Response to Malony

Victor L. Brown, Jr.

Dr. Malony concisely sums up the thrust of my efforts to understand helping principles when he asserts that I feel "that religious counselors should use the best information they have for helping people and that the best information comes from the Savior's teachings." He also underscores the particular principle upon which this article rests when he notes that I am "making a more basic point, namely, that values *should* be part of therapy wherever therapy is done."

Those of us involved in the helping professions and in religion would do well to heed the Savior's warning against attempting to serve, with equal allegiance, two masters (Matt. 6:24). At the same time, a decent respect for empiricism demands that we avoid the ruse of camouflaging professional inadequacy with ideological fervor. Jesus himself offered an empirical test when he stated that false prophets can be discovered by their fruits (Matt. 7:15–20).

I propose that the therapeutic power of methods based upon the doctrines of Jesus is enormous, and that dilution of gospel doctrines or principles weakens the efficacy of these methods. Malony understands this when he states that Christians "take their cue from God not from culture." The type of inquiry reported in my essay examines the clinical usefulness of the teachings of Jesus Christ. For reasons of research clarity, this type of inquiry is needed in far greater amounts. I must emphasize, however, that the tests my article reports are not of the *validity* of the doctrines of Christ but of the *application* of those doctrines to the therapeutic task.