions and attitudes.

All participants (and Service-Providers so requesting) were told that they would receive a written summary of the research findings.

### **The Interview:**

I pre-tested my interview questions and style with one rural man (Subject 280) whom I knew personally. The experience of that interview was invaluable to me as preparation for the other interviews, and though exhibiting many similar themes, that interview is not included in the data of this research project. Twelve other rural men were interviewed. None of the other subjects were personally known to me. All subjects, except one were interviewed in their homes. One subject was interviewed in his professional work setting. None had used the services of a professional family or individual therapist, though two had sought no more than two sessions with their pastor and/or a university counsellor some years previous. All had been resident in a rural area for a minimum of ten consecutive years. Most were active farmers. Subject numbers (except for the one test interview with a man I knew) were assigned beginning at 100 and incrementing by tens. When viewed consecutively the 12 subjects (100-210) are listed in chronological sequence of their interviews, that is subject 100 was first interviewed, 110 second, and so on, and subject 210 was the last one interviewed. All interviews occurred between mid-February and mid-April 1995.

The interview consisted of a fifteen minute to half-hour time for getting acquainted, outlining my personal rural background and my interest with respect to this thesis. The consent form (Appendix D) was explained, questions discussed, then signed. Then demographic information was entered

(Demographic Form, Appendix A). This was followed by a 30 to 45 minute taped interview structured around the general outline of 6 semi-standardized questions (Appendix A). Interviews ended after the taping making sure the subject knew he could follow up any questions he might have, or contact counsellors indicated on the list provided (Appendix C). Often there was additional unrecorded informal conversation following the interview, so that each interview encompassed approximately two hours. One interview (Subject 130) presented technical difficulties in that the tape recorder operated intermittently and only 15 minutes of interview time could be transcribed for editing.

Following each interview I transcribed the audio tape, removing all identifying information, and sent the transcripts back to the subjects inviting them to make corrections or edit them in any ways they wished (Memo, Appendix E). I enclosed a postage-paid envelope in which subjects were invited to return their edited transcript. From this procedure I received a one hundred percent return of edited interviews which formed the data for this thesis. Edited interviews, each page initialed by the Subject involved, are on file and comprise approximately two hundred and fifty pages of data. All audio tapes have been erased.

None of the transcripts were coded until after all had been returned.

### Coding the Data

Two unexpected themes emerged during the interviews before examining the transcripts. The Theme "Informal Counselling (IFC)" refers to people or groups who rural men would talk with about issue they were facing. For example, Subject 210 page 14 (210-14) reports a number of stresses in a particular year, including the death of his mother. When asked if he ever thought of calling a counsellor, he responded

**Subject: Not really. I always just sort of talked to people about it. Other people had lost.**

Interviewer: What people would you talk to?

**Subject: Oh. I always found friends. People that I knew that had lost their mothers. And neighbours over here.**

Interviewer: Would these be people that you'd known for a long time?

**Subject: Yeah. Basically. People you'd known all your life. Give you a bit of advice on this and that. At the same time, I guess. I just looked at it and you know I looked at the lady and could tell, you'd wish you'd go to London and she'd be sitting up, but on the way home you'd say, "That's never going to happen. Let's face it, this is the way it's going to be." That took a long time to get over, but that's the way life is.**

**That was a pile of stress in one year.**

The IFC code identified data elements that indicated subjects seeking out others whom they felt had experienced a similar situation so the subject could talk about an issue they themselves were facing. Most often this "Informal Counsellor" would be someone they had know for a long time, perhaps most of their lives. For one subject it used to be his father, but for all others, it was someone outside of their family.

Another code that emerged during the interviews was Public Relations (PR). In large measure this is an indication that rural men consider themselves to know very little about what goes on in the counselling room, so they need to hear stories, see people and see advertising that normalizes the experience as something that a rural man might use. This request for storied knowledge accompanied a fairly accurate assessment of basic counselling skills and activities, gained mostly from Media dramatizations or reports.

Interviewer: That's the tough spot. That's the spot where I'm wondering if you see anything that could be done to motivate the person who's in the tough spot to actually say, "I need help."

**Subject: I think public awareness. Posters and that. Public awareness and that kind of stuff. At least people know what's going on. Just to hand a sheet like that [help list] brochure or something.**

Other coding emerged in a like fashion as the edited transcripts were analyzed.

I rediscovered what is noted in Child's work,

"In rural settings, personal trust is more important than professional expertise. Without trust, expertise will be ignored." (p. 228)

and this led to a coding of Naming and Knowing (N/K) which included the rural man's sense that a therapist or counsellor was genuinely interested in him and in knowledge of him. Often it would take the form of sharing personal backgrounds and interests, for example, 190-11

**Subject:** Well - No, I can't say that I really have any expectations of what a counsellor might be like. To me I don't think that would be important really, as long as they were - I think the sort of thing as what we've done, where we sat down and learned a little bit about each other before we started

Interviewer: In today's process - the half hour?

**Subject:** Yes. I think that would be important to me. I'd have to feel comfortable that the counsellor was genuinely concerned about who I am. I guess if we sat down and just started out, "What is your problem?" sort of thing, I think that would be hard. So you'd have to get started, and I think the way we got started today, for myself, was ideal, we were talking a little bit about each other and who we are and so on.

Naming and Knowing is characterized by the external activity of knowing someone who might be helpful, and as such includes both trust and circulating knowledge. It is also characterized by the internal process of naming one's own need for help. The internal process seems to be aided as stories about needs other men had met in counselling are told and circulated.

The above are given to illustrate the methodology I used to code the data which the interviews generated.

During the interviews many of the men wanted to illustrate their responses with examples from their personal experiences. They also indicated that it would be helpful to hear the experiences of other men. The openness to give and receive story telling about how men deal with personal issues invited me to consider this finding in relationship to the theological theme of Incarnation.

## Chapter 2

### **Literature Review**

The Research Question guiding me through this thesis has been, **What are the motivations for rural males' involvement in Marriage and Family Therapy**. This question implies at least three sub-issues:

1. What is "rural"? The answer to that question will help identify "Rural males".

2. A further question relates to "males involvement in ... Therapy", and could be formulated, "What is the experience of males who are involved in therapy. What has motivated them to be there?"

3. "What is rural therapy?" is a question which helps me discern whether or not the literature on therapy treats "rural" as unique.

#### The Literature

I found a paucity of direct references to "rural men" in my search of the literature, which may indicate the necessity of a more thorough review or that rural men are not making use of professionally offered therapy.

The following abstracts indicate the focus on rural characteristics to be an ongoing area of study as professionals attempt to modify their services to the

uniqueness of the rural setting. Even so, "rural men" are grouped in families so there is not yet a specific focus on the rural man's perspective regarding therapy or counselling services. Even the studies on client satisfaction have not treated the rural male as a special subject of study.

Some publications and abstracts have identified a need to consider how therapy is practiced in rural areas. Brownlee (1994) argues for a special approach, highlighting such factors as visibility, exposure and informality. Though beyond the scope of this paper, Brownlee's abstract suggests that providing therapy in a rural area "requires consideration of how therapy is practiced."

Dianne Sterling (1992) notes four unique characteristics of practicing in a rural area: "the multiplicity of boundary issues that arise, the complexity of the role of the therapist, the ongoing nature of the therapy relationship, and the changed stance of the therapist as an adaptation to the rural setting."

Gretchen Waltman (1986) identifies sensitivity and willingness of the rural service provider to work at the community's pace, be a generalist, and work cooperatively with existing rural institutions. She also notes that "effective public relations skills are necessary for the rural social worker ...". Anderson (1976) makes the point that "crisis intervention may be the treatment of choice in a rural setting", and Brownlee (1994) promotes Constructivist family

therapy "as a uniquely suited form of practice" within rural areas.

In writing about the challenge to therapists of the uniqueness of the rural setting, Bagarossi (1982) notes: "the very nature of the communities ..." in the southern United States "... requires the therapist to modify, sometimes radically, his/her approach to treatment ..." Not only do these abstracts indicate that the therapist needs to alter their approach, but even the educational focus, according to Keating (1987) has overly targeted farmers' financial concerns "at the expense of developing resources for coping." Walker (1988) underscores the foregoing through the results of their study which indicates that rural adults (476 men and 341 women) have higher stress-related symptoms than a comparison group of urban residents (70 males and 39 females).

Could it be that therapy for rural males has highlighted the socialized "instrumental" approach for men rather than attending to problem-solving activities men are already using? Given the rural setting, would the therapeutic use of nature, cultivation, animal and soil husbandry be effective tools? These are musings that are not investigated here, but which could prove productive areas for future research.

#### What is "rural"?

One tentative definition of Rural is "less populated" or "small communities" - (Childs, p. 49, 249-250) while at the same time the need for the definition is questioned since

"Rurality as a general concept is fading in clarity" (Childs 110). Yet Sim (p. 16) makes a powerful point in favour of defining rural community as any "place or territorial expression with a name, history, and identity, bound together by a network of common interests". Truly "rural" is no longer accurately described as "Farm", but Sim (p. 22) concludes that a reasonable description of "rural" would be any community under 10,000 population. Having had more than 3 decades of experience in rural Ontario and Alberta would have led me to chose a smaller limit to the size of rural community, but Sim's contention is that a smaller population category creates the dilemma of what to call those many Canadians who reside in communities of population between the lower limit and the urban definition of greater than 10,000. My experience also tells me that there is a difference between rural and urban folk, and many other of the contributors to Child's volume validate that experience (p. 221-228, 233-235, 238-245, 249-262), as do the abstracts cited at the beginning of this review.

Indeed, the difference may be deeply connected with the weekly summer exodus from urban to rural areas. What is it, deep in our souls, that drives us through all sorts of frustrating obstacles to make a connection with nature, with what might be called "rurality"?

### What is Rural ... Therapy?

I want to begin this section with a discussion in Pastoral Counselling which, on the one hand says that Pastors should always refer and never become involved as long-term therapists for parishioners (Rolfe, p. 66) while Pastors in isolated (I read "rural") areas may be permitted, even obligated to offer long-term therapy (Mitchell p. 60). This argument strikes me as an example of the continuing need to determine whether there are unique skills and approaches necessary for service providers in rural areas.

Child's volume outlines uniquely rural approaches that Mental Health professionals will need to use because rural is different (Childs (p. 233-4, 251-2). Indeed, the rural therapist will need to be visibly involved in the community (Childs p. 221-228) and even needs *to be seen* as a co-creator of community (Childs p.238-41, 245). Referrals for therapy in rural communities, even when from other service agencies, generally come not from overt advertising, but from the comments of community members consulting one another. It seems that one main characteristic of "rural" therapy would be that in "... rural settings, personal trust is more important than professional expertise. Without trust, expertise will be ignored." (Childs, p. 228).

Regarding a rural focus in mental health literature and training, the book notes that

"... the literature of community psychology and community mental health has largely neglected rural problems as a special issue.

.....

At this time, however, there are no models for rural community psychology or rural mental health delivery programs, nor have clear questions or research issues been generated."

(Childs p. 261-262)

#### **How Are Men Involved in Therapy?**

Men are more likely to have been involved in therapy if they have been pressured there by a boss, spouse, lover or friend (Scher (1987) p. 42; Silverberg p. 37) implying that most men are forced into counselling through the legal system (for physical or sexual abuse) or pressure from a feared loss, rather than from desire for personal growth. Indeed, Lewis (p. 36) notes "the almost universal inability of men to ask for or receive help from psychotherapy, an institution created, designed and directed by males." Lewis' comment raises questions about the need for therapeutic processes developed specifically for men. Many others join the questioning in view of the strong influences of male socialized gender role making feminine qualities undesirable in a male (Meth p. 4,6; Rieker, p. 28; Scher (1987) p. 141,156; Scher (1981) p. 200; Silverberg p. 39). Therapy is seen by most males as a feminine activity (Carlson p. 129; Collison p. 222; Scher (1987) p.

390) or as an activity proclaiming weakness (Silverberg p. 38). In general, men who seek therapy are "identifying difficulties in controlling or adapting to external events ..." (Scher (1987) p. 151), rather than motivation toward personal growth. Rural people have high, unrealistic expectations that psychologists will offer a brief, or at least no more than a few brief "fix-it" session(s) (Childs p. 238-241).

When clients feel forced into counselling, and the counselling process is contrary to the basics of their own sense of who they are, then a new sensitivity from the therapist is needed. Each of the referenced works has advice to help therapists be more effective with men, by orienting therapy more to action, skills development, time-limited contracts, and mutuality of self-disclosure. Again no specifics were given relating to rural men. Either "rural" is not culturally different enough to warrant attention, or rural men are infrequently involved in therapy.

Men's motivation to enter therapy has, in the literature, often led to a discussion of men's developmental experiences, and implies a need for a shift in therapeutic approach if more men are to become personally motivated to seek therapy (Collison p. 222; Scher (1987) p. 390). Trust, a basic developmental task (Trust verses Mistrust - Erikson 1968 and 1982) has been identified as primary for effective service referral in rural areas (Child's p. 228). For men in rural areas, developing trust will be both a difficult task for the

therapist coming in from the outside, and a key toward effective therapy.

Based on the foregoing, I would expect rural men to highlight trust (Personal Knowledge) of the counsellor/therapist as an important motivating factor, as well as having knowledge of the therapist through informal conversations and actual observations of the therapist at community events.

The literature review provides tentative answers to my research question, indicating that trust of the therapist, visible presence of the therapist and circulating common knowledge (gossip or mythology) of the therapist in community activity will greatly enhance the motivation of a rural male to seek counselling. Though coercion is another factor the literature points to, it does not constitute a "motivation to seek counselling/therapy", but rather is a factor *requiring* males to be in a counselling/therapeutic setting, whether they are motivated, or not.

Murray Scher's volume points out that "... a counseling centre and/or particular therapist(s) with a reputation for effectively serving members of specific racial/ethnic groups ... or special populations ... will be likely to attract a larger portion of students from those groups than would otherwise seek assistance." (Scher 1987 p. 158). Though references to rural men are scant in the literature I've consulted, the above comment indicates that rural men may be more motivated to seek counselling services when there is a

therapist or agency that develops a reputation for dealing with the issues facing rural men. Immediately one questions whether rural men face issues that are any different than their urban counterparts. Regardless of how one answers, if there is a perception that something is specialized for rural men, those understanding themselves to be rural men may be more motivated to use the service.

The addition I wish to make to the literature cited above addresses what twelve rural men say might motivate them or men they know to make use of professional counselling services. They give important clues for professional service providers who wish to make their service accessible to rural men.

### Chapter 3

## **Evidence from the Interviews**

### **(a) Demographic Data**

The interviewed Subjects resided in either Huron, Perth or Oxford Counties of South Western Ontario. The majority (75%) resided in Perth County. The men interviewed were aged from 32 to a recent 56, the majority (seven or 58%) being in their forties, two being in their thirties, and three being in their fifties.

### **Rural**

The Subjects all fit the criteria of being rural males, resident in a rural area (not necessarily their current house) for a minimum of ten years. When considering the length of time their families of origin had lived in a rural area, and excepting two to five years absence for educational purposes, all but two of the men in the sample had lived most of their lives, and their families of origin had lived most of their lives in a rural area. Another way of stating this information is that 83% of my sample had 30 or more years of lived and inherited experience in a rural setting.

### **Church**

All but one of the subjects included "Church" in their list of organizations in which they held membership. One subject indicated church as the only organization in which they held membership. The subjects varied from describing

their church activity as "very active" with at least one church connected event in addition to worship each week to "just going back" indicating attendance at most worship services, to "sometimes" indicating involvement in special occasions. Even the individual not indicating church in their list of organizational memberships indicated a special involvement around their son's upcoming confirmation.

### **Primary Source of Income**

Two of the subjects were involved exclusively in generating their income from non-farm occupations, one as a school teacher, the other in an urban industrial setting. Two additional subjects indicated that the farm-related work they did was part-time. One of these two was a mature student at university, the other was a worker at a recreational-services job in a nearby small community.

The remaining eight subjects were full-time farmers, three primarily involved in the Dairy industry, two focused in hog production, one focused in crop production, another combining Dairy and crop and the final one combining beef farming with farm-related consulting. Two of the subjects had experience and training through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food related to the "Farm Advisor Program".

Another way of stating the above is that one third of my sample focused on non-farm occupations.

### **Marital/Familial**

All of the men were married, and all but one still had children living at home. The children living at home ranged in age from just under two years of age to 31 years of age. The twelve households contain 25 children (12 males and 13 females), most of whom (80%) are under sixteen years of age.

The spouses of these men were one year older in 2 situations, the same age in 4 situations and all but one of the remaining situations, 1 to 5 years younger. In one situation the spouse was 8 years younger than my subject.

### **Proximity and type of Service Providers**

When asked the distance they travelled to their nearest service provider, the range was from 100 meters to 20 kilometers. The nearest service provider was randomly listed as banking, groceries, minister, church, other farmers, physician, farm supply and service station.

Half of the subjects had talked to another person in addition to the referring service provider (see methodology) about being involved in this research project. Those they had talked to included their spouse, or their pastor. The other half of the subject sample had talked to no one other than their spouse and the interviewer about their participation in this project.

**(b) Themes**

The literature suggested and the interviews demonstrated that a Socialized Fear of Self-Disclosure (SFSD) is a major inhibiting factor in men seeking professional counselling services. Conversely, my discovery through these interviews was that the men desired more knowledge of what might go on in a counselling setting, and how counselling or therapy might benefit them. The descriptor SFSD was balanced in the interviews with a descriptor I called Public Relations (PR) and a descriptor I called "Naming the help I need and Knowing somebody or some event to be helpful" (N/K).

Subject 150 put it this way when he was describing his knowledge of therapy or counselling (150-2)

**... I've always been of the opinion that if there's something wrong, you go and find the best possible person to fix it and you fix it. Since I've gone - but that would have been if there's a problem, you go and get it fixed. Once it's fixed, you go on and keep living.**

Subject 150 went on to indicate his life experience was that the 'fixing', rather than being a thing that's accomplished once and for all, is an ongoing activity and likened it more to maintenance, thus demonstrating both the naming (identifying the issue to be "fixed") and knowledge (identifying someone who might be helpful in the "fixing") aspects of the N/K descriptor:

Since that, I've realized that this type of thing we're talking about is basically a maintenance thing. It's not fixing. You go on. I do have a couple of mentors that I still work with, so I guess in a sense, you could call them counsellors, therapists, whatever. (150-2)

Other examples of this N/K balance to SFSD were found throughout the interviews.

Subject 210 indicated a kind of reverse N/K (naming/knowing) by expressing a desire for the counsellor to be the active investigator regarding people's inner needs. Subject 210 was also the only subject not naming the church in his list of memberships and showing an exclusive preference for the counsellor to come into his home as a way of getting to know the client. An example from Subject 210 follows regarding the expectation that the counsellor would have the motivation and do the work of N/K:

**The counsellor would have to do his homework before he'd come. He'd have to, I think, go around in the neighbourhood to some of the, well in my case, to some of the suppliers that supply me, and just ask the basic question, "How is he? How do you feel, has he changed his mood, or this or that?" I guess you**

wouldn't have to tell them what you're doing, just sort of hint around and see. Get some ground work in place. You can't just walk in to a guy's house cold turkey, you don't know what you're walking into, or what's your situation. (210-3)

Subject 120 shows the pure N/K in a precise statement concerning trust:

**Subject: The personal**

Interviewer: you want to talk to somebody you know.

Am I catching you right?

**Subject: That's right. And the other thing is the trust.**

Interviewer: Can you say more about trust?

**Subject: I think, if you've got problems, you have to know that the person you're telling is keeping that in confidence. (120-4)**

This demonstrates the integrity of naming and knowing. They go together in the sense that the subject needs to know that he has something to work on (naming internally), and also needs to know how to connect with someone who might help him work on what he has named (knowing a helper). How do you get to know the helper? In my interviews this had to do with

Public Relations (PR) as well as knowing a potential referral source. For example, Subject 140 has named a few situations where he might be motivated to admit that he needs help on an issue:

Interviewer: If you imagined yourself in one of those situations, where do you think you would go first?

**Subject: Probably start out with the medical community, I guess.**

Interviewer: See your physician?

**Subject: Probably, Yes. (140-7)**

Subject 140 would trust (know) his physician to be an appropriate starting point. Subject 140 has named the issue and knows a person where he might start getting help for it.

I hope the foregoing has illustrated the point of N/K being both a personal naming of a personal issues and a personal knowing of a person or place where one might start addressing the issue identified.

I believe my data to show that SFSD can be greatly reduced if N/K is combined with effective PR. Indeed, it seems to me that PR and the ability to do N/K are closely linked. No matter how good I become at naming my internal issues, unless I know where to get help to address them, I am left in an internal cycle that says to me, "You should be able

to fix it yourself". How do I get to know that I can have help with the "fixing" part?

### **PR - Public Relations**

Overlapping and intertwined with Naming and Knowing is Public Relations. PR names the fact that persons or agencies are known as sources of aid for particular issues. None of the farmers I talked to hesitated to name where they went to get feed supplies or equipment repairs. Other than identifying another family member (usually their spouse), all of these men could name where they might start if they identified a personal or relationship issue with which they needed help. Only one man who personally knew a professional counsellor indicated that he might start asking for help by talking to that counsellor indicating that was due to the established friendship and the expectation that his counsellor friend would refer him to another appropriate professional. (180-5) Others usually named either the minister of their church or their physician as their starting point to seek help for personal issues.

PR relates to the fact that those skilled in providing the tools needed in working through relationship and personal issues will have to become known to the rural man if they are going to be considered in that man's N/K processing.

Subject 140 noted above how he would likely go to his physician and later he notes the difficulty of getting people

to know about the availability of a service from which they could benefit:

**Subject:** ... It's hard to impress upon the people that the service is out there until the last minute sort of thing. So it's hard to get somebody to make that sort of decision. And the other side [personal counselling] is probably somewhat the same because a fellow probably has to be making a last ditch effort for them to do it. No amount of advertising seems to - our church bulletins are full of it. There is counselling for almost everybody. So the word is out there. It's just that to get that person to go is a last ditch situation.

Interviewer: The advertising is out there. What ideas do you think the men have that makes that information something they don't follow up on?

**Subject:** You're actually trying to make me think of somebody else now. Pride. [afraid of it] Being known for them that they are doing this. That's why we don't drive a van with an OMAF sticker on the side. That's a lot of it I think.

Interviewer: So they might read something in the church bulletin, but their pride would have them say, Oh, I don't need that?

**Subject: That's it exactly.**

Interviewer: So the way that it's advertised, I'm wondering if you have any ideas about how it's advertised might overcome that?

**Subject: I don't know. I've often grappled with that question. (pause) If you do it in the schools, I guess. I've often thought of that. There's one place. Make it visible in the school so that the kids bring it home. Cause they recognize problems too. If the parents know that the kids know it, well, gall, then we've got to go. That's never been tried, probably, but we've done all the other avenues. OMAF has certainly done, with the farm advisor program, a bend-over-backwards job of advertising it.**

Interviewer: In that program, what type of advertising do you think was most effective?

**Subject: The most effective, you've done two or three years of it, and you have a person call saying, "I've a friend, not mentioning any names, but he got that last year and he was well pleased."**

Interviewer: Word of mouth?

**Subject: Yeah, Word of mouth.**

Interviewer: And that connects with something you said earlier about the people needing to know that their story is being heard. Like when you went into counselling, you would want your story to be part of - the weather, what's going on - to be validated.

**Subject: Yeah.**

Interviewer: So the word of mouth says, "Hey, if he has a story like that and something from me connects with that, then I can make a call.

**Subject: That's the part of feeling easy with somebody. I think that's very important.**

The above excerpt is rich combining both SFSD, N/K and PR factors in the steps subject 140 identifies in making the transition from hiding the personal issue to seeking professional help with the issue. Note how ineffective traditional advertising is indicated to be, and how immensely effective a "word of mouth" or 'neighbour to neighbour' grape vine is (This is discussed later under IFC - Informal Counselling). But how will rural men gain the encouragement to talk about experiences they've had taking their personal and relational issues to a professional counsellor?

Subject 140 provides the clue for me when he speaks of the story telling aspect. If rural men could hear from service providers that other rural men had benefitted from

their services, that would begin a process of Normalization in which the rural man would have knowledge that for him to do likewise, that is to seek professional help, would not be out of the ordinary, but in fact something that other rural men were doing. The fact of stereotyped male socialization and the associated SFSD indicates that men are not likely to do this on their own, so PR is primarily up to the service providers to do. This has implications for both Counselling agencies and Churches who will have to become story tellers willingly showing examples and specific instances of how rural men have made use of and benefitted from their services. Neither can assume that the men already know what goes on inside their agencies. Furthermore the language used in PR will have to be like the word of mouth conversation a rural man might have with one of his friends. Subject 100 was the first to raise this potential:

Interviewer: Are there any other things along those lines or anything you can think about or imagine that might motivate men to make use of counselling services?

**Subject: I can't think of anything else. Just one. When there's a gathering of men, or a farm meeting, a big farm meeting, maybe have somebody to come and have maybe 5 minutes and just say or introduce counselling for a few minutes and say that it's available.**

Interviewer: Do you think men need to know some more detail of what happens in counselling?

**Subject: Maybe they, if they would feel there is a hope, they might use the service a bit more than if they don't know what's going on.**

Interviewer: So if men were able to get within this five minutes, say just before a break in a farm meeting, get somebody who says "I've had experience in helping farmers cope with stress. I'm what you call a counsellor. And was able in about three sentences to say I've had experience like this and it helped this type of case and this was the general outcome of that case." Am I catching you right.

**Subject: Yeah, that would make me more comfortable in going to see that person. I could say, hey, I've got a problem like this. Put my name on your list and contact me.**

This "word of mouth" story-like description containing actual rural case material for rural men to hear at one or more of their meetings, not as a focus, but as a short personalized announcement by the Professional Service provider or someone involved in making referrals offers a key to better service delivery. It provides the focus for my theological reflection, "Please Incarnate Again." When something is beyond us because it is so unfamiliar that it doesn't seem to

connect with our world, then we need to follow what God did in Jesus. Making the "Word", (i.e. in this context, the word of practical counselling experience and how that impinges on me) become Flesh is what I heard many of my subjects request. Knowledge of what happens in counselling (PR) is not high amongst those who have never used the service. That knowledge could be increased by PR which involved story telling case examples during brief periods at meetings where rural people gather. Unless Normalization of help-seeking for personal and relational issues is fostered, people will not see it as an option to consider. Not considered as an option, the individual tends toward isolation (increased SFSD, perhaps) with respect to dealing with personal or relationship matters.

For some of the men, stories of personal illness of friends who then received therapy or good advice was their only source of information regarding counselling. Even then, one bad experience, while in hospital for a back problem, made one man decide counselling could never help him.

**Subject:      When I had to go to a counsellor, they  
                 were the type of people I wouldn't recommend  
                 anybody to go to. When I talk to you, I like  
                 talking to you. And I like talking to [United  
                 Church Minister]....**

Interviewer: So the kind of counsellor you  
                 experienced at the hospital was different than  
                 the kind of counsellor...

**Subject:** He knew his business and he knew what he was talking about. He was here (hand high in the air) and I was here (hand waist high).

Interviewer: He was talking down to you?

**Subject:** That's right. There was no - you couldn't relate. He had the answers before you give them to him. You turn off. Why say anything because you know he's just waiting to ask you the next question. I don't think I could go see somebody like that. I could go see somebody that you went in and told him your problem and they wrote down a bunch of stuff and said, fine, let me analyze this and then come in for another meeting. I could understand that. You just can't walk into somebody's house and say [give advice]. You have to give information so that they can work back through to you. And I can understand that. That's why I say it would be very hard for me to go to a counsellor out of town unless I knew why I was going there. I know why, but I mean the relationship.

Interviewer: What I hear you saying is that you need to know that that person is going to relate to you, at least on an equal basis?



to use an example which won't hurt anybody. I did not want to go. My wife really wanted to go. She kept trying to talk me into it. I wouldn't listen to her. We have some good neighbours. They realized we were having some problems, because of work load and everything like that, family. Probably it came down to them asking me, because my wife was asking at least 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 times, and I just said, "It doesn't make sense, I don't want to go." It just turned out one particular evening when we were having an all out row with one another, he walked in.

Interviewer: This neighbour.

**Subject:** The neighbour. He says, "We've got to sign this thing up because its coming up on such and such a date, and I've got to know today whether you want to go or not." And I just thought to myself, "What the hell's he doing here right now. Why did he pick this minute to come?" That was enough to make me say, "Yeah, this does mean something."

Interviewer: So it was a combination of persistence of the neighbour and sort of the mystery of the moment.

**Subject:** That's right. And either you believe in that, or you don't believe in that. And I am a

**believer in it and it happens a lot. I don't know whether you call it gut feeling, fate, common sense, but there's a - that's my viewpoint, and I think that's what you're after.**

Interviewer: Definitely. So what contributed, in your mind - were there any external factors that contributed to that moment happening? that fateful moment?

**Subject: External. I just knew we needed something different into our marriage. It wasn't the way it should have been.**

Interviewer: So you had that internal feeling.

**Subject: Yep.**

Interviewer: Did you think about it a lot before that fateful moment?

**Subject: O yeah. Mainly because my wife wanted me to go so bad. Why did she want to?**

Interviewer: Did you talk to anybody else about that internal stuff? (Subject shakes head "No")  
When you were driving, out doing field work, did you talk aloud to yourself, or just concentrate inside.

**Subject: Inside.**

Interviewer: Did you hear anybody else talking about that kind of stuff?

**Subject: Yes. Yes. Because it was through our church. So other people from our church had been there and talked about it and now that's my role. We've been there, other people have not specifically asked us.**

Interviewer: Did you ask people what this encounter was going to be like?

**Subject: Yeah I did.**

Interviewer: Other men, other women?

**Subject: Couples. As couples we talked about it. That's what interested my wife. (200-4,5)**

Another subject (120) indicated that grief would be a time when he might seek professional counselling. Tragically a woman neighbour had suicided a week before our appointment. Though he had called the local clergy and asked them to visit the surviving husband, he had made no move to seek professional care for himself. He did talk with his spouse, and with the husband, as well as with friends about the situation. His N/K indicated that the informal system, the non-professional system of which he is part, was sufficient to meet his personal needs.

PR and N/K represent, then two parts of a trilogy necessary to optimize the likelihood that a rural man will seek either a counsellor or contact a referring person. The third part, Normalization, is demonstrated in the following:

### Normalization

Interviewer:What led you to make that change?

You've noted a change in what was to what is now. What would you say helped that change happen?

**Subject:** Perhaps listening to other people. In my Christian surroundings, I've heard testimonies of people who have lived a different life than I have, and yet how they found they're free. Again it was recognizing a need which probably released them from their bondage to free them to go knocking at a door for help. ... What motivated me to do that? I can answer now. It was a little more difficult back then. I think sometimes there's a dream, there's a thought within us. And if it doesn't go away, my philosophy is today to pursue that - push the wall open. (inaudible) In other words, it's a dream. I'm not saying that because I can dream I can do it, but I'm saying I can be motivated to do something about it

(170-4)

and

Interviewer:That's my point as well. How can we move ahead the point at which a man in

particular would be able to say, "I want to ask for help."

**Subject:** It probably won't happen until he recognizes a need. To a certain degree it's there. At the same time, if you can be part of a nucleus of friends, or have a friend, that you can expose yourself to, more than likely you can proceed easier. I speak as being a single person for years, even socially. It's very difficult having no companion to go with me. I don't believe any man is an island unto himself. Yeah we have our fears, we have our personal struggles. We also need help.

Interviewer: Is there a way in which - I'm catching from you that the sharing of friendship experiences is something that helps lower the fear level from somebody else to make use of a service, For instance, let me give you an example. If I'm in a group of friends and the conversation allows me to come to the point to say, "Yeah I had an issue like that and I talked to Mrs. so-and-so at such-and-such, and she was really helpful." Is that the kind of sharing that the friendship opens up, or is it something different that you were thinking of?

**Subject:** No I think that's it. You hit the nail on the head. (170-13)

Note how subject 170 has integrated his informal counselling (IFC) network - the "friends" - as an important aspect contributing to an increased ease and motivation to seek out the services of a professional counsellor. PR and IFC continue to emerge in Subject 170's comments:

Interviewer: I'm wondering, Subject, if you have anything at all that I haven't covered in the questions I've been firing at you, anything at all that you'd like to say about rural men and their motivations to seeking out counselling services?

**Subject: I say this in many different circles I'm part of, more often than not, non-Christian circles. That is we ought to get back to our common friendship model. Maybe it has to be structured in a sense. It would probably take some effort on a few people to make it happen. Or if we have a model whereby, say, you get together with six neighbours, and - we begin to talk about the pros of how things work - it might be just coffee, but we suddenly discover each other, our strengths and weaknesses and we also identify. Now that's ideal. ... Service wise, I still think its a very slow procedure. Ideally its**

one-on-one, or very small numbers. And in our communities? If we're sensitive we can probably see someone who's struggling out there. Be a friend once-in-a-while. Some of the statistics of this aloneness. All I can say is I was single until I was 38. I lived here for seven years alone. [personal story of previous broken engagement 8 years earlier ... - depend on Higher Source]

For me to ask for help today is much easier than it was.

Interviewer: Do you see that happening amongst your male friends?

**Subject:** Some.

Interviewer: Is there a general kind of key or comment you can make about what's helped that transition? Or is it specific to each individual?

**Subject:** I think caring, just plain caring - realizing that what is said is confidential - finding ways of encouraging each other. It may be some criticism, but that may be our chance to get involved [example] The neat thing is that if you walk with me for a certain period of time, and then I will walk with someone else. That doesn't mean we lose touch with the other person. When I look back now and see

**people who have helped me are also some of the people who have come back now and said "Thank-you" for help I've given.**

(170-14)

Subject 170 is identifying a number of characteristics important to effective PR:

- demonstrating a sense of care;
- presenting a sense of encouragement and hope;
- giving examples of how to get involved;
- demonstrating sensitivity (you are not alone);
- maintaining confidentiality;

It is important to note that Subject 170 makes these comments, not about professional counselling, though they apply there, but about the informal "friendships" that he believes could lead to a more healthy rural life for men.

Subject 180 also raises this "friendship" theme, noting the lack of information he notices (other than TV) regarding professional counselling services:

Interviewer: Based on what you currently imagine or know about counsellors and counselling, is there anything that you'd like to change about that?

**Subject: If you want more access, I guess I think there probably needs to be some revolution in the way counselling is seen.**

Counselling is always seen as probably media and TV and everything else as being something where weaker people go to obtain help. I think that creates a problem. It's no different than financial counselling. People think that, "I don't need help unless I need help - unless things are really bad," and what they really need is every-once-in-a-while a check. A check that what they're doing is right. Or they need to do that themselves, not necessarily have somebody come in and tell them, but at least know where they can go to say, get a feeling of how they're doing. I think that until, somehow, we can have that feeling about personal counselling, I don't think we're going to make any progress. At least not for men. Women have a better network for emotional support. (180-10)

Subject: ... Often just knowing that other people are facing the same difficulties you are is the fix you need. ... There was a program long before my time, years and years ago, called Farm Forums, or something like that?

(180-11)

.....

The farm press, all the publications talk a whole lot about financial management, yields and management, all that sort of thing. They don't talk much about this sort of thing.

Interviewer: Self care.

Subject: Yeah, that's right. Or if it's approached, it's approached from the standpoint that, well it's organized religion, or it's a psychologist from such-and-such a place, you know. That's not it. There needs to be a more common man, common folk sort of approach.

Interviewer: When you say, common man, common folk approach, can you give me any examples of what you think might work?

Subject: I'll give you an analogy, I guess. A lot of the real power in changing cropping practices over the last few years has come from successful farmers who have been doing it and are articulate and stand up and speak at meetings, key-note speakers at meetings. Can write about it intelligently and honestly in the farm press. That does it in that area and so I suspect that would also work in other areas. It's not as easy a sell when people can't see a dollar return. That's the first

**hurdle. So that's one approach. That's what's made no- or minimum-tillage go.**

Interviewer: Seeing somebody else doing it, asking questions, and then getting on board.

**Subject: That's right, somebody from Guelph can stand up at a microphone at a conference in Guelph and say it's a good idea, but people aren't going to do it until they see their neighbour doing it or they know somebody that's really successful at it down the road. They can go see him or they can talk to him, or there's some articles in the press.**

Interviewer: So it's going to be on the peer example kind of thing around the counselling use too?

**Subject: I think that's the only thing that works in all of this. I think it is. It gets to the point where one neighbour talking to the other neighbour either through the press, across the fence or at a conference, that it works.**

**I am involved in one of the most successful education programmes in the province for farm people. It's the Ontario Pesticide Education Program - the need for a certificate to apply pesticides was legislated in '91. However the program started in 1987 - four years before - and there were approximately two thirds of the**

farmers in the province took that course before it became legislation. And the power behind that was their chemical suppliers standing across the counter from the farmer when he came in and saying, "We're sponsoring these courses," and the neighbours talking to the neighbours, "I went to that course, it was a great course, you should take it, you'll learn something." So the power in the programme was people selling it to their neighbours, selling it to their customers, that sort of thing. You could have all kinds of government officials saying, we need this, but success didn't come until ... (180-16)

Again, as indicated above for Subjects 120, 140 and 170, Subject 180 has combined the request for more information on how counselling may benefit a rural man with the already informal networks of which he is part. To have counselling seen as a "normal" activity will greatly enhance the likelihood that a rural man will make use of the services offered. But Normalization of the process will involve, as indicated, friendships and word of mouth - people who can speak of their experience and provide, if not a living example, at least a story that lives so that the man hearing the story of involvement with counsellors can say to himself, 'I just might be able to use that too.'

These excerpts from the interviews show more than Normalization. They demonstrate that the link between PR and N/K is Normalization - making this activity of self care or seeking the services of a professional counsellor an activity that rural men are known to be involved in. It begs the question, "Will the counselling process have to change in order to engage rural men?" Will Normalization of attendance at counselling as currently offered result in the storied outcomes that these men are requesting?

The way the above excerpts are structured by the men speaking, it appears that the burden of action rests on professionals to do effective PR which then leads to rural men having the ability to make the N/K action with knowledge about someone who might be helpful because they have been helpful to other rural men. Men who are willing to share their experience of counselling can then take an important informal lead the process of Normalization through their already established networks. As subject 180 indicated, when a rural man uses word-of-mouth, the rural media, the farm press and established rural meetings effectively, a dialogue and resulting action will begin.

Though simple on paper, the Normalization process is closely connected with offering new role models for rural males. How will asking for help be framed by this new role model?

One subject noted that counselling was an activity signifying failure:

I guess a lot of my friends are farmers of one description or another. And I don't know what they'd have to get to, to actually make them do that. I don't know if they'd do that on their own because of the whole idea. It's signifying some kind of failure or some kind of you being less than a man sort of thing. You haven't fulfilled your obligations. I think that's pretty strong.

(190-3)

The same subject drew a contrast between masculine and feminine activity in seeking opportunity to converse about personal issues:

**Subject:** Yeah. Somehow I know that a female can be much closer and get into very intimate conversations about those things in life that you probably need to share with somebody, whereas with me I don't talk to guys much about some of the intimate things - she's the one that I talk to about them - I find a lot of guys like to talk seriously about production, all those sort of things, but when it comes down to some real hard issues -

Interviewer: And more personal kinds of stuff?

**Subject:** Yeah. I don't know too many guys that are real interested in sitting down. I have a

**couple of friends I can do that with to a degree.**

Interviewer: That's been part of the discovery of my reading. That's very common male experience to be in the kind of space that you're describing, and I can identify with it in my own life as well. That venturing out to talk to another man about some things that might be personal and might risk appearing weak or not quite in control, is a very risky territory for most men to venture into. It's a tough one.

**Subject: I'm not sure it's fair when I say it, but I suspect that it's even tougher for agriculture farm type men because somehow it's been ingrained into us that fulfillment in life comes from work - hard work, and anything less than that is, "You're a bit of a wimp or you're a little on the lazy side," and you don't want to be seen that way. So you're driven.**

(190-6)

Another subject (see below) is very direct in describing counselling as an activity that women, but not men, do. Therefore, Normalization of counselling as a male activity will be a big step in opening the services of counsellors and therapists as a possible resource for rural men:

Interviewer:OK. Are there any other comments or observations that you'd like to make about what would motivate men to make use of counselling services?

**Subject: I think that they'd have to be aware that there are services there for them, men included, not just for women.**

Interviewer:Do you associate more with women going for counselling than with men going for counselling?

**Subject: Yeah**

Interviewer:You do.

**Subject: Because I think men, when they have a problem they try to work around it. They think, with time the problem will solve itself. So they are more hesitant to get some service. Women are more, they want to resolve the problem, they are more apt to go and get counselling.**

(100-10)

Subject 100's comments may be an indication of Socialized Fear of Self Disclosure. Yet the above comments could also be interpreted to speak of a general impression that counselling is an activity and language, a communication style geared to and for women. If such is the impression among rural men,

then examples and information indicating that counselling is valid for males will need to be provided.

The foregoing provides the foundation for postulating that rural males are motivated to seek professional counselling services when a dynamic trilogy of Public Relations, Naming the issue and Knowing someone who might help with the issue, and Normalization of Counselling for males are simultaneously active in the rural community.

For PR to be effective, professional counsellors (or their marketers) will need to know how they are already perceived by rural men.

### Rural Men Describe Counsellors and Therapists.

Overall, the men in my sample did prefer the term "counsellor" over the term therapist though "therapist" was seen by some as indicating a higher level of education, a deeper problem one was dealing with, and an expectation of more work on the problem. A Counsellor provided the base-line of what these men would expect, and a therapist, for some, indicated that the activity would "dig deeper". Common to both were the basic skills of listening, trust, and confidentiality. All the men expected the counsellor to show a genuine interest in them, and to take time to get to know their history and the history of their presenting issue. Rural men want to know who they are going to be talking to, and want to be assured that this person will understand something about my rural setting. Their fear is that they and their situation won't be familiar to the counsellor. This could be partially restated in Rogerian terms as an expectation that counsellors will provide an atmosphere of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard.

A few of the men associated a therapist with physical or occupational therapy which they had received for physical ailments. They indicated an expectation of more activity and "homework" with a "Marriage and Family Therapist" than with a counsellor.

For two of my subjects the terms counsellor and therapist could be used interchangeably, though for all the men,

"Counsellor" became the dominant term in our interviews. This finding could reflect my own bias as stated in the FORWARD.

Here are some of the comments from the men I interviewed:

**Subject 120: ... Therapist is who you go to if  
you've got an arm that has to be limbered up  
again.**

Interviewer: They work on you for the physical  
parts?

**Subject 120: Yeah, and not the mental. (120-9)**

Another responds,

Interviewer: OK. I'm wondering, we've done the  
counselling and the marriage and family  
therapy, I'm wondering what would come to your  
mind with the term counsellor? What pictures,  
images, associations come to your mind when  
you hear the term counsellor?

**Subject 190: Then I'm going to think of somebody  
that is, probably comes from TV as much as  
anything, just a listener, I guess is what I  
think of as counsellor. Somebody who's going  
to sit and probably listen and from what they  
hear either advise or help somebody to attack  
a problem and deal with a problem.**

Interviewer: And if I were to ask the same question, but put the term therapist there instead of counsellor. What comes to your mind in terms of picture, vision, with therapist?

**Subject 190: I'd probably think more of somebody that might work, when I think of therapist I'm thinking of somebody that might if you had a broken leg, you might go to a therapist after you were starting to heal up and they were going to work with you to get it back in shape. So I'm thinking more mechanical type of things, I guess when I think of therapist. I've gone to what I consider a therapist to do some back work, - work on some exercises for my back, so ...**

Interviewer: So that's more connected with the rehabilitation model from the medical world.

**Subject 190: Yeah, yeah exactly.** (190-1)

And another response,

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you associate with the term therapist?

**Subject 100: I think therapist is more - it's hard to explain. Counselling as I see it is more getting information out and therapist is more trying to help giving answers to the problem.**

**I think that's the difference I see. And maybe involved with more people than just counselling.**

Interviewer: So a counsellor, if I hear you right, is getting information out, and a therapist?

**Subject 100: Gets information out too, but also gives suggestions back.**

Interviewer: How to do things?

**Subject 100: Yeah. How to improve the situation.**

Interviewer: When you think of the term therapist and counsellor together, are you drawn to one more than the other?

**Subject 100: I'm more comfortable with counselling, because therapists I'm not too familiar with. I don't know if it's because being French I've understood counselling more than therapist**

(100-1)

**Subject 130: ... what the difference is. To me, why there is no difference is they're interchangeable.**

Interviewer: Are there any other characteristics you would associate with person who does counselling?

**Subject 130: When you think about it, with a therapist, you think something's going to**

**happen, like a physiotherapist. You're going to fix something. Whereas maybe a counsellor is more of a listener and a therapist is an action oriented person.**

(130-1)

Interviewer: If I were to change that term from counselling and counsellor to Marriage and Family Therapy and Therapist, would you have any similar ideas or different ones?

**Subject 140: Similar. Quite similar. Maybe a little different. I have no masters degree in anything. I'm not well enough versed in that probably. I learn more by doing than I have by learning. I think it takes a person with a good solid degree in something. And then have the right feeling and carry it on from there.**

Interviewer: So you're saying that there's a little bit of difference in the therapist end that there's going to be more educational background for the therapist?

**Subject 140: I think it helps. It would be a lot easier to get into that.**

Interviewer: And do you see the therapist doing things any differently than a counsellor?

**Subject 140: Probably not. No.**

(140-3)

**Subject 170:** Counselling as to therapy. The little I know about it, there probably is no great difference, just the term, perhaps. Probably people will pick that up differently. Therapy, to me, means more practical implications versus counselling.

Interviewer: Can you give an example of "practical implications" that therapy suggests to you?

**Subject 170:** Perhaps doing your homework. Go back home and view it the way it should be, recognize the way you are now, and then how are you going to get there.

(170-2)

The implications of the foregoing are that a service provider in the rural area will have to be very comfortable working as a "counsellor". Using the term "therapist" exclusively could become an inhibiting factor for some of the men in my sample as they associate it with more education and more difficult problems. Indeed one man who showed a preference for the term "therapist" was candid enough to indicate he would prefer going to a counsellor:

**Subject:** (indicates agreement) That's just the marriage part, The Therapy handle probably - probably would indicate - probably not legitimately or correctly, but more treatment rather than idle listening. That's generalizing, but ...

Interviewer: So you'd expect a counsellor to do more listening whereas a Therapist would do something different?

**Subject: The counselling's probably coloured by TV. The guy sitting there and you keep going back talking and talking and somebody's wondering if anything ever got solved. Whereas the Therapy might seem to be a bit more positive a word.**

Interviewer: It implies more action, more treatment?

**Subject: (indicates agreement)**

Interviewer: So what do you associated with the term Therapist, then?

**Subject: Have to quit smoking (laughter). A Shrink. (pause) I wouldn't want the job because it must be a - an awful lot to shirk off at the end of the day to go on home and enjoy life.**

Interviewer: And would the associations be any different if the term was counsellor?

**Subject: Probably. I would be guessing the only thing would be a little lower level of the above due to my lower expectations of him in the first place.**

Interviewer: Do you anticipate a difference in training for therapist over counsellor?

**Subject:** Therapist might be a little more specialized or a little more something like the difference between an engineer and an architect.

Interviewer: Can you say more about that difference?

**Subject:** A little more (pause) goal oriented in a good way.

Interviewer: That's the therapist?

**Subject:** Yeah. And again I don't think, I suspect none of this is reality because of the perception of my childhood - therapist - probably sounds better. If I was in the business I'd probably rather be called a therapist than a counsellor.

Interviewer: Who would you rather go to?

**Subject:** (pause) Neither! (laughter) Aw ... right now running through my mind is counsellor because that would be less of an admission that there's something wrong. Less serious.

(110-2)

To be effective amongst rural men, counsellors must be willing to become knowledgeable of the rural culture in which the men they wish to serve live. Rural culture in Ontario varies from predominantly farm based, with it's differing specialities, to forestry, fishing, mining and recreation based. That will mean being present in the rural areas from

time to time to hear the "word-of-mouth" news, as well as tapping into the media that serve rural areas (relevant news papers, broadcasts, rural meetings).

### **Non-Professional or Informal Counselling**

The foregoing trilogy of PR, N/K and Normalization explain a resource that rural men are already using, most often surrounding production issues and technical work details, though sometimes involving personal issues as well. One subject called it "non-professional counselling", I called it "Informal Counselling" (IFC).

IFC is a descriptor which indicates the activity of seeking out someone already known to the man, trusted by the man, and who is expected to have helpful information for the issue the man is confronting. An example from Subject 100:

Interviewer: When you mentioned friend, can you imagine what friend it might be. I'm not looking for names as much as occupation, or role, or relationship to you they might have. What friend might be able to be that point that would help you say, I need to ...?

**Subject: Well, if it would be a farm related problem I would talk to somebody who has pretty well the same business or somebody ah, if it was a financial problem I'd talk to a financial advisor. Production specialist. But**

if it would be a personal problem, I'd probably go and talk to a church minister that I'd be comfortable with. (100-3)

and again:

**Subject: Yeah, and come here, if that was necessary. Have to make sure your counsellor has had experiences similar to what you are going through.**

Interviewer: Similar to what you are experiencing?

**Subject: Yeah**

Interviewer: If you are seeing a counsellor you would like to know that that counsellor has had something similar?

**Subject: Or had experience in that field.**

Interviewer: Or dealt with other people having a similar problem?

**Subject: Yeah.**

Interviewer: so for you as a farmer, would it be helpful to know that the counsellor had some knowledge about farm issues or problems?

**Subject: Yeah. Yeah it would be nice if the counsellor would say "well, I've dealt with a case similar to yours", and give you an idea of what happened to help the person out without mentioning names. Give an idea that it's possible to rectify the problem.**

As demonstrated above the N/K is closely associated with IFC in that choosing someone with a similar experience requires that one has already identifies one's own experience and the need for help in dealing with it personally before identifying another person who could provide the help. Most often the person sought for IFC is one who has been known for a long time - at least a decade is reported by most of the men, and often the men reported knowing the person for most of their lives, a function of they and their families having been resident in the rural area for at least thirty years.

Subject 120 revealed himself to be part of an informal counselling system where he was known as one to whom others could talk:

Interviewer: So you have other men that you talk to on a regular basis then?

**Subject: Yeah. Usually they come here, but we talk about everything.**

Interviewer: It's not specifically for one thing, but they're the kind of man that you could if you wanted to, share something after the 20 minutes or so that you're really struggling with, or that's been bothering you?

**Subject: Yeah, I think any one of them.**

Interviewer: And that's what you've been listening to as well?

**Subject:** Oh yeah. One of the guys always works Mondays. He always comes by here for coffee. We talk about everything. And my buddy that builds houses. He comes in and we sit down, have a coffee or a beer, whatever, and shoot the breeze for an hour. This is what you get in a small town, because we always get somebody coming here. I'm surprised today with you here this afternoon, that we haven't been interrupted by the phone or something. It's not just me and her [my wife] it's -

Interviewer: Characteristic of the area?

**Subject:** Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you give me an idea of just how many people might stop through your house in a given week or month? Men in particular?

**Subject:** Last night [details] girls talking, I left [details] And I came home about 9:00 pm, and I was a little worried about [the guy whose wife suicided a week ago] so I thought, I'll slide over there to just shoot the breeze with him. So I stopped in and we talked about

everything under the sun, and half an hour later I came home and I said to my wife, "I'm beat", so I laid down on the couch [and refused an invitation to a hockey game with friends] so rather than go to the hockey game, they all came in here and we talked until 1:30. But that's the type - it's not I'll call to see if you're there, they come to the door.

(120-13,14)

For this man, IFC provides all the counselling he feels he needs. It is unlikely he will want to use the services of a professional counsellor. The same held true for Subject 210 who uses solitude and nature as well as family suppertime discussions to work through the personal and business issues he was facing:

**Subject:** When I get wound up tight and can't sleep or that, I'd just as soon jump in the car and drive six hours to Palmer and take a cup of good home brewed coffee and walk around out in the bush or something for a bit. Give yourself time to really work it over.

Interviewer:When you say, "really work it over", what's going through you at that point when you're walking in the bush. Are you thinking over the problem or

**Subject:**     **Yep. Every problem has got an answer.**

**If you get so bogged down with problems then you can't think out the answers, and you've got to get away and start to think on it. You know, maybe take your little pocket diary if some good idea comes up, write it down. What about [different technical details related to hog farming] Why was it working and now isn't.**

**Interviewer:** So is this something going on inside of you or do you speak that aloud as you're walking? How does that happen?

**Subject:**     **No I don't usually talk to myself. I usually just think it, sit down and think it.**

**Interviewer:** Do you find yourself talking to the other co-workers, like your brother and your Dad about those things?

**Subject:**     **Oh yeah. And the kids and [wife] too. Usually at supper time the first half hour we let the kids talk about school because everybody's got a story, bus or what went on in school. Everybody gets a crack at telling you what happened that day at school, and then if we've got a problem at the barn, or we're vaccinating, or this or that, then we usually discuss that between the boys and myself.**

Interviewer: So that dinner time is a really important time for opening up things that might be discussed about stressful situations.

**Subject: Yeah, Yep. Supper is supper and supper is discussion time.**

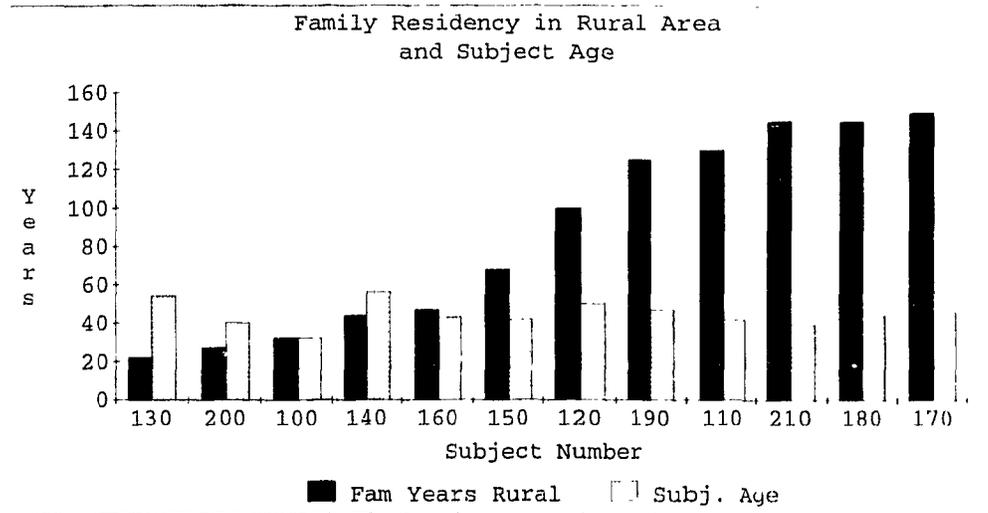
The category of Informal Counselling was not one I expected to discover, yet it describes something that each of the men I was talking to used. When they knew they had an issue to work on, they knew someone (or in the case of subject 210, some place) they thought would be helpful to their issue. Subject 120 has an established, spontaneous network, and benefits from the "drop-in" nature of those who come to talk about "everything under the sun".

Is the pace of rural life different, so that IFC is an effective means enabling men to work on their issues? Certainly, long time residency in an area where others are also long time residents, and where one gets to know family connections, would tend to create a high level of knowing who might be helpful. The long-time knowledge could also contribute to the knowledge of whom one could trust with matters of confidentiality. So IFC depends on N/K as well as informal PR. IFC is already a normalized activity for the subjects in my sample. Though several subjects admitted that they seldom talked of personal matters with their friends, IFC operates as an effective arena for technical advice, and gives potential information (N/K) that could serve these men if an issue of a personal nature did arise.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion of the Data and Findings

Selected demographic data results in the following chart, locating most the men in their forties and also implying the power and influence of family history in their lives.



Tamir (1982) reported the forties as being a special age for men "because coming to terms with emotions may be a new experience for the man." (p. 4). Tamir notes in addition that "Around middle age, members of each sex begin to express those traits previously missing from their lives and more prevalent in the other sex ... Several research studies confirm the occurrence of a sex-role crossover." (p. 10)

If Tamir's results hold true for all males, then some of the data from the interviews I conducted are related to "middle age" phenomena as men attempt to express the neglected "feminine" (*al la Jung*) aspects of themselves. Tamir (p. 11) uses Erik Erikson's terminology to describe the forties for a

male as an "Adult crisis" where the developmental task is now generativity, rather than self-absorption. The identity issue for men in their forties is therefore different than during Erikson's fourth and fifth stages of Industry vs. Inferiority and Identity vs Identity Confusion.

Though my Data can be interpreted to show the Eriksonian work of generativity as the men experiment with roles other than their striving for success through productivity, there is an additional element in the data that is not accounted for in Tamir's discussion. Indeed one of the men interviewed was under the impression that professional counselling was an attempt to feminize men. Though I used the Jungian perspective that there are both masculine and feminine qualities in all people, and counselling helps men identify the already-present feminine qualities, this Subject (160) was still hesitant. Earlier in the interview he had indicated his preference to go to a pastor or friend whom he knew rather than a professional he might not know.

Interviewer: Can you say more about who that might be, or what that might be?

**Subject: Uh, it could be conversation with friends, or it could be church - a church related thing - sometimes at the church we have a seminar, maybe on the family, enrichment, that type of thing. That may spur**

**me on to do something further. I can't really think of anything other specifically. I suppose there's things in every day life you'd see this, you'd see that and maybe it helps you.**

Interviewer: If you came to that decision inside of yourself, "Hey I need to talk to a counsellor, I need to talk to somebody about this thing that's going on in my life," who would you think of calling first?

**Subject: Well right now, right at this point, in our church, we have a pastor couple, and the lady is educated in counselling. I'd probably go to her to start off with.**

.....

Interviewer: Part of my reading has been in the area of how we have been brought up to be men in this society - to be strong and self-sufficient, provider. So that's one role that we carry with us from birth on. It's not something we choose, its just laid on to males, and how we as males often expect females to be the nurturer, the healer, the caretaker. Yet as human beings, each of us have the other qualities in us, but we don't expect to see those nurturing, caring kinds of things come out from men. So one of the things

that I'm reading about is that probably, as men, we need to do something like what the women have done - talk about how it is with us - talk with other men about how it is for us to bear these burdens and in the talking, begin to get tin touch with some of the other qualities that are there and have sort of been pushed down.

**Subject:      So the idea wouldn't be to try to make men women. We're just trying to bring out some qualities that men do have but they haven't been rally tapped into as much?                      (160-5,8)**

I detect the generativity Erikson describes as these men wonder how they could help some of their friends who seem both troubled and isolated from sources of help. Yet the data I have present the element of how what rural men know about counselling, the N/K coding category, influences their ability to offer appropriate tools and comments to their troubled friends. Without contextual, story-telling PR from the service agencies, the men on the "front lines", the "firefighters" (Subject 150-19), are left helpless, deficient in resources to do the task their developmental age demands in reaching out beyond themselves with responsibility toward the ongoing and upcoming generation.

Jesus demonstrated the kind of PR that is necessary, first providing his own example in teaching and healing, then

offering to his disciples the opportunity to use his example, his way, to be empowered themselves (Luke 9:1-6 and Parallels). The disciples go and are surprised to be able to teach and heal. This suggests a model to me about how professional counsellors can get the story out of how they are helping rural men, and then the story, circulating amongst rural men, can become a motivation for those men to seek a greater variety of sources of aid for their issues.

Three subjects talked of their need for information as they entered homes of rural men on business, to find what they perceived as needs for counselling. One of the men ended up as a "non-professional counsellor" (200-10), primarily listening what was said. The other two men, with OMAF training, left a name and number of a professional counsellor to contact, yet those leaving the information themselves had no personal experience of what might happen during counselling itself, and no follow-up knowledge whether the leaving of information resulted in a phone call and actual counselling session.

It could be that attempts to offer persons an experience, or case-story of what counselling is like and might accomplish, would be one way of contributing a greater effect to the non-professional activity of referring persons to appropriate counselling services. Though Subject 100 was desiring some representative of professional counselling to tell about counselling during a meeting men would attend, other subjects upon hearing the suggestion thought of it as a

method to reach men they thought to be in need. Further, those subjects involved in providing services that took them into rural homes already see themselves as informal counsellors who help a man by listening. PR from professional service providers would do well to target rural service providers such as insurance representatives, feed suppliers, or others who provide on-site contact with rural men. For example, a Counsellor, or a referring person (physician or clergy person) might offer the annual insurance meeting a ten minute presentation with an example of how rural men can benefit from a number of counselling sessions. By presenting a brief case example at such a time, PR would include an aspect of incarnation that men could take with them and re-story to others they might encounter to make a personal referral when issues of a personal nature are raised by the clients they serve.

One subject indicated a process similar to that just outlined to be an amazingly successful educational event in "**the Ontario Pesticide Education Program**" (180-18) where suppliers, educators, and eventually rural men themselves, were talking about the benefits of the program. That program took place over a six year period and was paid for from a variety of sources including the end user of the service.

The above illustrates the trilogy of action that I believe my data supports for more effective delivery of professional counselling services to rural men: PR (effective

advertising (incarnation) of the service), N/K (men naming their need and knowing someone who can meet their need), and Normalization (rural men do it).

That the men I interviewed demonstrated a forceful 92% ~~against~~ having professional counselling happen in their homes indicates a specific, non-counselling, referral role for the churches with regard to serving men.

The data suggests that the best PR professional counsellors and their agencies can do is to offer informational, story-like presentations during gatherings of rural men or rural service providers at annual conventions or product promotion events geared to the rural consumer.

### **Incarnation: the core assumption**

An unspoken, but undergirding theme through the interviews has been the incarnational, word-made-flesh expectation that there will be someone I know who will meet the need I have. I may have to travel to eventually contact that someone, but I should be able to find the connecting links here. The connecting links here in my community will come from people I already know and trust, and who know me and my history.

The core assumption about Rural Health amongst men is that the solution resides in our midst. Theologically, that could be stated, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God".

One subject, from whom the subtitle of this thesis comes, indicated "**you can't just go to town and get counselling.**"

(140-2) The statement reflects a view consistent with other data elements that professional (and informal) counselling is not a commodity, it is not just knowledge, but it is a living process which requires a living relationship (incarnation) before it will be effectively engaged by rural men.

This reminds me of the comment from Scher's book, "In rural settings, personal trust is more important than professional expertise. Without trust, expertise will be ignored." (228). That comment implies that knowledge of professional expertise goes further in a non-rural setting. It is wise, then for counsellors desiring to work with rural folk to develop a PR network which allows them to be known and trusted by many others, including potential referrers, in a personal way. Only then will their expertise be received.

## Chapter 5

### **Summary of Findings:**

#### **PR (Public Relations - information sharing)**

To be effective, PR must include the cooperation of referring persons (Physicians, clergy, other rural service providers) in telling and re-telling examples of how professional counselling has affected the well-being of rural men. When rural men can hear this story from one another, then ideal PR is happening.

#### **N/K Naming the help I need and Knowing a helpful person**

This finding is related to PR in so far as information and knowledge will have to flow for the individual rural man to be able to identify someone believed to be helpful for the issue he has identified. This process happens constantly for the rural man's business needs, and is the operative factor in IFC. The challenge for professional counsellors is to have the PR which circulates and presents the counsellor as both a known person and someone who is helpful to a variety of personal needs men might experience. The naming aspect of N/K is an individual internal process. Even when under great stress, one of the men I interviewed could not name his need for stress relief until the relief actually came :

**Subject:** ... The interesting thing about our schedule was that I had no idea what stress was until I left the job. When the job was over and I settled down to farming, which has only been one year, that's when I realized the amount of stress I was under. When I was going through I didn't know.

Interviewer: Did other people talk to you about the stress they saw in you or not?

**Subject:** Oh yeah.

Interviewer: And how did you respond to those?

**Subject:** I was young and I was strong and I could handle it. (200-6)

For this man, and some of the others, the male stereotype is to be strong and fix my problem myself. Asking for help isn't considered. Even though he participated in a couples event and continues to participate in couples meetings with his spouse, even though he sees other men whom he believes could benefit from professional help, he still chooses not to use professional help for his own personal issues. Naming one's own need and knowing a helpful person are linked to a skill of self-knowledge and a courage to act on what one knows about one's self.

I believe that N/K already shows itself to be linked necessarily to PR. My interviews demonstrate that currently rural men make more use of informal counselling sources than of professional sources. If the rural man is going to use professional services, then PR and N/K will have to be linked to Normalization, so that the story becomes, for example: "I know this guy who went to see Mr. C. Mr. C. really knows what it means to work in an area like this, in fact he works with a lot of men like us. This guy, he went there a few times, and now he says he's got a lot more choices in front of him. Before he went, it looked like a dead end to him. Now he's hopeful. Sounds like you and this guy are facing some of the same issues. Why don't you give Mr. C a call?"

When an IFC network can add personal details to known situations, then the links to professional counselling are more apt to be used.

### **Normalization**

This term applies generally to men entering therapy. Bly and Keen are authors demonstrating through metaphor men's need to consider their issues and questions as acceptable components of male communication. Osherson does the same in a less metaphoric, more personal story telling way that I believe holds more potential for connection with the experience of rural men. As more and more men are using professional counselling services, as their stories become known in a general way, then even more men consider

professional counselling services as an option for themselves. One subject indicated the relationship of PR, normalization and N/K in the process he thought he might use to decide which counsellor he would talk to:

Interviewer: Verifying and checking out - any vision of how that would happen?

**Subject: For myself my due diligence would come from asking for references from people that they've worked with.**

Interviewer: How would you see that in terms of confidentiality?

**Subject: Well, I don't see a problem there because I would expect that that person, if they were successful - if they were the type of person that I wanted to work with, they would have been very successful, they would have been successful with people at such a degree that there would be very happy individuals that would say, "If you ever want to use my name, give me a call and tell me who you want to give it to, and I'll say yes or no for you to pass it on." That's the type of individual that I would seek out, that they've attained that level they would have people saying, "Yes, you've done such a wonderful job**

**in my life, pass on the good word to somebody  
else and I'll talk to them about you."**

(150-5)

For rural men to access a professional counsellor means it will have to seem "normal", something that other men would also do. That means they'll have to hear stories from others about how they experienced counselling from a particular counsellor.

Normalization also requires a sensitivity from the professional counsellor so that requests of rural male clients are not creating increased isolation from other rural males. As Hennon (1979) records in his study of rural males, professionals desiring to offer services

"must be aware of the social systems and reference groups that shape the male family role. In rural Appalachia, in addition to the nuclear family, this most often will be the family or clique group. Programs must be designed to avoid the pitfall of trying to impact the role of only one male without the support of the group." (p. 614)

Normalization, is a process working both within the individual male knowing he has a personal issue to work on, (highlight on the "N" of N/K) and amongst the professionals providing the service as well as amongst other service providers (PR). It is a process of re-socializing the concept and experience of what comprises acceptable male activity.

## Chapter 6

### **"Please Incarnate Again"**

#### **A Theological Reflection**

Daly and Cobb constantly make the point that being a "person-in-community" (chapter 8, p. 159f) requires a major transition in our sociological, economic and political inheritance of "individualism" from the past several decades. "People are constituted by their relationships. We come into being in and through relationships and have no identity apart from them ... People also have some freedom to constitute themselves. Personal responsibility is based on that freedom." (Daly p. 161).

After confronting his own needs following his baptism (Matthew 3:13-17 and parallels) and being tempted by the devil in the desert to live individualistically (Matthew 4:1-11 and parallels), Jesus chooses to begin making community with ordinary persons (Matthew 4:18-22). After calling the disciples, Jesus invites them to practice and preach the Jesus-way of being a "person-in-community" who lives not only to 'love yourself' but also to demonstrate "love your neighbour" (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31, Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14, and James 2:8). I note that the evangelists, in framing the reports of Jesus' quotation of Leviticus 19:18 have directly connected the love of neighbour to giving up individualistic security (Matthew 19:19ff) and taking a risk for the welfare of others-in-community. Indeed Romans 13:9 connects the loving of "your neighbour as

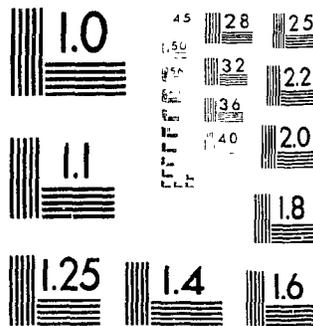
yourself" with actions of justice towards one's neighbour, as does Galatians 5:13-15. In emphasizing the fundamental relationship responsibility humans have in order to live justly and lovingly with self and neighbour, Jesus and his followers incarnate the story of living as "persons-in-community" who freely give and receive help. In receiving help, in asking for help, freedom is offered to live unencumbered by prevalent stereotypes.

Jesus sought to "Normalize" a responsible, loving engagement of persons-in-community and spoke "Woes" (Matthew 23:13ff; Luke 6:24-26, 11:42-52) to those who wished to have individualistic authority over others without compassionate regard for their common link of being persons-in-community.

The theme of "Please incarnate again" is suggested by the interviews with men who continually spoke of their desire to know and be known by trusted persons. They needed to "see" a fleshly "incarnation" who presented a source of help to an issue they were personally confronting. A few of these men in contrast to what the literature calls Socialized Fear of Self Disclosure, lived in a way that demonstrated their desire to live non-stereotypically as a "persons-in-community". They received comments from others inviting them to retreat to the old role model of focus on work and success, but by their actions revealed a deep inner energy to break free of that role. They were doing, what Jenkins (1990) refers to as

2 OF 2

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declining the "restraints" - the "traditions, habits and beliefs which influence the ways ... [they] make sense of and participate in the world." Yet, they had no role model, and very little support to be different than the socialized role they had inherited. For example Subject 190 reveals a portion of his struggle:

... So you're driven, and as I think about it, this group of guys, local people that we get together with, from a lot of them, their sole ambition in life, is to be what they consider successful, and that has to do with outside - out at the barn, and like you said those kids are growing up so quickly and no time for being with them when they're going to their sports or whatever it happens to be. I've been lucky that way because [wife] and I made that decision early in life that always tried to get in to see games or plays or whatever they're in, and I've always made a point of being in the house in time to be here and have breakfast with them before they get on the bus. I've always enjoyed that so it wasn't hard to do. We talk to lots of people where the man may not see the kids. They get up and go to school, when they get home, and he's later getting in at night, he may not see the kids, only an hour or so in the evening. I

think that's sad, but I mean that's not me.  
We've chosen something a little different.  
But maybe I'm just starting to appreciate  
that, I don't know.

Interviewer: I'm interested. How did you come to the  
point of making that choice?

Subject: Just because, I wanted to be a part of  
that, I wanted to see what the kids were doing  
at the school.

Interviewer: So was it an internal kind of thing  
happening in you?

Subject: Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Did you talk to anybody else about it?

Subject: Not really, not beyond [wife] I don't  
think because I've found often times that the  
two of us, or one of us, - or talk about me  
when I was there, not very many parents showed  
up for these things, and especially men. I  
showed up at the odd place where there was a  
dozen women and one or two men sort of thing.  
I've had people say to me, "How do you get  
away?", or "How do you manage to do this sort  
of thing?" I've always been fairly private  
about that, I'll just say, "I made time." Not  
wanting to put somebody down. When somebody  
else says that to you, you almost want to say,  
"Well, I take the time," and it's like saying,

"You don't take the time," and I didn't ever want to put anybody else down. But to me it was important and I could see that to the kids it was important. Having said all that I didn't see that I had any easier time with our kids as far as - as they came along and the problems they got in to and the problems we had to deal with, I didn't see that my making that extra effort - I don't know whether it made any difference. It seemed like we had our share of problems to work through.

(190-7)

This man, contrary to social expectation in his rural community, was incarnating a new way of being male that didn't submit to the individualistic hard work and success role-model that dominates male role stereotypes. This man was attempting to be a person-in-community with his wife and children and with other parents while not seeing an immediate, measurable reward. In one way he was "selling all he had" (Matthew 19:21) in terms of traditional aspirations to being the most successful farmer around in order to join the "unproductive" pursuits of risking being the only man at a parent-teacher meeting, or the only man available to his children when they left for school in the morning.

Subject 190 identified the same "Please incarnate again" them when he focused on the "production" mentality (an

individualistic, success-oriented phenomenon) that pushes people beyond reasonable and responsible human limits:

... We're bombarded with this production thing. To me that's the basis of it. That's where it comes from. Production has become everything in agriculture, we call it family farms, we hide it behind so many things. There's a cheap food policy and call it family farms, call it food production, we provide that. People are literally competing with each other to be a part of that. It always amazes me, they can convince a person to go out and borrow half a million dollars to expand and become more efficient. His chances of ever getting out of debt are almost nil. And yet that person may have been virtually out of debt before starting, yet they are convinced they can't survive unless - That's an amazing thing when you think about it, that they're convinced by the so-called experts that they can't survive as a small scale unit because of competition and all these things. There is a real pressure. I feel it myself....

(190-17,18)

In acknowledging that he feels this socialized rural pressure to produce and compete, Subject 190 was revealing the pain of trying to live in between the world where the pressure existed and his own desire to decline the restraints of that world (cf Jenkins, 1990) to be present to his children and his community life in a non-traditional masculine way. Subject 180 saw the need for financial management skills amongst farmers and has offered a course regularly, but he also recognizes how the rural men are caught "in-between", without role models, without social support to take risks which don't show immediate, measurable benefits on the productivity scale:

Interviewer: So in the financial management kind of course work, the neighbour-to-neighbour thing hasn't happened as much.

**Subject:** No, because we stand across the fence and we lie about our yields and all that sort of thing, but we don't talk about net income. We don't say, "Well, geez, I lost ten thousand bucks last year and I can't figure out why." Farmers don't talk to each other like that. If they do it's in a kind of a throw away comment, you know like, "Well it didn't make any money last year, don't expect to this year," something stupid like that, whereas everybody talks about yields, everybody talks about pounds per head per day gain, but it's

not considered acceptable to talk about, and maybe rightly so, about what our farm income is or isn't. I mean I know people that do, and that's fine. Push it the right way, and it's nice to talk about. Some people either brag or the opposite, they always complain. So the same problem is there. So people go to production courses because we talk about it a lot, about bushels produced and that sort of thing. They don't go to financial courses as much because it's not considered

Interviewer: the thing to do.

**Subject: That's right. the thing to do. There needs to be some sort of common man approach to this.** (180-19)

The common man approach was clarified by this subject as seeing someone else doing something different, asking questions, then trying it for themselves, even though there might be no financial return (180-17). Subject 180 reminded me of conversations with older parishioners regarding Radio Farm Forum, and trips through the countryside where rural men talked about what was working well in their work, and revealed difficulties so that the experience of others could be brought to bear on a particular difficulty one was facing. What has changed in the last fifty years so that producers, in the words of subject 180, now "lie" about their yields? My

subjects suggested the change has to do with the over-emphasis on production. Cobb and Daly have some potential answers to that question which hinge on the aspect of being an ethical person-in-community while declining to live the individualistic, success-oriented model of production-consumption.

Jesus, after being tempted to the individualistic way chose to demonstrate amongst his disciples the person-in-community way of inter-dependence and responsibility. Men seek other men as role models, and there are very few in the rural area who openly share their stories of asking for help on an issue of a personal nature. When it does happen, as indicated by subject 170, it may have been in the form of a testimonial:

Interviewer: ....What would you say helped that change happen?

**Subject: Perhaps listening to other people. In my Christian surroundings, I've heard testimonies of people who have lived a different life than I have, and yet how they found they're free. Again it was recognizing a need which probably released them from their bondage to free them to go knocking at a door for help.**

(170-5)

Jesus demonstrated in his willingness to share his authority and power with his disciples (Luke 9:1-6 and parallels) and in his willingness to heal that it was OK to ask for help. Jesus became both source of help, and asker for help in demonstrating the way of person-in-community. Subject 200 demonstrated the importance of that sharing, of help-asking, help-giving when the topic of his attendance at a Marriage Encounter was raised first by his wife, then by a fellow member of the church.

Interviewer: Did you hear anybody else talking about that kind of stuff?

**Subject: Yes. Yes. Because it was through our church. So other people from our church had been there and talked about it and now that's my role. We've been there, other people have not specifically asked us.**

Interviewer: Did you ask people what this encounter was going to be like?

**Subject: Yeah I did.**

Interviewer: Other men, other women?

**Subject: Couples. As couples we talked about it. That's what interested my wife. (200-5)**

We can call the above "word-of-mouth advertising", or theologically we can call it incarnation - the word becoming flesh in the actions, invitations, requests for help and

offers of help given for the health and well being of God's delight people. God's declaration of our human goodness, connected with the goodness of all else God had created is said, after the creation of human beings, to be very good (Genesis 1:31). That is an indication that God wants to delight in us, as well as in the rest of God's creation.

In the requests for more word-of-mouth information about the counselling setting, rural men were asking a theological question that might be phrased: How in God's creation could a counselling session benefit me, and my life in this community?

Their fear of professional counselling may be rooted in fear of the unknown rather than in a Socialized Fear of Self Disclosure. Jesus' ministry intended to show how close the kingdom of God was to those who most often received the message that they were the forgotten ones, the unacceptable ones (Matthew 21:31). Bright (chapter 8, p 215-243) sets forth a picture of the Kingdom of God that is and is not yet. Bright's discussion of the Kingdom of God reminds me both of Daly and Cobb's detailed look at "person-in-community" both present now, and yet to come, as well as the Hebrew name of God as discovered by Moses at the burning bush in isolated wilderness. In YHWH Moses discovers "I Am" simultaneously with "I Will Be who I Will Be" (Exodus 3). Subsequently, Moses risks leaving the safety of the wilderness to go back as person-in-community to face those from whom he fled on behalf of those who were enslaved. Moses, effectively brought the Kingdom of God close to Pharaoh and the Hebrews and could be

a biblical example of what Bright believes the church is called to demonstrate in living "between two worlds". Both Moses and Jesus risked being what I believe Daly and Cobb mean by "person-in-community".

Limburg in focusing on the role of the prophets argues that the prophetic role is to be one of "reminding his hearers that *the People of God are expected to show a concern for the powerless.*" (p.74) As persons-in-community prophets are to be "Advocates for the Powerless" (Limburg, p. 76). This reminds me of Jesus' invitation to the one who indicated he had kept the law and loved his neighbour as himself: "... go, sell your possessions, and give ... to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21). When rural men can hear that other rural men have given up being "possessed" by the stereotype that males fix all their own personal issues; that to ask for help is a sign of weakness; that to be males, one has to expunge all indications of anything considered a feminine characteristic; then rural men can emerge again from the wilderness of narcissistic temptation to live individualistically and join freely as persons-in-community to live life "abundantly" (John 10:10).

The men I interviewed demonstrated a call to have more information which they could use and share about counselling and the counselling process. Their call is a call inviting Moses to return to the place of enslavement, a call inviting captives to be released (Luke 4:18), a call inviting an

enfleshment of the reality of what good counselling might offer to rural men specifically.

"Please incarnate again" is the request that the information come to them in flesh - the flesh of someone they could get to know - a trusted referral point, or a resident counsellor who participates in community events and offers narrative from compiled case stories of how the services the counsellor provides could benefit those rural men who might consider using professional counselling services.

Romans 5:6 may provide a theme for professionals desiring to provide counselling services, in that the current way of making those services known may have to "die" for the men who are not yet using them. In the new story suggested by Roman's 5:6, the fact of the dying, makes possible a new opening, and new access. A pilot program in a rural area where counsellors took time at public gatherings to narrate their work with rural clients; A pilot program in a rural area where counsellors took time to address service providers already in business contact with rural men - these may be the new story, the resurrection part of the Incarnation which provides rural men with new opportunities to access available sources of help.

## Chapter 7

# Implications for the Church

## Churches as Referral Agencies

Coaching effective IFC

Churches who are willing to establish the incarnational pattern that it is OK for men to ask for help, and churches that are known for using community resources to meet the needs of individual members will likely be effective referral points for rural men. Churches which encourage and normalize discussion of personal issues in study groups or other discussion times are already providing Informal Counselling and Normalization. I was amazed at the strong church connection amongst the men of my sample. Subject 120 relies on the minister of his church to be a referral point:

**Subject: No. I would still go to the minister.**

**I think I would here. I don't think he could help me in the financial end, but maybe he could put my mind at ease, or direct me to where I should be going. I would still end up talking to the stranger, but I would only be talking to the stranger about the money end of the deal.**

Interviewer: When it comes to the

**Subject: The personal**

Interviewer: you want to talk to somebody you know.

Am I catching you right?

**Subject: That's right. And the other thing is  
the trust.**

Interviewer: Can you say more about trust?

**Subject: I think, if you've got problems, you  
have to know that the person you're telling is  
keeping that in confidence. (120-4)**

Subject 120 has more to say about the role of the church  
going beyond church members:

**Subject: ... [United Church Minister]'s been good,  
no question about that. We're the ones that  
asked him to get involved in this. Thankfully  
he did, cause they [woman suicide and husband]  
didn't go to church or anything. They were  
probably Christians, but just weren't going. I  
think something like that around here, I know  
the minister's trained for that, but it's a  
strain on him too.**

Interviewer: So what you're saying is that the  
minister is providing a service that goes  
beyond the church membership to be able to be

available to people who might need a counsellor.

**Subject:     Yeah, That's right. That's right.**

and a little later talking about another long-time resident minister of another denomination,

**Subject:     Yeah.   But he'd be the type of guy that'd give a listening ear. I think if there's some type of a - you'd never see it because who'd fund it - it'd have to be a multi-thing where you'd done 20 charges or and have it in a place like [town 15 km away] and then people here wouldn't use it anyways.**

Interviewer: They want somebody they know and can see as another human being.

**Subject:     Yeah. To tell you the truth, out of the majority of men that I know, it would take a lot to get them to go to counselling.**

and a little later:

Interviewer: Is there anything else that comes to your mind that you'd like to say about men and counselling at all?

**Subject:** My honest opinion is Rural communities  
I think if the church could be there for  
people, I don't think they'd even bother. I  
don't know what the rest said.

Interviewer: And what you're meaning by that, "if  
the church could be there for the people" Can  
you say more about that.

**Subject:** Well I think like with this, where you  
go in and talk to the minister and say, "Things  
are going bad on the farm, I know I'm going to  
lose it."

Interviewer: Are people open to that, and how could  
we make it so that people were more open to  
that?

**Subject:** I don't know. I really don't. That's a  
hard call.

Interviewer and Subject: [sharing of farm  
experiences]

**Subject:** I found that at work too. It was always  
a half an hour later or 20 minutes or the  
second coffee before we got around to what  
they really wanted to talk to.

Interviewer: So one of the things you're saying is not to rush it with men.

**Subject:     Yeah, because I think it's hard.**

Interviewer: And another thing you're saying is that the church may have one of the most important roles to play in rural communities in terms of

**Subject:     I think the church does.     (120-23,24)**

Connection to a church appears more common (even though the men may not attend church activities) than what I had expected from my rural church experience. The above shows strong expectations that the resources of a church should serve more than it's members when it comes to crisis situations among other folk in the community. When men are connected to a church, their relationship with the clergy person will determine their openness to consider clergy as their first professional point of contact regarding a personal issue. Clergy, based on the data of my sample, will need to be well trained in knowing how to refer and to whom to refer. Indeed, when clergy have personal knowledge of what happens in professional counselling, and personal knowledge of a professional counsellor, and combine this with a demonstrated sensitivity for the lives rural men live, then clergy can be a highly effective referral point for rural men. This will hold true of other rural service providers including physicians,

insurance representatives, and a host of other agencies in contact with rural men who can expect to encounter situations where men reveal personal material indicating a need for professional counselling.

Notwithstanding the above, rural men may find clergy who engage themselves in the community to be effective links in their IFC network. Clergy will need to have the skill to distinguish what issues can be adequately dealt with informally, and what issues would derive greater benefit from professional counselling services. My own experience would indicate the "knowing when to refer" as a sometimes difficult judgement call when an atmosphere of trust and personal disclosure has been established. Already, rural folk complain of the way they are shifted from person to person in the field of medical services for the rural area, and may, depending on the person's condition, be relating to as many as six or more medical service providers, each of whom expects a certain level of personal disclosure. Therefore early referral or a team treatment effort at the outset, rather than later, may be the mode of choice for rural clergy so as to lessen the impact of distrust building based on having build new relationships and talk so personally with more than one counsellor.

## Chapter 8

### **Ways for Counsellors to Engage Rural Men**

Providing an accessible service that rural men will feel invited to use will engage the counsellor or Marital Therapist in attending to the IFC networks already operative amongst men. Counsellors will also need to determine if their counselling presents as a "feminine" event, or as an event in which it will be perceived that men can engage. That perception can be enhanced only as the counsellor or agency becomes known and trusted (PR) so that the IFC speaks of the counsellor or agency as a potential resource for issues men face. To gain access to the IFC network, counsellors will need to ask male clients if they can use their name as references to whom another rural man might speak if they wanted to know about the experience of counselling. In addition, counsellors will need to work at establishing trusted referring persons who are already part of the IFC. Such persons may be Insurance agents, Physicians, Clergy, or other rural service providers. A Mutual insurance company may be very receptive to having their representatives become informed about what services are available for rural men, and how those services may be accessed. Cognizant of the Incarnation theme, counsellors will want to provide case summaries as examples of what rural men might expect in the counselling session. That will allow the man hearing the case summary, of which there would ideally be a variety, to decide

whether the counselling fit his particular need and sense of masculinity. How case examples are framed will be important in helping normalize the counselling process as an activity in which rural males engage (Normalization). Can seeking help be framed as a strength, as an aspect of caring for the current and future generations who will experience the outcomes of counselling?

My study does not provide the necessary case examples, but rather offers a framework of motivational and expected themes which counsellors could utilize.

Counsellors will need to remain cognizant that the IFC is seen as sufficient for many rural men, and their efforts to get help will cease within the IFC network. Counsellors, then can see themselves as "consultants" to referring persons indicated above, and may want to detail the benefits such consultations could provide to rural physicians, clergy, insurance representatives and other service providers. Already, the Public Health system (recent phone conversation with Public Health Nurse) has social workers and medically oriented therapists going in to the homes who recognize needs for more focused and in-depth counselling from someone who is regarded as knowledgeable about rural folk, rural issues and rural community life. They want to be able to make referrals in confidence and trust to someone who will present as sensitive to the rural context in which their clients live. They want some knowledge of what service can be provided, and of the person of the provider.

As two of the Subjects I interviewed indicated (100, 210), a counsellor making contact in the home setting may be beneficial, only in-so-far-as it gives both counsellor and client a sense of the client's history and context. In depth counselling, needs to be conducted, with this sense of context and personal history, but at a site other than the client's home.

Is there a specific therapy more suited to rural men? Maybe, as suggested by Anderson (1976) and Brownlee (1994) but most important from the interviews I have conducted is conveying the sense to the rural male client that he is being listened to, respected, treated as an equal, and as the focus of the counsellor's genuine interest.

I would suggest that counsellors who see rural men could well explore their support networks with questions geared to uncover what IFC has been helpful. Encouraging and building the IFC capacity to refer will be the developmental task of counsellors and therapists desiring to Normalize personal help-seeking behaviour of rural males. This task will strengthen the individual male's knowledge of someone helpful and his exposure to stories of what needs others have found helped by counselling activity.

Indeed, like the narrative of the Bible, seeking to lessen the gap between human experience and God, so counsellors, seeking to lessen the distance between isolated rural males and counselling will have to consider a variety of incarnational means and messages to effect their task.

**APPENDIX A:** Letter of Introduction

Neil Lackey  
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Letter of Introduction  
to Potential Participants in the  
Research Project: Rural Men and Counselling/Therapy

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This letter comes to you by way of a conversation I had with (name of person/agency) about the provision of counselling services for rural men. I am interested in learning what rural men between the ages of 30 and 55 think about counselling services. I have lived in Perth County for more than a decade (1983-1994) and have been involved in rural issues, both through the United Church, and my participation in a variety of workshops, events, and projects geared to the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas.

Now, as a student working toward a Master of Theology in Pastoral Counselling (MTh) at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, I am hoping to interview men who have not yet made use of a

counselling or Family Therapy service, because I believe that hearing what you and others have to say could provide valuable information about how such service could be provided in our rural areas. I will be using the information provided in the interviews to write my MTh Thesis, which will be microfilmed, and lodged in the Library at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo and at the National Library, Ottawa.

Should you consent to participate in this research project, I will be making arrangements so that I can conduct one 40 to 60 minute private interview with you in your own home, regarding the areas touched on by the attached questions. You are free to decide not to participate in any aspect of this project. I will be calling you in approximately seven days from your receipt of this letter to learn what your decision is.

Should you decide to participate in this research project, I can assure you of confidentiality and privacy in the following ways:

1. The audio tape we make of our interview will be used only for the data you offer, and no names will ever be identified in the report which I make from the data.
2. You will never be identified in any verbal report or written material made by me, unless, as required by law, you tell me about a situation of the physical or sexual abuse of

a child, or indicate suicidal or homicidal tendencies, in which case I will be legally bound to make a report to the proper authorities.

Participation in this project presents very few risks, but one potential risk is that the questions we discuss may bring to mind some situations that you have faced. I am prepared to provide you with a list of local counselling/therapy agencies including Interfaith Pastoral Counselling Centre, Kitchener so that at your option, you may obtain appropriate counselling/therapy services for any issues that may arise for you.

Should you consent to participate in this research project, you shall always have the right to refuse to participate, the right to withdraw at any time, and the right to refuse to answer any questions. I will make audio tape recordings to help me in my data gathering, and the audio tapes will be erased once transcripts of them have been made and edited. Transcripts will be identified by number only and will be edited by me so that all names and other identifying information are removed in order to preserve confidentiality and privacy. The edited transcripts will be read by myself, my thesis advisor, two readers, and may be read by members of the Thesis Colloquium committee. I will also be keeping a copy of the edited transcripts in my personal education file at my home. The

final MTh thesis document will be available through the Wilfrid Laurier University Library and at the National Library, Ottawa.

Should you agree to participate, you will have the right to take two or three days to edit the transcript of our tape recorded interview. The researcher will make use only of the edited transcript for his thesis and other readers.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this research, the researcher, or the way in which research is being done, you may call me, Neil Lackey at (519) 656-2653, or my thesis advisor, Doctor Peter VanKatwyk at his Seminary office, (519) 884-1970, Extension 3586 or at his Interfaith Pastoral Counselling office, (519) 743-6781.

At the conclusion of the research, (anticipate July 1995) if you so request, a summary of the findings will be made available to you.

Enclosed with this letter is a Consent Form. Please sign this form, only if you agree to participate in the research project as outlined above.

Thank you for reading this introduction about my interest in rural men and counselling services. Should you

have any questions, please call me at the above number. I look forward to talking with you in about seven days to learn what you have decided about your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Neil Lackey, BSc., MDiv.

(The letter was originally formatted to fit on two pages, so the total amount of paper going to potential subjects was four pages in total: Two pages for the letter, one page for the Interview Questions and one page for the Consent form)

Proposed Interview Questions:

1. What thoughts, idea(s), picture(s), association(s) does the term "Counselling" bring to your mind? Does the term Marriage and Family Therapy bring anything similar or different to your mind? What do you associate with the term "Therapist"? Are your associations any different for the term "Counsellor"?
  
2. What would you imagine would have to happen to motivate you to make an appointment with someone who does counselling? What kinds of setting/location/timing or other details would make it easier for you to make an appointment? What would stop you from making an appointment?
  
3. What would you expect to happen to you if you were seeing someone who does counselling? What kinds of characteristics and activities would you expect from that person? Based on what you currently know or imagine about counselling, what would you desire to change about counselling and/or counsellors? If the words "counselling" and "counsellors" were "therapy" and "therapists" would your response be any different?
  
4. Imagine that you have decided you needed counselling. What people/organizations in your community would you consider approaching?

5. What influences would other people or organizations in your community have on your decision to seek counselling? ... to use counselling services?

6. What other comments or observations would you like to make about what would motivate men to make use of counselling services?

7. Demographic information:

Age:\_\_\_\_\_Marital Status:\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation:

Number years resident at this location:\_\_\_\_\_

Number years Family Name resident this area:\_\_\_\_\_

Organizational Memberships:

Number of other people living in this household: M\_\_ F\_\_

Ages:

Is Your personal income generated primarily in this community?\_\_

In another community? \_\_\_\_ (distance - KM)

Type of nearest Service provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance (km) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you talked to any one else about his research project?

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B** Outline to Service Providers

Neil Lackey,  
149 Queen Street E.,  
Wellesley, Ontario.N0B 2T0  
(519) 656-2653

A Brief Overview of my Thesis enquiry into  
What are the motivations for rural males' involvement in  
Marriage and Family Therapy?

I am currently working on a Master's Thesis in Pastoral  
Counselling with an emphasis on Marriage and Family Therapy  
at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in Wilfrid Laurier University.

My experience as a Minister in the United Church of  
Canada since 1979 has provided me with many observations of  
rural men who, though in need of therapy, seldom take action  
to obtain help even when their spouse or "significant other"  
takes initiative and makes use of a counselling service.

I have had many good talks with rural men in the barn,  
during a work project, at an auction sale, but seldom, at  
the kitchen table, or in the counselling office. Seldom have  
rural men followed up on referrals to counselling services  
which I have encouraged.

My review of the literature so far suggests that most  
men will show up in the counselling room because they have  
been ordered there by the courts, i.e. the men go because  
they have been perpetrators of violence against someone or  
because they are part of the "whole family" who is seeking a

counselling service. Some men will seek a counsellor when they are faced with a significant loss, for example, their spouse threatens to leave unless they get counselling. In the literature, it has also been suggested that counselling (and family therapy) has developed with an emphasis on the "feminine" characteristics of affect and connection. The hypothesis is that men don't seek counselling because it is not a masculine activity, and that counselling itself will have to develop a "masculine" process.

I want to focus on what rural men say would motivate them to seek a counselling service. I believe knowing this will help persons and agencies who provide counselling services better understand how rural men could be encouraged to make use of their service.

I am using a qualitative method of research and hope is to tape record interviews with 10-20 men who are between 30 and 55 years of age, have lived in a rural area (population less than 10,000) for at least 10 consecutive years, and who have not yet made use of a counselling service.

I will contact the men by letter, (telephone follow-up in 7-10 days) explaining my interest in hearing what they think about Family Therapy and Counselling services. Confidentiality, and privacy are assured. The University Ethics committee has reviewed and approved my proposal.

I hope you, as a service provider, might know some men who might be interested in talking about what they think would motivate men to use a counselling service. I would be

indicating to the men you suggest that I had been talking with you about the subject of what might motivate men to seek a counselling service, and their name was suggested.

Thank you for taking time to talk with me today. If you have further questions, please phone. If you'd like, I'd be pleased to provide you with a summary of my findings after July 1995.

Sincerely,

Enclosures: Consent Form and Proposed Interview Questions

(This information for Service providers was originally formatted to fit on one page)

**APPENDIX C** Help List

## People You Could Talk to ...

- about individual, couple or family stress and coping;
- about family issues;
- about issues concerning children;
- about strengthening relationships;
- about work-related stress and coping;
- about personal issues ...

## Huron-Perth Centres for Children and Youth

Listowel	291-1088	Stratford	273-3373
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## Stratford Family Counselling Services

Stratford	273-1020	Listowel	291-5401
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## Canadian Mental Health

Stratford	273-1391
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## Stratford General Hospital

Psychological Services	271-2120 Ext 571 (Doctor must Refer)
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Listowel Mental Health Services	291-1320
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## Optimism Place Stratford

271-5550	OR 1-800-265-8598
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**APPENDIX D** Transcript Editing Memo

&lt;Neil's Return Address and Phone&gt;

## MEMORANDUM

To: &lt;Firstname&gt;&lt;Lastname&gt; (Subject)

From: Neil

Date: &lt;Current Date&gt;

Re: Transcript of &lt;int-date&gt; Interview.

<firstname>, the following is a transcript of the tape we made at your house. I have double spaced your comments. Please edit, add, or change any of your comments as you desire. Feel free to refer again to the original letter I sent, or the questions in that letter as you make any changes you desire. Please initial each page to indicate that you have authorized the changes or the page as it is. I have enclosed a self-addressed, pre-paid envelope for your convenience. Please mail the enclosed transcript with any additions or changes by <Current Date: + 14>, 1995.

Remember that you are free to make changes;

Add comments, or ideas, or additional pages;

Delete comments;

Make comments unrelated to the interview questions that you would like to include now.

Thank you again for your help in my research project concerning rural men and counselling/therapy services.

- (signature)

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