

# **Lessons From the NAFWB Counseling Program**

**Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.**

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What follows is a synopsis of the counseling program offered through NAFWB. It is hoped that this report will provide clarity to the purpose and impact of the program and result in its continued funding.

Since its inception at the 2022 National Convention in Birmingham, we have surveyed participants once a year. The information that follows is derived from those surveyed as well as from providers of the program. You likely know that Tom Jones, a licensed professional counselor, has conducted most of these services. Other practitioners utilized include two more licensed professional counselors (master's level), a master's level psychologist, two doctoral level licensed professional counselors, a doctoral level biblical counselor, a certified professional mentor, and a psychiatrist.

## **What are the main concerns of the participants?**

The most recent survey of participants identified the concerns below as their reasons for seeking treatment. Note that most participants identified more than one concern.

<b><i>Concerns</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of Participants</i></b>
Anxiety	49
Ministry issues	37
Depression	35
Marriage	32
Grief	29
Sexual issues (e.g., pornography, addiction)	8
Trauma	8
Family issues	7
Other	8

## **Who are the participants?**

**Where are the participants ministering?** There are participants in the counseling program from 25 states. The following data shows the percentage of total program participants from each state.

<b><i>States</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of Participants</i></b>
North Carolina	20
Tennessee	12
Arkansas	7
Oklahoma	7
Florida	4
South Carolina	4
Georgia	4
Arizona	4
Michigan	4
Missouri	3
Mississippi	3
Virginia	3
Texas	3
Alabama	1
Ohio	1
Other (includes 10 states)	20

**Who are the participants?** Most participants are either a senior (or solo) pastor of a church or the wife of a senior or solo pastor.

<b><i>Position</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of Participants</i></b>
Senior/Solo pastor	58
Wife of a pastor	27
Church staff member	9
Child of a pastor	6

**How old are the participants?** Participants come from a wide age span. Five percent of children in the program are the children of pastors who have been involved in a serious situation. Pastors, wives, and staff 39 or younger comprise 38% of participants. Fifty-seven percent of participants are over 40. The table below provides a breakdown by age.

<b><i>Approximate Age of Participants</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of Participants</i></b>
Below 11	2
Teens	3
20s	12
30s	26
40s	21
50s	25
60 and above	11

**How much has the program cost?** See the cost breakdown below. As ministry personnel have become aware of the program, it has grown significantly. If this year's trend continues, the cost will more than double this year.

2022	\$ 4,575.00
2023	\$ 36,037.50
2024	\$ 58,600.00
1st Quarter 2025	\$ 29,712.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 128,925.00</b>

**How is the program funded?** Three states and five NAFWB agencies have helped fund the program.

<b><i>Agency or Organization</i></b>	<b><i>Amount Received to Date</i></b>
Executive Office	\$51,280.83
North American Ministries	\$30,534.17
FWB Foundation	\$17,555.00
IM, Inc.	\$15,755.00
Richland Ave Financial	\$6,000.00
North Carolina	\$5,000.00
Missouri	\$2,100.00
Mississippi	\$500.00

**What are the results of the program?** All program participants have rated the program as being helpful, with 93% rating the program as very or extremely helpful. In fact, 94% of participants report they are likely or very likely to refer the program to another pastor. Another 85% of participants say they have recommended the program to others. Thirty-seven percent of participants attested to learning of the program from another pastor.

**How has the program helped?** Results of the program cluster around four areas: **1)** retaining pastors, **2)** helping marriages, **3)** reducing isolation by providing a safe place, and **4)** learning life stewardship.

**The testimonials that follow** are representative of 66 comments received on the most recent participant survey. (Bold text has been added for emphasis.)

## Testimonials From NAFWB Counseling Participants

### Retention

The Refresh Counseling Program has helped pastors, their wives, and staff members continue in the ministry who may have otherwise walked away.

*This program has been **a life and ministry saver**. As a young minister, I believe I would have quit the ministry by now if it wasn't for someone to talk to....*

*Helped **save my ministry**. I thought my ministry was over.*

*God has used this ministry to bring victory in my life that otherwise I fear could have been the **demise of my pastoral ministry** or worse my marriage.*

*If it wasn't for this program, I very much doubt I would **still be in ministry** today.*

*I don't know **where I would be**, if I did not have this resource available to me.*

*When I believed the enemy had finally won in my life and ministry, this program showed me that the grace of God was so much deeper and so much more powerful.*

*In the most difficult time of nearly 26 years of ministry, and the serious **consideration of walking away**, this opportunity became a vital piece in my decision to continue. Having someone to talk with and them asking the questions to help navigate the thinking process made it easier to refocus on the calling God has placed on my life.*

### **Marriage**

The program appears to have saved some marriages and greatly benefited others.

*I appreciate this gift. It **saved me and my marriage**.*

*This program...helped me greatly in my **marriage**.*

*This has been a truly great program for me and my wife. **We have benefited** from this resource.*

*I didn't even know this ministry existed — but I can say with full honesty without it, I don't know where **my marriage**, my faith, or my mental health would be right now....*

### **A Safe Place**

Many of our pastors and their wives feel isolated. This program has alleviated that problem.

*Thank you...for offering this wonderful resource! **Pastors don't feel like they have anywhere to go** to work through issues.*

*The program has provided **a safe place** to open up and talk through some things that have been an obstacle in my personal life and ministry.*

*It is great to have an **outlet** to share my concerns with. It is comforting to know I can talk to someone and receive help to navigate my thoughts. God is definitely working through this program.*

*It has been a great encouragement finding out that **I am not in this battle alone**. Pastoring can sometimes feel like you are in a cave all alone and nobody else cares. It was a comfort to hear God's still small voice say that there are others in this same battle and then be able to talk to a counselor about the issues that come up.*

### **Stewardship**

The program has helped participants steward their lives better, making their ministry more effective.

*I battled pornography for nearly 10 years...this program...has been a **life changing** program. I am free!*

*This program was worth the effort and **tremendously helped** me. I'm grateful to God for it.*

*I thank Jesus for this program. My wife and I, my church, and my full-time ministry **benefit** from this work.*

*The sessions have been very **helpful for me** in working through long-term issues.*

*It really **helped** me through the grieving process.*

*This program was worth the effort and **tremendously helped me**. I'm grateful to God for it.*

*The Refresh Counseling Program is an **invaluable** resource to our men of God.*

*There is a biblical principle that light dispels darkness. I've always thought of this in terms of the light of Christ or God's Word exposing the darkness of sin. But I have found that this same truth applies to godly counsel exposing and, when applied, dispelling the darkness of the soul.*

### **Much Needed**

It appears that this program has only scratched the surface of the needs of the 1,693 NAFWB pastors and their wives. There are frequent comments about how participants wished they had had the program earlier, how others need the program, and that it should be promoted more extensively.

*Wish it was available 30 years ago for pastors and families.*

*More programs just like this.*

*A much-needed resource. So proud to be a part of our denominational leaders for developing this program.*

*Expand it! This is invaluable to our pastors and families.*

*Please continue the good work that the Lord has started in this body of believers.*

### **Thankful**

Participants are very thankful for the program. The below responses are characteristic of participants. Many refer to the cost and how they could not afford this service on their own.

*Blessed to receive such quality counseling without having to worry about the cost.*

*I appreciate this gift. It saved my marriage.*

*I appreciate the opportunity to be a recipient.*

*I am extremely appreciative of the FWB denomination. This has been fantastic! It's a blessing.*

*Thank you...for offering this wonderful resource! Pastors don't feel like they have anywhere to go to work through these issues.*

*I appreciate the NAFWB taking care of the cost. Cost would have been a major preventative to receive treatment during a time of crisis.*

*I'm very thankful....*

*If you're wondering whether it matters — let me tell you it does. It saved pieces of me I thought were already too far gone. I'll never be the same, and I'm so deeply, eternally grateful.*

Depending on the needs and kind of treatment utilized, it costs around \$1,000 from start to finish for a pastor. The total program expenditure is 0.32% of all gifts to the NAFWB (less than half of a percent). Almost half of our pastors minister while working another job (48%). They maintain churches and give to our ministries. They are worthy of this ministry. Let us find a way to continue and expand it.

*The labourer is worthy of his hire... (Luke 10:7). — **Jesus***