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Proactive Pastoral Counseling: A Christlike Integrative Therapeutic for Creating Christian Intrapersonal Formation in Believers at First Baptist Church of Harmony, ME

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to

the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

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Harmony, Maine

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This action research project introduces Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) as a Christian Integrative Therapeutic (CIT). PPC, combined with its counterpart, Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF), offers a proactive pastoral counseling approach to assist others in coping with intrapersonal conflict while guiding them toward Christian intrapersonal formation. The impetus behind the study addresses the need for pastoral counseling with members of First Baptist Church (FBC) in Harmony, ME.

Chapter One lays out the history, background, and beliefs of FBC and the Maine culture dating back to the late 1700s. Chapter Two addresses the nature of pastoral counseling, its tenets, and applications described in literature and field research. Theoretical and theological applications are also noted. Chapter Three provides the methodology of the CIF four-step process, offering others a vantage point into the CIF program while viewing the efficacy of PPC. Chapter Four provides the results of the CIF training program, laying out the results for each FBC member who submitted to the CIF training program. Chapter Five provides PPC's overall benefits, advantages, and options for future applications, such as integrating PPC and the CIF program with other churches, congregations, and ministry programs, such as discipleship ministries and outreach programs specific to reaching non-religious entities.

Employing PPC for one's church or organization is practical, realistic, and healthy for all who consider its applications. Applying a PPC approach integrated with the CIF four-step program will enhance the spiritual well-being of all participating.

Contents

Abbreviations

CBT   *Cognitive Behavior Therapy*

CCT   *Christian Cognitive Therapy*

CE   *Christian Education*

CIT   *Christian Integrative Therapeutic*

DMIN   *Doctor of Ministry*

FBC   *First Baptist Church*

IBS   *Inductive Bible Study*

IP   *Integrative Perspective*

IT   *Integrative Therapy*

NASB95   *New American Standard Bible Update 1995*

NT   *Narrative Therapy*

PC   *Pastoral Counselor/Pastoral Counseling*

PPC   *Proactive Pastoral Counseling*

REBT   *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy*

SM   *Stephen's Ministry/Stephen's Minister*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

An ongoing battle for spiritual truth fills the hearts and minds of the people living in Harmony, ME.[1] From its conception, First Baptist Church (FBC) of Harmony has suffered dramatically in its pursuit to understand Christian spirituality and grow intra-personally in Christ.[2] While maintaining a preference-driven church and adhering to staunch devotion to self-preservation,[3] FBC's ability to discern spiritual things declined. FBC's exclusion of those who did not meet religious standards kept community members at bay to avoid disruptions from doing church "their way."[4] In essence, FBC struggles from the lack of spiritual leadership and understanding of how to be a Christ-centered church the community might seek for worship and spiritual care; hence, the need for Christian intrapersonal formation.

Christian intrapersonal formation is the pursuit of becoming more Christlike in one's thinking. Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF), a six-week proactive pastoral counseling training program, advances that objective, implementing a four-step process to help others realize a restored sense of cognitive well-being. Like Carlson[5] and Maddix,[6] CIF informs others to become more like Christ by spiritually forming according to God's Word.

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[1] Scott Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview: Mitigating Emerging Syncretism with Worldly Philosophies Through Focused Instruction in Christian Theology" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2021), 108.

[2] First Baptist Church of Harmony, "Business Meeting Journal" (Harmony: First Baptist Church, 1872), n.p.

[3] David Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University, 1989), 18.

[4] Thom Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 29.

[5] Gregory C. Carlson, "Adult Development and Christian Formation," in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim (Nashville: B&H, 2010), chapter 7.

[6] Mark A. Maddix, "Spiritual Formation and Christian Formation," in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim (Nashville: B&H, 2010), chapter 8.

Maddix describes spiritual formation as an inward action that helps one "form" and does not necessarily correlate with a phase. He says, "Spiritual formation is the outworking of the grace of God in the hearts and actions of human beings."[7] Carlson suggests, "Adult development and spiritual formation can be glimpsed in the life of Jesus."[8] Whitney adds, "Persistent spiritual discipline is the only path to godliness," which is affirmed by Peter's exhortation regarding growth in Christian virtue in 2 Peter 1:6.[9] Respectively, CIF challenges others to "self-reflect in Christ," reframe their life narrative and submit to Christian spiritual disciplines to help augment one's ability to discern the things of the Spirit; thus, a Christian spiritual journey.

Maddix also contends the journey through the stages of purgation, illumination, and union provides a pattern of transformation necessary for spiritual growth and formation.[10] He says, "Often through patterns, God breaks in and upsets our lives for transformation and change to occur."[11] Carlson affirms, "Life submitted to Lordship produces righteous living . . . goodness, righteousness, and truth are fruits of a follower of Christ."[12] In other words, spiritual formation occurs when one intentionally engages the heart and mind toward Christlikeness.

Replacing self-thinking with biblical thinking changes a person's intrapersonal world, imposing spiritual formation, especially in adults. Leaf comments, "Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are granted a 'new nature' resulting from the Holy Spirit's regeneration. This new nature

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[7] Maddix, "Spiritual Formation," 12.

[8] Carlson, "Adult Development," 69.

[9] Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 4.

[10] Maddix, "Spiritual Formation," 75.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Carlson, "Adult Development," 17.

enables each believer to develop thinking, a worldview based on the mind of Christ."[13] Through interactive Bible reading, the CIF program encourages spiritual discussions (vis-á-vis adult interaction) in a Christian environment (small groups),[14] inducing hope founded from new life narratives in believers—narrative care.[15] In so doing, CIF training aims to help others disengage from cognitive activities that do not support Christian spirituality while assisting others in developing cognitive behavior that helps decrease intrapersonal conflict.

In one sense, Christian intrapersonal formation puts on display one's life for Christ in the community, engaging others as "Ambassadors for Christ," as Paul asserts in 2 Corinthians 5:20. Early and Wheeler assert, "The gospel was never meant to be a private or individual affair reserved only for the solitude and silence of a believer's soul. It was meant to be believed out in the community among Christians and unbelievers."[16] Essentially, believers become more than just believers: they become known as disciples, resulting from not only hearing God's Word but also acting upon God's Word, as expressed in James 1:22. Therefore, by making a cognitive shift from self-thinking toward thinking in "Bible" terms, Christlike cognition takes root, and Christian intrapersonal formation develops.

One might wonder, "What will it take for believers at First Baptist Church in Harmony to grow intrapersonally toward Christlikeness? What must they endure to overcome their battle for truth and become spiritually discerned?" Spurgeon suggests, "You must be a man

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[13] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 7.

[14] Kenneth Haugk, *Stephen Ministry Training Manual*, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Stephen Ministries, 2000), 15.

[15] M.C. Moschella, "Affect in Narrative Spiritual Care," *Pastoral Psychol* (2023): 3, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-023-01110-x.

[16] Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is…: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 115.

of God, not after the common manner of men, but after God's own heart; and men will strive to be like you, if you be like to God."[17]

This thesis project answers these questions by implementing a pastoral counseling program that proactively[18] draws others out of their present cognitive state to help them reengage their intrapersonal world with a renewed "spirit of the mind" (Eph 4:23, New American Standard Bible, 1995 update).[19] Therefore, Christian intrapersonal formation at FBC might become accomplished by examining biblically inspired spiritual applications in a group setting facilitated by a pastoral counselor.[20]

1.1 Ministry Context

First Baptist Church of Harmony is a small conservative Baptist church nestled in the woods of rural central Maine.[21] Its membership ranges between twenty to forty active and inactive members yearly, and it currently hosts an all-white congregation. Some adolescents attend randomly, but FBC is mostly home to parishioners aged sixty to eighty-five, with twenty to forty people attending regularly. The FBC Member Board governs FBC with its constitution and bylaws and operates as an autonomous church body. However, FBC maintains fellowship with the Venture Church Network, previously known as the Conservative Baptist

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[17] Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students* (Complete and Unabridged) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 19.

[18] Charles Profit, "Counseling and Referral Experiences of Southern Baptist Clergy" (Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies, 2018), 133.

[19] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible (1995) update.

[20] Pamela C. Wells, and Kristen N. Dickens, "Creativity in Counselor Education: More than Case Studies," *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 42, no. 2 (2020): 197.

[21] "Harmony," in *Maine: An Encyclopedia*, accessed November 6, 2023, https://maineanencyclopedia.com/harmony/.

Association of America.[22]

FBC offers traditional (9:30 a.m.) and contemporary (11 a.m.) worship services. The standard service preserves the older church worship style and devotes its structure toward a conventional liturgy, such as a call to worship, reading of Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures, receiving the offering, a pastoral prayer, an expository sermon, and enjoying songs from the traditional Baptist hymnal accompanied by a piano player. The contemporary service provides a spirited worship team that leads the congregation with a modern style of Christ-centered music using acoustic and bass guitars, piano, and inspired vocals.[23] Comparatively, both the traditional and contemporary services employ a Christian pastor (the author of this action research project) who preaches God's Word from a transparent, dynamic, gospel-centered heart and encourages others to renew their hearts and minds in the Spirit of Christ.[24]

Additionally, FBC's weekly ministry includes Sunday School with the pastor on Sunday nights, Wednesday night prayer meetings, a men's and women's breakfast taking place every second and fourth Saturday morning, weekly Bible studies (a regular outlet, in individual and group settings, for teaching spiritual truths to promote Christian intrapersonal growth),[25] and once-a-month seniors gathering for food, fun, fellowship, and games.

Every quarter (on the first Sunday of the month), FBC also provides a worship service

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[22] First Baptist Church of Harmony, ME, partners with Venture Network, a Baptist organization. More information on Venture Network for the northeast region where Harmony aligns can be found at https://venturechurches.org/region/vcn-northeast/.

[23] Contemporary worship services of this pastor-student can be found at https://www.youtube.com/@pastorkohen.

[24] The sermons of this pastor-student can be found at https://www.youtube.com/@pastorkohen/featured.

[25] Patrick Morley, *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines: 12 Habits to Strengthen Your Walk with Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 2023), 42.

focusing on the Lord's Supper. FBC's faith traditionally holds to the deity, person, and works of the crucified Christ Jesus, His resurrection, and His return to receive His bride; Salvation comes only through faith in the name of Christ Jesus.[26] When necessary, baptisms occur using the facilities at Hartland Baptist Church, twenty-two minutes away from Harmony, as FBC has no facilities for baptisms in the building.

In addition to Baptisms, the FBC Member Board, which comprises folks from various backgrounds and walks of life, makes decisions concerning church membership, property use, and finances. On the last Sunday of each month, FBC members gather to discuss the daily operations, review the treasurer's report, discuss old business, and introduce any new business pertinent to growing the ministry at FBC.[27] Occasionally, weddings, benefit dinners, celebrations of life, and special music events help encourage new life among the parishioners of FBC.

Located in a rural setting with nearly nine hundred people,[28] the parishioners attending FBC in Harmony consist primarily of an older generation who have experienced life's fullness. From minor league baseball players, collegiate athletes, and coaches to professional cribbage players, fish and game wardens, schoolteachers, photographers, artists, shoemakers, foresters, business owners, and stay-at-home moms, the congregants of FBC steadily live out the "old heroes" of their past.

Overall, the people of Harmony are primarily traditional, hard-working folks who have

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[26] First Baptist Church of Harmony, "FBC Constitution, Ministries, Ministers, Administration, and Committees" (Harmony: First Baptist Church of Harmony, 2023), 2.

[27] First Baptist Church, "FBC Constitution," 7.

[28] According to the state of Maine, in 2021, the median household income of Harmony households was $32,259, 96.6% are Caucasian, and the average age of Harmony residents is 55.6. Incidentally, 17.7% of Harmony families live in poverty. Accessed on August 8, 2023, from https://www.mainedemographics.com/harmonydemographics.

lived well and now bask in the comforts of retirement. They passively spend time with loved ones, content in hastening their days with a fishing pole in hand, listening to the birds in the trees, enjoying walks along the water's edge, and relishing the soft breeze of the wind from their front porches. Harmonians live quietly within a rural backdrop filled with pine trees, just as it was for the Maine pioneers who founded Harmony.

1.1.1 History and Beliefs

Harmony, ME, began from humble beginnings. Samuel Weston, in 1790, provided a survey for the town of Vaughanstown, which at the time was a farmers' plantation.[29] In 1796, the first log house was constructed, and it provided housing with farmland for pioneer families and their animals to come and take residence. According to local folklore, Ichabod Goodwin brought with him and his family four oxen and several cows who ultimately plowed a five-and-a-half-mile road to provide travel from the nearby town of Athens. As a result, the settlement expanded rapidly, and in 1803, the Vaughanstown plantation became known as the town of Harmony.[30]

According to its history, Harmony was given its name by the wife of Deacon John Moses and the mother of clergyman Franklin Hurd because of the good feeling among the people of Harmony at the time.[31] Townsfolk enjoyed working the hard life together as they built their community, which brought a sense of gratification, self-worth, and accomplishment to the newly founded "Harmonians." However, behind their everyday lives, the hearts and minds of the people drifted away from the leading of the Holy Spirit in their way of living life.

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[29] Paul Herrick, *Harmony, Maine: Celebrating 200 Years* (Harmony: Harmony Historical Society, 2003), 119.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

With negative, toxic attitudes, the witness of the Spirit and of perfect love, as taught by Wesley, was deemed a hurtful delusion.[32] Slowly, FBC fell away from pursuing the discipleship path of Christianity, as noted in Luke 9:23. Ultimately, religion replaced grace at FBC, and Christianity became a stoic goal for the new "Mainers."

Instead, the good-hearted folks of Harmony began drawing toward spiritual complacency and malaise, gradually falling away from its "harmonious" tones, separating itself from the community it once knew. In comparison, Rhodes illustrates, "Over a period of several years the demographics changed within the community, but the inside of the church did not change with the demographics. As a result, many people in the church moved to churches where the communities looked like them rather than helping the church look like the community."[33]

Unfortunately, too many congregants of FBC refused to allow the Spirit of Christ to change them intrapersonally, and church membership declined.[34] People left the church, and aside from only a few, the Harmony community disassociated with members of FBC. Men's religious mindset also hindered community outreach and created a spiritual breakdown in the church.[35] In turn, FBC became known as a religiously preferred, preference-driven church body of believers rather than a community-minded congregation filled with grace.

Just like the men whom Paul refers to in Acts 7:51, FBC walked stiff-necked and

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[32] W. H. Pilsbury and Stephen Allen, *History of Methodism in Maine* (Augusta: Charles E. Nash, 1887), 4.

[33] Jerry A. Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership is Key to Church Revitalization: A Revitalization Strategy for Declining Churches" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2022), 6.

[34] First Baptist Church of Harmony, "Business Meeting Journal" (Harmony: First Baptist Church, 1942), n.p.

[35] Joshua Millet, *A History of the Baptists in Maine and A Dictionary of the Labors of Each Minister* (Portland: Charles Day, 1845), 213.

uncircumcised in heart, always refusing the Holy Spirit for direction in their lives just as their

fathers did. Judgment toward others and strict adherence to religious legalism ensued, and a

forgiving heart seemed rare.[36] Instead of bearing with one another, accepting others in truth, and

pursuing Christian spirituality, the townsfolk relied on their own understanding to properly

manage their church life and behavior.[37] Rainer submits, "The church refused to look like the

community."[38] In other words, the hearts and minds of believers at FBC rejected Christian

spiritual formation, and the people of Harmony suffered.[39]

Over the years, FBC lost sight of its purpose for itself and the community. Macchia

reminds Christians that spiritual formation is the lifelong journey of being transformed by the

love of the Father into the image of Jesus. He notes that by the gracious movement of God's

Spirit, one might live an abundant life of trust, rest, hope, and joy.[40] That said, spiritual formation

becomes inhibited without a focus on the journey toward Christlikeness.

Unfortunately, Harmonians became spiritually blinded, and godly relationships between

the people of Harmony deteriorated. Hessert notes spiritual blindness as preventing one from

seeing life from a true perspective.[41] In that light, the town of Harmony experienced an increase

in the spirit of intolerance, which manifested in deceitful behavior toward its inhabitants, such as

gossip and abnormal storytelling. Fear of communicating the truth with one another increased,

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[36] Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 25–30.

[37] Millet, *A History of the Baptists*, 213.

[38] Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 25–30.

[39] Millet, *A History of the Baptists*, 213.

[40] Stephen Macchia, *The Discerning Life: An Invitation to Notice God in Everything*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 127.

[41] Paul Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2023), 148.

religious implications amplified, and the idea of living by the Spirit became a distant consideration.[42] However, Harmony's history describes one view on why FBC today still imposes its religious judgmental attitude and behavior on others.

In 1826, before the inhabitants of Harmony founded FBC, the Methodist Society came to town and became known as its first established religious organization.[43] Methodism reflected a religious culture that had gained movement in Massachusetts in the late 1700s. However, Methodists found opposition from free-will Baptists and other churches when they arrived in Maine.[44]

Carrying "Puritan" overtones with them engraved in their spirits from their "England" way of life, many Methodists (at the time) instilled Episcopalian and Calvinistic views, helping to sustain its sense of judgmentalism based upon prior religious standards and to keep others out.[45] Incidentally, history shows that in 1795, religious judgmentalism was so severe that the Rev. William Screven, pastor of the first Baptist Church of Maine in Kittery, was fined for preaching in his own house.[46] Yet, despite the demise of spiritual oppression migrating to the Maine area,[47] the population of Harmony grew over the next forty-six years. In 1872, the First Baptist Church of Harmony came to life.[48]

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[42] Millet, *A History of the Baptists*, 213.

[43] Herrick, *Harmony, Maine*, 119.

[44] B. F. Wentworth, *History of 175 Years of Maine Methodism* (Farmington: The Heritage, 1976), 18.

[45] Pilsbury and Allen, *History of Methodism*, 6.

[46] Ibid., 5.

[47] Henry S. Burrage, *History of the Baptists in Maine* (Portland: Marks, 1904), 23.

[48] Herrick, *Harmony, Maine*, 119.

Initially, FBC gathered in the same building where the Methodist Church assembled for worship.[49] For many seasons, the two congregations (under the same roof) operated as a unified church, succumbing only to understanding religious-minded agendas from clergy not qualified spiritually to lead. Essentially, religion became the mandate for regulating the behavior of others rather than following Christlike leadership empowered by the grace of the Gospel of Christ. Thus, Christian-inspired spiritual applications became overlooked while the hearts and minds of the people lost sight of the truth and the design for which God created them.[50]

Traditionally, Baptists believed in sacred things held within the constructs of biblical theology. Aadne confirms, "Extensive research has demonstrated convincingly that Baptists have historically and theologically held sacramental views of not merely baptism and the Lord's Supper but also of the collective ministry of the church . . . preaching, prayer, and the varieties of ministry performed by church members."[51] Over time, combining two different church religions (Methodism and Baptist) in the same place created relational hardships.[52]

Tradition holds that although, at the time, some Baptist leaders acknowledged the distinction of John Wesley's Methodism—regarding free love of God vs. the predestination of Calvinism—Methodist ministers experienced violent opposition from the established churches.[53] As a result, instead of faithful people attending church to worship the Lord truthfully,

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[49] Herrick, *Harmony, Maine*, 26.

[50] Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001), 22.

[51] Linda Aadne, "Radical Discipleship in Participation: Spiritual Formation in Baptist Community," *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 22, no. 1 (2022): 79.

[52] Pilsbury and Allen, *History of Methodism*, 5.

[53] Wentworth, *History of 175 Years of Maine Methodism*, 9.

parishioners began to assemble in fear of judgment from their peers, carrying on the same battles in their hearts and minds first instituted by their forefathers.[54] Religious opposition soon became the binding factor that kept the Spirit of Christ away from people's hearts at FBC.[55]

In point, gatherings at First Baptist Church of Harmony eventually became nothing more than a social event and a way to hold others to its religious mandates. In other words, FBC sought the approval of others instead of pursuing Christlikeness, creating a false sense of character in people. As Paul describes in 1 Timothy 4:1–2, the spirit of deceit ruled the hearts and minds of the people through the hypocrisy of liars. Ultimately, FBC's "pretend" nature created a false sense of Christianity and Christian conduct in its members, and they became frightened to be honest with others for fear of being found out and shunned (for various offenses).[56]

In so doing, the church fostered duplicitous behavior, and those in the community experienced a deep-rooted separation from church-going townsfolk. The separation between the church and community became so distinct that in 1942 church membership declined from sixty-two to nineteen members.[57] According to the testimonies of many long-term Harmony residents, the main reason for the disconnect between the church and the community stems from an elitist, judgmental presence and attitude that FBC imposes on those in the community.[58] Incidentally,

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[54] Millet, *A History of the Baptists*, 23.

[55] Pilsbury and Allen, *History of Methodism in Maine*, 6.

[56] Jesse Eubanks, *How We Relate: Understanding God, Yourself, and Others Through the Enneagram* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023), 231.

[57] First Baptist Church, "Business Meeting Journal," n.p. Interestingly, the membership at FBC today still remains at nineteen members.

[58] The researcher of this thesis interviewed many long-term residents of Harmony to learn about the stories about FBC that have been passed down through the generations. Six months of field research was compiled together to create the assessment. Multiple stories were told as to why people in Harmony do not attend FBC. However, out of all the personal one-on-one interviews given (100+), the most common reason folks in town do not attend FBC is the result of its religious, legalistic, and judgmental behavior towards others.

people at FBC became so untrustworthy that they employed spiritual oppression as a means of controlling the people inside the church walls.

More so, religious legalism and judgment became FBC's primary vehicle to manipulate members and new members into retaining their membership, and there is some evidence for this. Like the Pharisees accused Jesus (Jesus committed no crime), FBC also treated others in the same likeness by instituting the custom of judging one another before hearing the truth (John 7:51)—FBC chose what to believe about people regardless of any truth. This behavior type established FBC's norm for treating others (members and non-members), which explains (in some sense) why similar behavior still exists at FBC today.

Like their forefathers, FBC behaved falsely toward themselves, others, and God, personifying in themselves what "pretend" Christians look like, as noted in Matthew 15:8–9. Similarly, as Paul notes in 1 Thessalonians 2:4, true Christian behavior comes from the desire to become approved by God. In contrast, FBC still does not "imitate" the likeness of Paul (1 Cor 11:1), nor do they seek the approval of God's will and direction for the life of their church body. In perspective, if a person acted like a biblical Paul and opposed the self-driven church model instituted by the FBC control group, a member faced severe judgment and persecution (like William Screven) for not conforming to the religious status quo and would become shunned, eventually becoming nothing more than an outcast.[59]

The same problem exists with the congregation of FBC today. Membership remains the same (19 members), and the generational disconnect keeps the Church and the Harmony community from living in harmony. Without Godly leadership or reforms proactively preparing

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[59] Millet, *A History of the Baptists*, 23.

the hearts and minds of the good people of Harmony to receive the Spirit of Christ, FBC's parishioners might lose the fight for Christian intrapersonal formation and become forced to close their doors permanently.[60]

1.2 Problem Presented

For years, FBC experienced a lack of "Shepherd" leadership to equip its congregants with the spiritual tools needed for Christian intrapersonal formation. The pulpit supplied various pastors from time to time. Still, non-spiritual leaders in the church controlled the thoughts and spiritual direction of those they raised as lay leaders to represent how FBC members and new members should live a Christian life but according to religious rules instead of spiritual rules[61]—FBC control group. Instead, the teachers and leaders of the church instilled in new lay leaders a mindset of religion rather than promoting spiritual applications from a Christlike attitude, as addressed in Philippians 2:1–5.

As a result, FBC suffered from a mass consciousness of strict religious legalism and judgment, sternly holding one another accountable for their behavioral failures.[62] Intense intrapersonal spiritual damage persisted, relationships split apart, and people's hearts turned against one another, creating an environment of intrapersonal conflict with no one to lead them out. Holding to religious-minded leadership, one might suggest a misaligned outlook between doctrine and ministry suppressed the Spirit within the church (1 Thess 5:19). In so doing, it created additional interpersonal chaos, low self-esteem, and a lack of confidence to pursue God

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[60] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 88.

[61] First Baptist Church, "FBC Constitution," 2–3.

[62] First Baptist Church of Harmony, "Business Meeting Journal" (Harmony: First Baptist Church, 1872), n.p.

through Christ, as Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 3:4–6.

Similarly, the inability to spiritually minister to the community impressed an unspoken misconception about the Christian faith and the person and works of Christ. Wesley comments, "It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the things of God."[63] Personal testimonies (generational families, oral tradition) from people who grew up in Harmony affirm: "Folks were told they did not have the ability or know-how to read and interpret what the Bible says. Clergy was the only one who could interpret it correctly. The purpose of attending Sunday church was to listen to the pastor: He provided the understanding."[64] Inevitably, the misunderstanding of spiritual things permeated as a result.

Theologians commonly recall the condition and state of man, in that the natural man does not accept or understand the things of the Spirit, as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Tozer comments, "It is my observation that the natural man does not understand spiritual principles. The problem has never been the translation. The problem has never been academic. The problem has always been spiritual."[65] Unfortunately, believers at FBC misunderstood doctrinal truths and spiritual insights (even from the beginning), hindering the church's moral beliefs, procedures, and teachings.[66]

FBC's inability to discern things spiritually produced significant conflict between church

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[63] John Wesley, *The Witness of the Spirit: A Sermon on Romans 8:16* (Bristol: William Pine, 1776), 3.

[64] In-text: In a conversation on October 15, Mr. Jones, who is in his mid-70s, shared stories passed down from his parents and his personal experience growing up in Harmony. One thing he remembers about his family church life is how he was not allowed to read the Bible, because he was not able to understand it or interpret what it said. Essentially, many congregants went to church just to hear what was in the Bible because many of them did not have Bibles nor even allowed to open them. Some folks even did not know how to read.

[65] A. W. Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 3 in 1 edition of *The Essential Tozer Collection*, ed. James L. Snyder (Minneapolis: Bethany, 2013), 19.

[66] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 55.

attendees and the community of Harmony. Today, that same false "truth narrative" generated long ago between the church and the community of Harmony persists, and the intrapersonal struggle continues. The problem is FBC lacks intrapersonal spiritual health, resulting in interpersonal conflict and behavior unbecoming Christlikeness.

1.3 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to implement a proactive pastoral counseling program that equips believers to grow intrapersonally in Christ. Christian intrapersonal formation manifests spiritual well-being,[67] which allows one to discern whether change is something of a personal gain or gain Christ desires.[68] Christian intrapersonal formation might best describe itself as the result of practicing a preference for God.[69] Seeking God's guidance in everything propels spiritual understanding and applications found only in the Bible, which procures spiritual well-being. In this, growth in the Spirit necessitates spiritual leaders willing to grow to bring about biblical applications, procuring spiritual truths and discernment.[70] Pastoral counselors—ready to meet people right where they are—can facilitate that process.

Christian maturity develops when life priorities change intentionally and shift from self-worship to worship God.[71] In other words, living a discerning life is an intentional choice of the

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[67] Neil B. Dodson, "Assessing Well-being in a Pastoral Counseling Program" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2021), 33.

[68] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 88–9.

[69] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 22.

[70] Ibid., 92.

[71] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

will.[72] Growing in Christ encompasses moving down the discipleship road and believing in doctrinal positions, but it also incorporates transforming into a specific type of person.[73] To become that person, one must seek out, practice, employ spiritual disciplines, and learn how spending time in Christlikeness yields new character.[74] Christian intrapersonal formation is a Christlike means to make that happen—to create and inspire change in one's thought process.

Like spiritual and Christian formation, Christian intrapersonal formation involves a lifetime of transformation, a sanctification process providing Salvation through Christ, as Paul addresses in Philippians 2:12–3. Through the gracious movement of God's Spirit, Christian intrapersonal formation allows others to hope for an abundant life in Christ for God's kingdom and glory and the fulfillment of his mission of grace, justice, mercy, and peace for all.[75] Ultimately, Christian intrapersonal formation, adult development, Christian formation, and spiritual formation measured in any believer are reflective of the life that one displays daily.[76]

1.4 Basic Assumptions

This study assumes that Christian intrapersonal formation occurs when biblical thinking precedes secular thinking and becomes filled by the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, allowing His mind, through His

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[72] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 53.

[73] Albert Cheng, Beth Green, and David Smith, "The Development and Validation of the Practicing Faith Survey," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 51, no. 1 (2023): 69.

[74] Allan Clyde Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship at Faith Baptist Church of Tuscola" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2023), 17.

[75] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 22.

[76] Cheryl Marshall and Caroline Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most: Speaking Truth with Grace to Those You Love* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 91.

Word, to dominate everything that is thought and accomplished.[77] White explains, "While

acknowledging that we make space for specific practices, it is critical to recognize that the work

itself is God's. As we work out our salvation, 'God at work in [us]' accomplishes any real change

or transformation. We cannot transform ourselves."[78] Whitney says, "One must succumb to the

biblical nature of spirituality to discern the disciplines God has provided to be imitators of

Christ."[79] As Paul records in 2 Corinthians 10:5, Christian intrapersonal formation occurs when

one willingly accepts the Holy Spirit as the effecter of cognitive change and daily takes his

thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ.

Indeed, spiritual discipline, Christian spirituality, intrapersonal conflict, and pastoral

counseling are beyond the experiential faculties at FBC but need addressing for the sake of

future parishioners. However, the hypothesis, "To change a culture is to change the way it

thinks," hopes to procure Christian intrapersonal formation in believers and promote the

foundation (biblical thinking) for the premise of this research. Haykin confirms, "The Christian

Scriptures are the primary text for Christian spirituality. We don't form our personal spiritual

lives out of a random assemblage of favorite texts in combination with individual circumstances;

the Holy Spirit forms us following the text of the Holy Scriptures."[80]

Although the culture at FBC operates from an "old school" and "religious" mentality, the

scope of this study is not exclusive to FBC of Harmony. Ultimately, this thesis coincides with

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[77] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 40.

[78] Kristen M. White, "Conceptualizing Therapy as a Spiritual Discipline," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 39, no. 2 (2020): 92.

[79] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 6.

[80] Michael A. G. Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality* (Webster: Evangelical, 2020), 63.

addressing the intrapersonal health of many other small-town New England Baptist churches but extends to all congregations who seek the Spirit of Christ through God's Word to lead them. The door is open to individual believers and other religious entities seeking to understand how the Holy Spirit works, how the Holy Spirit might fill one, how to replace a "religious" mindset with a "grace-filled" perspective and submit to becoming a disciple of Christ—to deny oneself, pick up one's cross, and follow Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23).

This thesis project also hopes to inspire religious communities, alternative Christian denominations, Christian schools, discipleship groups, and other congregations to seek Christlike-induced intrapersonal change. Intrinsically, this study aims to promote the adaptation of Christlikeness in thought and spirit in believers everywhere and supports other communities needing Christian intrapersonal growth. Everyone has a right to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there is no limit on God's reward for those who diligently seek Him and believe (Heb 11:6).

For change to occur, though, something must change in its present setting;[81] when nothing changes, nothing changes, and cognitive health becomes limited. For this reason, a pastoral counselor must become proactive rather than reactive and offer additional resources and opportunities for spiritual growth and change.[82] Under submission to the Holy Spirit, the pastoral counselor intentionally guides an individual's thought process with God's Word so that His Word will work out and affect the intrapersonal world of those participating, resulting in Christian intrapersonal growth.[83]

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[81] S. Van der Watt, "Mission-Minded Pastoral Theology and the Notion of God's Power: Maturity through Vulnerability," *In die Skriflig* 57, no. 1 (2023): 7.

[82] Dodson, "Assessing Well-being," 147.

[83] Christopher T. Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength: Understanding Spirituality's Transformative Impact as Assisted by Intradisciplinary Integration" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2022), 213.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit does not restrict Himself to boundaries made by men. As described in Acts 17:24, God does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything. In John 3:8, John preaches there is no way to measure, grant, limit, induce, control, impose, hinder (or the likeness of such things), or dictate the workings of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in anyone.[84] Moses proclaimed that God alone pours out His mercy on anyone, at any time, affecting change according to His will for a person's life (Exod 33:19)—acknowledging by the power of God alone can one's spiritual and intrapersonal world become affected.[85]

Finally, this study restricts itself by no rules or other submissions other than promoting Christian intrapersonal growth for everyone. Therefore, this project encourages all people who desire Christian intrapersonal development to come to Christ. No matter the shame, regret, feelings of unworthiness, or the number of times a person falls away from repentance, Salvation comes through believing in the heart and confessing with the tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom 10:9–10).

1.5 Definitions

This thesis project addresses the need for Christian intrapersonal formation at First Baptist Church of Harmony, ME. The study utilizes standard terms (and other more complex or nuanced terms) to help facilitate a greater understanding of a pastoral counseling approach that fosters increased Christian intrapersonal growth at FBC. Present research employs terminology such as Christian education, Christian spirituality, intrapersonal conflict, intrapersonal formation,

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[84] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 93.

[85] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

pastoral counseling, religious legalism, and other expressions that provide more profound clarity. Recognizing such terms provides the necessary evidence to stimulate a proper understanding of this research.

1.5.1 Christian Education

Christian Education (CE) advocates spirituality through training in Christlikeness, submitting to the authority of God's written word, established in Christ for His creation.[86] God provided grace and truth through the person and works of Jesus Christ (His life as a human being), through which His sacrifice on the cross (Christ in His flesh bore our sins), His resurrection (God raised Christ from the dead), and the return for His bride might draw men unto Himself through the ministry and "word of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:19). In essence, belief in the teachings of Christ founded on these principles and precepts, gives Christian Education its name and directs its approach in educating others from a Christian worldview perspective.[87]

Additionally, Christian Education teaches the Christian worldview by promoting the creation of man, the Fall, and human redemption as a part of God's plan for restoring sinners and becoming a new creation in Christ. Hessert notes, "Full education requires an understanding of the religious factor."[88] A worldview, then, is a conceptual lens through which we see, understand, and interpret the world and our place within it.[89] Overall, the impetus of this thesis maintains that

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[86] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 61.

[87] Cheng, Green, and Smith, "Development and Validation," 67–8.

[88] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 83.

[89] Tawa J. Anderson et al., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World* (InterVarsity, 2017), 8.

God created all things and "upholds all things by the word of His power," which is in Christ (Heb 1:3).

With that in mind, Christian Education also teaches righteousness as a faithful, genuine, and humble relationship with Christ, daily submitting oneself to God's commands, surrendering every thought captive to the obedience of Christ with a repentant heart while pursuing the likeness of Christ. Christian Education seeks to inform others about the purpose of godliness, holding steadfast in selflessness to gain favor with God and others.[90] Mckinney suggests a more nuanced understanding: for him, Christian education is "an educational process that produces Christians. Christian education seeks to develop its learners a strong belief in, dedication to, and knowledge of Jesus Christ so they can better know him, reflect his image in the world, and bring others to him."[91]

Nonetheless, for Christian intrapersonal formation to become realized, Christian education must inspire the process of growing the inner man—the heart, the spirit of the mind—by helping others disengage from their current intrapersonal world and reengage in Christlike thinking, such as in Bible reading and study, prayer, silence, and discipleship training measures. Whitney explains, "God's word is exclusive to spiritual discipline . . . godliness is its only goal."[92] Hessert asserts, "When Christian education ceases to work, spiritual blindness increases."[93]

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[90] Dwight Rice, "Story Tuning: Growing in Favor with God in the Midst of Relationships" (video lecture in PACO 825 at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, January 10, 2022).

[91] Lora-Ellen McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church: A Guide for Teaching Truth* (Valley Forge: Judson, 2003), 4.

[92] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 4.

[93] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 148.

Consequently, by willfully adhering to the practices and principles found in Scripture and seeking out regeneration by the Holy Spirit, one becomes renewed in Christian development with a proper telos of conformity to the image of Christ.[94] Hence, Christian education emphasizes God's love for His creation, promoting hope through His promises. In other words, God supplies all the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, instilling His people with complete joy in knowing that the Holy Spirit convicts and empowers change in the individual willing to receive grace.[95]

1.5.2 Christian Intrapersonal Formation

Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) promotes Christlikeness in a person's mind, heart, and spirit, resulting from intentional learning. Whitney affirms, "To follow Christ and become more like Him, we must engage in the Spiritual Discipline of learning."[96] Therefore, intrapersonal formation seeks empowerment from the Holy Spirit while submitting to biblical insights and applications for a transformed life. Herein lies the impetus behind Proactive Pastoral Counseling: to help others experience CIF.

One approach CIF utilizes is its ability to intentionally help others engage in self-reflection in Christ through self-talk and interpersonal communication—providing a Christian safe space.[97] Christian safe spaces provide a non-judgmental atmosphere to observe intrapersonal

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[94] David P. Setran, and Jim Wilhoit, "Christian Education and Spiritual Formation: Recent History and Future Prospects," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 3 (2020): 542.

[95] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 60.

[96] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 273.

[97] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 92.

growth as participants solidify stronger relationships with others, particularly those providing

pastoral counseling.[98] Self-reflection involves assessing one's inner world, such as how one

thinks, feels, and manages intrapersonal factors.[99] Essentially, self-reflection in Christ is the key

to healthy self-awareness.[100]

Oleś mentions, "Internal dialogical activity shares a good deal of variance with common

self-talk functions. In other words, there is a significant self-talk component to internal

dialogues."[101] Yet, by applying the Christian worldview lens, an individual might learn how to

self-reflect "in Christ," gaining biblical perspectives on any cognitive behavior that might create

negative or irrational thinking about oneself or others.[102] When relocation from self to

Christ occurs, one's intrapersonal world changes and intrapersonal formation occurs.[103]

1.5.3 Christian Spirituality

There is much debate on understanding the nature of spirituality, let alone attempting to

define Christian spirituality from a natural premise. However, McClendon recommends, "As it

relates to the development of Christian spirituality, the most significant meaning of Spirit is the

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[98] Pamela C. Wells, and Kristen N. Dickens, "Creativity in Counselor Education: More than Case Studies," *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 42, no. 2 (2020): 197.

[99] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 92.

[100] Heather Vanderstelt, Alida van Dijk and Simon Lasair, "Transformational Education: Exploring the Lasting Impact of Students' Clinical Pastoral Education Experiences," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 29, no. 1 (2022): 94, https://doi.org/10.1080/08854726.2022.2040892.

[101] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues and Functions of Self-Talk: Comparisons and Implications," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11, no. 227 (2020): 9.

[102] Liu Yanhong, Peitao Zhu, and Alonzo D. Turner, "Counselor Trainees Personal Growth through Interpersonal Experiential Growth Groups: An Instrumental Case Study," *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* 14, no. 4 (2021): 15.

[103] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

indwelling presence of God's Spirit and the life that flows from that presence."[104] Macchia says, "Releasing the fullness of our attachments is profitable for the soul. A healthy dependence on God's Spirit to define and refine you as an individual and a group will lead you into a release posture. Letting go is what defines most of our spirituality and our maturity."[105]

Stokes refers to the state of a deep relationship with God. He comments, "Christian spirituality is the outworking . . . of God's grace in the human soul, beginning with conversion and concluding with death or Christ's second advent. It is marked by growth and maturity in Christlike life."[106] Van der Watt explains, "Through the Holy Spirit, God's power is the power to create new life, to cure, and to rebuild rather than the power to impose, that is, to control."[107]

Ultimately, Christian spirituality is impossible to grasp without the indwelling of God's Spirit, which onto man He imputed from Himself after overcoming sin and death, to work in the inner man to become holy. Stokes adds, "Christian spirituality is the outworking of God's grace in the human soul beginning with conversion and concluding with death or Christ's second advent. It is marked by growth and maturity in Christlike life."[108] Therefore, the pursuit of godliness through Christ becomes realized as a process that undergoes a lifetime of spiritual training.[109]

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[104] P. Adam McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians: A Critique of Contemporary Christian Spiritualities* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 1.

[105] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 155.

[106] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 27.

[107] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 7.

[108] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 27.

[109] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 6.

1.5.4 Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal refers to the internal space (cognition) in which a person conducts, deals with, copes, and facilitates rational and irrational thinking. The intrapersonal world exists to process the inner workings of one's cognition, including any disruption that might affect the normal state of mental peace and overall spiritual well-being—those things that occur within oneself, particularly the mind. In a study of sixty-nine articles on peer assessment, Xiuyan identified six intrapersonal factors: motivation, self-efficacy, emotions, trust in the self as an assessor, fairness, and comfort.[110] As such, this study addresses the interaction between the nature of one's intrapersonal world and how intrapersonal conflict develops. The study suggests that changes in one's cognitive perspective can alter a person's intrapersonal factors (just mentioned), forcing an alternative to rationalize challenging situations or solutions that pertain to the intrapersonal well-being of oneself and others.[111]

One might understand intrapersonal turmoil is the presence of cognitive dissonance that reveals the "self-talk" within oneself, exposing the inner workings that created the turmoil in the first place (such as spiritual integrity). Oleś explains, "When I have a difficult choice, I talk the decision over with myself from different points of view, and in my thoughts, I take the perspective of someone else. Such dialogues might involve taking a fruitful or conflicted perspective of another person."[112] In essence, intrapersonal conflict is nothing more than spiritually induced mental chaos in its pursuit of finding cognitive resolve.

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[110] Xiuyan Guo et al., "Development and Validation of the Peer Assessment Motivation Scale (PAMS) in Higher Education," *Studies in Higher Education* 48, no. 8 (2023): 1243.

[111] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 5.

[112] Ibid.

However, within the parameters of Christian intrapersonal growth, intrapersonal resolve varies, depending on whether submission to godly thinking precedes worldly thinking in the individual. The resolution for intrapersonal conflict occurs when the thought process relocates from carnal disruption to a location that embodies Christian spirituality, such as replacing disruptive thoughts with thinking inspired by Scripture. The hope is to relocate one's internal infrastructure that produces thought without cognitive damage to the area of the desired change by finding mental and spiritual resolve through God's Word in Christ.

1.5.5 Intrapersonal vs. Spiritual

Throughout this thesis, the terms, "spiritual" and "intrapersonal," might occasionally become interchangeable concerning meaning. The word "spiritual" generally suggests having a specific awareness of one's internal being from a natural sagacity; a spirit lives inside man, allowing him to move in the flesh.[113] "Intrapersonal" is the understanding from which one's feelings and thoughts become internally processed. Combined, both spiritual and intrapersonal can take on the same meaning in that to grow intrapersonally, one must also develop spiritually in nature.[114]

Holding to that premise, God's Word is the power that gives both spirit and life (John 6:63). As Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 2:11–4, God's Word, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is the only power that can open the hearts and minds of individuals to understand and discern spiritual things. Therefore, only by consuming God's Word and surrendering to the Holy Spirit can one process and understand inwardly the spiritual things of God.

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[113] Andrew Murray, *Humility: The Beauty of Holiness* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 27.

[114] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 24.

1.5.6 Pastoral Counseling (Proactive)

This action research project holds to the Christian worldview as the requisite for proper, efficacious pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling helps others to understand and cope with spiritual struggles that involuntarily arise in a person's life.[115] By infiltrating biblical applications, pastoral counseling aims to meet the spiritual needs of those in immediate crisis (reactive pastoral counseling). This study professes pastoral counseling as its primary premise yet does so with a proactive device. In other words, instead of a pastoral counselor waiting on others to come to them, Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) creates small groups to target intrapersonal conflict intentionally. In other words, one might consider PPC a pastoral counseling approach to meeting its clients outside a traditional office setting.

Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) employs a pastoral counselor as a Christian Integrative Therapist (CIT) to build caring, trustworthy relationships with others. Likewise, PPC focuses on helping others experience Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) by intentionally targeting the cognitive struggle in others. As Wilkins states, "Christian counseling, in its purest form, is a covenant between a caregiver and a care seeker to labor collaboratively for the possession of the soul—through the power of the Holy Spirit, under the authority of the Word of God, and within a context of accountability and encouragement— for the purpose of the imitation of the Christ."[116] He adds, "Counseling from a Christian perspective covers a variety of problems for people: helping people deal with severe loss, conflict resolution, stress management or elimination, and other issues that plague individuals."[117]

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[115] Richard. L. Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation on the Role of the Pastoral Counselor" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2021), 51.

[116] Ibid.

Pastoral counseling must consider multiple elements when helping people through intrapersonal struggles. Stokes suggests, "Pastoral counseling focuses on the promotion of welfare, symptom mitigation, increased coping, positive behavioral transformation, and better relationships with self and others; it considers shifts in a person's spiritual life, values, meanings, and fundamental commitments as vital."[118] Faith-based, Christian-oriented biblical counseling defines the essence of pastoral counseling for this thesis project.

1.5.7 Religious Legalism

This study undergirds three views of religious legalism noted by R. C. Sproul: 1) the act of behaving to please oneself, 2) obedience to the externals negating a faithful desire to honor God, the intent of His law, or His Christ, 3) and adding rules to God's law and treating them as divine.[119] Sproul comments, "I had a professor in graduate school who said, 'The essence of Christian theology is grace, and the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude. The legalist isolates the law from the God who gave the law. He is not so much seeking to obey God or honor Christ as he is to obey rules that are devoid of any personal relationship.'"[120]

In essence, religious legalism goes against God's love as the premise for life and joy, binding others by the rules and regulations laid down by non-spiritual men. Sproul notes, "It's a rote, mechanical form of law-keeping that we call externalism. The legalist focuses only on

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[117] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 17.

[118] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

[119] R. C. Sproul, "3 Types of Legalism," accessed September 4, 2023, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/3-types-legalism.

[120] Sproul, "3 Types of Legalism."

obeying bare rules, destroying the broader context of God's love and redemption in which He gave His law in the first place."[121] Although Sproul's definition describes the spiritual nature of FBC well, Paul's exhortation in 2 Corinthians 3:6 provides a more biblically founded understanding regarding religious legalism. Paul notes, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

1.5.8 Spirit of the Mind

The spirit of the mind refers to the nature by which man produces his thoughts. In Ephesians 4:17–8, Paul tells the church to no longer walk as the Gentiles do, carrying darkened hearts embellished by the futility of their minds. Marshall affirms, "Those who are filled with the Spirit live continually under the influence of the Spirit by letting the Word control them . . . being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting his mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done."[122]

Similarly, in Ephesians 4:22–3, Paul continued, saying, "Lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Paul urges the church to put on the Spirit of Christ and change the current spirit controlling their minds. In other words, what man fills himself with dictates what spirit operates in his mind, just as adding drugs or alcohol to the body (manufactured spirits) changes one's thinking and behavior.

In the same likeness, inserting God's Word into the mind alters one's behavior, producing a higher sense of spiritual well-being. Thus, one's intrapersonal world becomes ever-changed by

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[121] Sproul, "3 Types of Legalism."

[122] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 40.

the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, under the influence of God's Spirit, Christian intrapersonal formation manifests by applying the principles, precepts, and practices found in God's Word, maintaining a godly spirit within one's mind.

In that light, walking in the Spirit (being led by the Spirit, seeking God's hand in everything) becomes a way of life. In contrast, the "mind of the flesh" promotes walking in wickedness, carnal affections, and spiritual death. Louw says, "True peace of heart and spiritual maturity are found and accomplished in resisting passions, not in satisfying them. There is no peace in the carnal man, in the man given to vain attractions, but there is peace in the fervent and spiritual man."[123]

For this study, by connecting the "spirit of the mind" and "religious legalism," one might better understand why those who do not submit to being Spirit-led (FBC) behave as they do: rote, mechanical in form, absent of expression or emotion.

1.5.9 Spiritual Discernment

To see God's hand in everything is more than a noble pursuit. Macchia notes, "Spiritual discernment becomes a part of us as we embrace the lifestyle of practicing a preference for God, noticing God in everything, and receiving the hospitality of God in the very places where we are learning to be hospitable to others and even ourselves."[124] Marshall agrees one learns to discern truth from error by making choices according to the commands and principles of Scripture. He describes one's foolishness as replaced with God's wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle,

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[123] D. J. Louw, "A Christian Spirituality of Imperfection: Towards a Pastoral Theology of Descent within the Praxis of Orthopathy," *Acta Theologica* 41, no. 2 (2021): 77.

[124] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 22.

reasonable, merciful, impartial, and sincere.[125]

In the end, without godly discernment, understanding God's will becomes a foolish endeavor for the carnal man. As for spiritual things, "He cannot understand them" (1 Cor 2:14). In that case, spiritual growth purposed for holiness cannot manifest, leaving one's ability to discern spiritual things dormant.

1.5.10 Spiritual Discipline

Nothing grants spiritual growth more (other than the Holy Spirit) than spiritual disciplines found in the Holy Bible. Morely asserts, "The Bible is the starting point for all spiritual discipline, for everything that glorifies God, and for all growth and sanctification."[126] Spiritual disciplines include reading the Bible, being silent with God, being in solitude and prayer, and gathering with other Christians regularly for edification and encouragement.

Morley promotes spiritual disciplines as the motivations that change the core reactions of the heart.[127] He says, "They will usher you into a deeper communion with God. You will grow in your knowledge and love for God. You will gain confidence about how to discern His will. You will find yourself yearning, aching, to follow the example of Jesus."[128]

In contrast, spiritual disciplines go against the religious status quo of FBC; instead, religious legalism takes precedence, as previously explained (judgmentalism replaced grace). If one does not seek to become influenced by spiritual disciplines, learning stops, spiritual growth

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[125] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 61.

[126] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 42.

[127] Ibid., 10.

[128] Ibid.

ceases, and change never becomes realized (as spiritual death occurs). Marshall explains,

"Discipline also includes 'being' disciplined by God through His discipline like a Father to a

son."[129]

For FBC, personal discipline (or taking responsibility for one's actions oneself) is a

thought beyond many parishioner's ability to comprehend. Therefore, without applying spiritual

discipline in one's life, life becomes dead, and growth on any level becomes a mere illusion. In

short, intrapersonal development does not occur without intentionally growing one's faith in the

person and works of Jesus Christ.

1.6 Limitations

The most important limitations of this action research project encompass the following:

Participants' ability to learn spiritual things, honesty in sharing the narratives of one's life,

spending time in active Bible reading, willingness to grow in Christ, level of participation in the

training course, personal stumbling blocks to biblical understanding, and desire to grow in

godliness. Tan notes, "A significant and substantial part of dealing with spiritual and religious

issues in explicit integration in Christian therapy or any spiritual and religious therapy is working

with the spiritual struggles of the client."[130] At the same time, this researcher has no control over

the level of commitment one might have to read the Bible for application, the level or ability to

read context (reading is difficult; dyslexia, lack of comprehension skills), or one's ability to

navigate and manage any cognitive interference experienced throughout the process.[131]

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[129] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 84.

[130] Siang-Yang Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles in Psychotherapy: Empirical Evidence and Clinical Applications from a Christian Perspective," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 41, no. 4 (2022): 311.

[131] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 95.

Similarly, the level at which one understands spiritual things initially might produce positive or negative results among the group, varying from participant to participant.[132] Each participant bases the hopes of personal spiritual growth on the degree to which one might or might not see themselves becoming spiritually aware throughout the growing process. Therefore, results differ for each participant and become an individual pursuit based on a personal commitment to the project (or not). Regarding fidelity, other small Baptist churches in Maine and other rural New England congregations might consider this project (PPC and the CIF training program) a tool for all those seeking Christian intrapersonal growth.

With that in mind, implementing a PPC approach might also intimidate some participants as spiritual conflict might arise throughout the study. Therefore, the fear of expressing the heart condition of a participant might inhibit results that are not intended and withhold the most authentic information. At the same time, some of the nature of the study might bring about oppressed feelings from past experiences about God as He opens the hearts and minds of the participants.[133] In contrast, some may even question one's true purpose in the study and consider leaving due to the integrity of one's spiritual well-being.

1.7 Delimitations

This project encourages Christians who seek to grow in Christ intrapersonally to submit to individual and group classes led by a pastoral counselor. This action research(er) hopes to foster an opportunity for others to increase spiritual discernment and Christian intrapersonal formation through proactive pastoral counseling applications. Therefore, the study limits itself to

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[132] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 183.

[133] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 311.

active believers seeking to learn to become more like Christ.

That said, this researcher controls the learning environment (a group setting offering interpersonal communication),[134] the selection of participants, and the course of action specific to each participant (see Chapter Four). The setting emphasizes a Christian atmosphere where six three-hour sessions engage in Christlike learning. Participants selected for the Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training course willingly submit to spiritual growth guided by the leadership of the pastoral counselor during the session.

Presently, all participants do not participate in any outreach ministry or reach out to the community for Christ. Similarly, not all members of FBC agree to submit to pastoral counseling to become more like Christ. The hope is that all those at FBC uninterested in Christian intrapersonal formation will witness the change in participants who undergo the CIF training program provided by proactive pastoral counseling measures and reconsider their interests.

1.8 Thesis Statement

Spiritual growth is the transformational process where people relocate from self-worship to Christ-centered self-denial.[135] As people grow in Christ, they mature spiritually, becoming more of the design God created them to become. Spiritual growth heightens self-awareness and acts as an essential ingredient for cognitive change.[136] However, every aspect of discernment requires a process, and for believers to grow, a pastoral counselor must help them navigate that

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[134] Haugk, *Stephen Ministry*, 15.

[135] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 3.

[136] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 94.

process;[137] hence, there is a need for a proactive pastoral counselor.

Instead of acting on everyday emotions to discern circumstances in life, spiritual disciplines integrated into daily routines can help facilitate FBC and other believers with the tools they need to live a more spiritually discerned life.[138] Spiritual disciplines, the component of spiritual change—combined with the PPC approach—helps to manage that process, and intrapersonal struggles might decline (CIF).[139]

For example, intentionally pursuing direct interaction with God's Word can help others relearn, understand, and apply spiritual applications to everyday life. If believers submit to proactive pastoral counseling, then internal conflict will decrease and procure Christian intrapersonal formation.

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[137] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 170.

[138] Eubanks, *How We Relate*, 167.

[139] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 45.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This Doctor of Ministry action research project extrapolates the most relevant research regarding what others say about the proposed subject matter. The literature review in this chapter speaks of Christianity, Christian education, and pastoral counseling from within the setting of intrapersonal formation. Specifically, this literature review focuses on pastoral counseling as a proactive means for creating Christian intrapersonal spiritual growth in believers and is integral to the research process—and the project, in particular.

2.1 Literature Review

Pastoral counseling is "faith-based" biblical counseling that seeks to facilitate Christlike change for all those who struggle spiritually.[140] Intrapersonal conflict, a mental framework of spiritual struggle, requires integrating spiritual disciplines found only in Christianity[141] with pastoral counseling to bring about and address one's internal distress. By combining spiritual conversations and Scripture reading with the integrative perspective of a pastoral counselor, others might become more aware of how to manage cognitive interference, decrease mental struggle, and grow spiritually.[142] Because intrapersonal struggles prevent confidence in others, spiritual growth might drastically fade if pastoral counseling efforts remain reactive instead of proactive.

Accordingly, this literature review reflects a pastoral counseling approach emphasizing the Christian worldview while interconnecting elements of Christian spirituality, spiritual

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[140] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 311.

[141] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 8.

[142] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 213.

transformation, and Christian education. While pastoral counseling accentuates that intrapersonal renewal develops from one's submission to the work of the Holy Spirit in their life, the proactive pastoral counselor underscores the practice of biblically guided spiritual disciplines for others to experience "Holy Spirit" change, such as thinking biblically;[143] proactive pastoral counselors engage in and intentionally create spiritual conversations with others to practice heart to heart conversations. Consequently, reaching out to others using a proactive pastoral counseling approach might decrease the growing need for Christian intrapersonal spiritual growth in others.[144]

2.1.1 Intrapersonal Formation and Christianity

The most extraordinary conviction to ever satisfy the core reactions of the human spirit comes from a faithful relationship with Jesus Christ.[145] Christian intrapersonal well-being incorporates a mindset centered around pursuing Christlikeness, while every affection of behavior (internal and external) "upholds spiritual applications that contribute to spiritual formation."[146] The Apostle Paul undergirds spiritual formation as receiving "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God . . . combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (1 Cor 1:12–3). In essence, spiritual formation results from pursuing the meaning behind the teaching of Jesus Christ (Christianity), which is found only in God's Word, the Holy Bible.

Rhodes suggests applying spiritual disciplines as a mode for growing spiritually. He

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[143] Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near*, 63.

[144] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 14.

[145] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 10.

[146] Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 4.

states, "Spiritual disciplines are the pathway to increasing spiritual discernment."[147]

Comparatively, Aadne adds, "Intrapersonal well-being results from genuine worship and

consistency in submitting oneself to hearing God's Word."[148] Hence, Christian intrapersonal

formation occurs by engaging in spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and biblical meditation,

guided by the work of the Holy Spirit.[149]

Setran agrees that spiritual disciplines are vital to experiencing the Holy Spirit's work. He

says, "Spiritual formation . . . continually forces us to recognize the role of the Holy Spirit in the

transformation process, through the Word, and also through such practices as prayer, worship,

solitude and silence, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, confession, service, and participation in the

liturgical expressions of the local church."[150] Similarly, Eubanks indicates reading the Bible

increases intrapersonal growth and one's relationship with God. He stresses, "The Bible

constitutes a school of relationship."[151]

Furthermore, Macchia admits the guiding light for Christian spirituality evolves from

consistency in living a Christ-centered life.[152] In contrast, White believes that "spiritual

disciplines are purposed not for doing but to engage in the process of becoming."[153] Essentially,

the power to overcome intrapersonal struggles and encounter spiritual well-being manifests from

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[147] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

[148] Aadne, "Radical Discipleship," 87.

[149] Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 542.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Eubanks, *How We Relate*, 16.

[152] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 14.

[153] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 93.

depending on God to provide spiritual discernment, invoking a spiritual sense of awareness.[154]

Macchia and White agree, adding that spiritual growth and discernment implicate focused attention toward personal levels of self-awareness. Macchia suggests, "When we grow in self-awareness through tools like a spiritual autobiography, our co-cultural experiences, and others, we see greater clarity on how our immediate personal context will either promote or deny the priority of discernment."[155] However, the Apostle Paul confirms, "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Cor 2:14). Although this literature review does not outline the differences between self-awareness and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit per se, the concept provokes Christlike thinking, allowing for a heightened view of Christianity.

Under the construct of Christianity, intrapersonal formation superimposes that while maintaining a relationship with God through Christ is vital for life, God's power (through the Holy Spirit) mobilizes one to change intrapersonally.[156] This is to say that the Holy Spirit is involved in every aspect of salvation and spiritual growth.[157] Morley comments, "God's wisdom is found in Scripture, and it is administered through the Holy Spirit."[158] However, others believe that the responsibility for intrapersonal formation requires more than God's hand.[159]

Hessert notes that God is all-powerful and the sole author of intrapersonal transformation,

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[154] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 94.

[155] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 141.

[156] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 3.

[157] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 54.

[158] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 98.

[159] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 311.

but the obligation to embrace a healthy mindset has two sides. He offers, "God may be willing to grant us spiritual insight, but this cannot come unless we are willing to receive it."[160] Clyde acknowledges the presence of the Holy Spirit who, in every aspect, makes it possible for salvation and spiritual growth.[161] Van Der Watt maintains, "Human existence is inherently relational, and God's power is the key to spiritual maturity."[162] Although there are no disputes about human nature as relational, those lacking spiritual maturity might not understand the essence of Christianity, God's power, how to seek God for help, know who to talk to, or even realize that pastoral counseling exists for such purposes.

Given this dilemma, a proactive spiritual advisor becomes necessary to personally engage others to effect the desired change for the individual and the community.[163] Tan says, "Helping clients deal with their spiritual struggles in constructive ways can facilitate their growth rather than decline."[164] As such, proactive pastoral counseling intentionally pursues and engages others for Christ, inspiring Christian intrapersonal formation for all who humble themselves to receive it.

2.1.2 Intrapersonal Formation and Pastoral Counseling

Pastoral counseling inspires intrapersonal formation by combining faith-based therapy

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[160] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 311.

[161] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 54.

[162] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 7.

[163] Dodson, "Assessing Well-being," 80.

[164] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 313.

with the integrative perspective of the pastoral counselor.[165] When a counselor-client relationship

establishes trust, individuals feel safe communicating and forming intrapersonally in Christ.[166]

Tan states, "Spiritually integrated psychotherapy . . . facilitates the development of spirituality or

spiritual formation into deeper Christlikeness of both the client and therapist."[167] Essentially,

pastoral counseling is the mediator that draws others away from intrapersonal conflict toward a

closer understanding of themselves through Christ (Christian intrapersonal formation).[168]

As a mediator-in-fact, pastoral counseling engages others with God's Word to help

decrease intrapersonal dissonance and increase one's desire for Christ-like transformation.

Wilkins describes, "Christian counseling in its purest form, is a covenant between a caregiver

and a care seeker to labor collaboratively for the possession of the soul (through the power of the

Holy Spirit), under the authority of the Word of God, and within a context of accountability and

encouragement—for the purpose of the imitation of the Christ."[169] Drawing people toward

spiritual maturity through implementing biblical principles, such as participating in Spirit-led

small group discussions and learning how to apply biblically enhanced spiritual applications in

one's life, might best describe the relationship between intrapersonal formation and pastoral

counseling.[170]

While intrapersonal formation through a pastoral counselor exists and is readily available,

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[165] Dodson, "Assessing Well-being," 15–6.

[166] Zaccheus J. Ahonle et al., "The 2023 Revision to the CRCC Code of Ethics: Implications for Defining and Protecting the Counselor–Client Relationship," *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin* 66, no. 4 (2023): 258.

[167] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 311.

[168] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

[169] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 17.

[170] Ibid., 54.

intrapersonal formation in Christ relies upon the individual's willingness to grow spiritually. Setran and Wilhoit, however, suggest other avenues for growing spiritually: "The increasing draw of spiritual formation was linked to the expanding reach of postmodern thinking in the academy and the church."[171] Cheng, Green, and Smith point out, "Instead of measuring the frequency of engagement in conventional spiritual disciples or assent to doctrinal belief, they focus on measuring psychological states."[172] One might suggest that assessing psychological states and intrapersonal struggles go hand in hand. Still, two different approaches, Christian Cognitive Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Therapy, might be considered when discussing any inward turmoil of the believer.

Ultimately, a biblical decision must become available to one's mind to move beyond the errors of one's way. Marshall and Newheiser express, "We learn to discern truth from error and to make choices according to the commands and principles of Scripture."[173] Nevertheless, implementing proactive pastoral counseling allows others to safely address spiritual issues not commonly discussed in religiously bound environments or outside of responding to intrapersonal crises, enabling therapy as a spiritual discipline.[174]

At the same time, although pastoral counselors typically attend to spiritual concerns, a pastoral counselor's responsibility involves more, such as dealing with others' mental, physical, and emotional issues. Wilkins states, "The attempt is to assist in the creation of a whole person

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[171] Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 534.

[172] Cheng, Green, and Smith, "Development and Validation," 69.

[173] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 61.

[174] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 91.

through spiritual formation and Christlikeness and view the person under the whole person concept as Jesus commands of us."[175] He asserts, "Pastoral care for the Christian counselor through self-care and the counselor's care for the congregation becomes soul care with the express goal of spiritual formation."[176]

Furthermore, Lui and his colleagues noted significant findings in their instrumental case study on intrapersonal formation. They found, "Intrapersonal growth involved participants' increased reflection of self-identities and personal issues. Participants achieved salient intrapersonal growth across the semester, evidenced by enhanced self-reflection, emotional awareness, and self-concept."[177] White adds, "Therapy as a spiritual discipline may help the Church reclaim paths of deep transformation of persons and communities."[178] Because intrapersonal conflict permeates internal distress, pastoral counseling must become proactive rather than reactive to help others manage that distress in hopes that Christian intrapersonal formation might become realized in others; thus, there is a need for proactive pastoral counseling.

2.1.3 Intrapersonal Formation and Christian Education

Learning to grow spiritually begins when biblical teaching is accepted.[179] Christian education naturally assumes the teaching position of proper biblical doctrine.[180] In that view,

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[175] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 50.

[176] Ibid., 47.

[177] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 32.

[178] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 98.

[179] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 311.

[180] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 24.

Christian education upholds the pursuit of administering appropriate theology for the spiritual development of others.[181] Proactive pastoral counseling also pursues others with a like-minded premise.

Stokes recommends that for the Church to develop spiritually, fruitfulness must remain its focus, which, empowered by the Holy Spirit, replaces all other pursuits. He mentions Christ-like teachers and preachers become proactive and intentionally engage their congregants, "equipping them with the decreed Word."[182] Cox believes that "Christian education should academically instill discipleship as the goal of behavior."[183] Comparatively, Macchia recommends applying competent biblical principles and receiving Christian teaching as the catalyst for spiritual movement.[184] Ultimately, the Holy Spirit enables the process and progression of Christian intrapersonal formation.

In other words, spiritual growth is not for the faint of heart, and learning the process is priceless for those who choose the deeper life of humility.[185] Christian doctrine and principles guide others to repentance and faith, producing in them a reverence of worship to God, prompting them to behave in love and dedication in submission to Him.[186] Yet, not everyone knows how to read God's Word or understand its spiritual applications, let alone grasp why

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[181] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 24.

[182] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 81–2.

[183] Cox and Peck, "Christian Education," 243.

[184] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 51.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 59.

living life focused on spiritual disciplines and seeking behavior approved by Christ is essential for overcoming intrapersonal struggle.[187]

Leaf comments that inside the local church, limited learning opportunities for enhancing biblical literacy in adults prove the fragility of adult biblical worldviews and note their decline;[188] when Christian education ceases to work, spiritual blindness increases.[189] Fruitlessness becomes the essence of action in people's hearts, separating them from the ability to discern things spiritually and thereby losing their ability to determine their pastoral counseling needs—producing a decline in spiritual growth.

2.1.4 Pastoral Counseling and Christian Education

Intrapersonal spiritual growth stagnates in the church when its members choose not to take advantage of pastoral counseling.[190] The members' unwillingness to engage in pastoral counseling limits the church's ability to affect others needing spiritual care. In contrast, pastoral counseling for the flock might become restricted due to the time restraints of the pastor and the lack of lay counselors available to assist in caring for the congregation.

Plainly, when Christian learning stops, spiritual growth stops, and complacent insight takes hold.[191] For Christian intrapersonal formation, growing stems from pursuing biblical literacy to produce new thinking in hopes others might transform and carry the hope to others.

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[187] Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 533.

[188] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 57–8.

[189] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 148.

[190] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 16.

[191] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

Wilkins says, "Spiritual maturity occurs in the individual that develops discipleship patterns that may be taught for adoption by other believers."[192] Therefore, integrated with proactive pastoral counseling, Christian education fashions itself for revamping the thinking process of others, helping them relocate intrapersonally toward Christlikeness while holding to an impetus for providing lay counseling for others.[193]

Globally, pastoral counseling is a Christian education device that teaches others how to rethink the state of their spirituality and reshape their life's narrative at the moment.[194] Leaf agrees, affirming that "thinking is inherent as an intrapersonal act, influencing one's character, values, lifestyle, and behavior."[195] Stokes says, "Pastoral counseling and Christian education that is faithful to God and His word teaches that Christ requires humankind to have a right relationship with Him and with others; as such, this allows for His creation to grow in several different ways with the result being a spiritually converted heart and mind."[196] As a result, the cognition process changes, biblical thoughts develop, and new behaviors manifest.

Wilkins admits that Christian education through the integration of pastoral counseling inspires others to think about and sometimes rethink their understanding of Christianity and the enacting spiritual power it beholds.[197] In comparison, Leaf suggests integrating and employing Christian education (among other things) with pastoral counseling to "empower those who

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[192] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 71.

[193] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 82.

[194] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 97.

[195] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 22.

[196] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 60.

[197] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 71.

experience intrapersonal chaos with the necessary spiritual tools found only in biblical doctrine."[198] One might consider the integration between Christian teaching and proactive pastoral counseling as the act of making disciples.

Harris contends that disciple-making is nothing less than pursuing a target intentionally.[199] Similarly, Christian education empowered by a proactive pastoral counselor seeks to educate those who fear addressing their intrapersonal problems, do not understand how to talk about intrapersonal struggles with others (interpersonal communication breakdown), shudder in crisis mode, and isolate themselves from others. Stokes says, "The attention to Christian education in the church is to assist clergy and laity in creating growth that manifests as spiritual maturity and motivation of the church's congregation."[200] Unfortunately, there are reasons why believers fear confronting their intrapersonal issues, exposing the negative side of counseling others who deal with spiritual chaos.

Part of the problem pastoral counseling and Christian education encounter involves church members' lack of Christian character, such as emulating a non-Christlike attitude, remaining biblically illiterate, spiritual apathy, lacking spiritual awareness, and spiritual blindness.[201] Tan presents a list representing this notion: "The lack of spiritual discernment, church commitment, understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual disciplines."[202] At the very least, one might consider pastoral counseling as a premise through which a Christian

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[198] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 7.

[199] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 78.

[200] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 82.

[201] Cheng, Green, and Smith, "Development and Validation," 69.

[202] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 313.

promotes education in a way that helps others maintain a Christian worldview. Therefore, pastoral counseling incorporated with Christian education provides an approach that "helps make sense of Christianity and helps others understand how to achieve attitudes and characteristics that emulate Christlikeness."[203]

Interestingly, one must also consider that those needing pastoral counseling might feel unworthy of a righteous pursuit and purposely evade any spiritual formation that requires another person, particularly a faith-based, proactive pastoral counselor. Tan notes that counseling measures "need to be done with great sensitivity and caution and care, with much prayer for protection and discernment from the Holy Spirit and informed consent from the client."[204] In contrast, Harris insists, "The Church's central mission is discipleship,"[205] which in its very essence should aim to reach others in that likeness.

Moreover, a proactive pastoral counselor might enter into an opportunity to conduct spiritual evaluations simply by engaging in personal conversations outside of the church, premised on teaching Christianity. This approach might inspire the individual to think about forming intrapersonally in Christ. As a general note, proactive pastoral counseling does not limit itself to a pastor, per se, but to those willing to provide faith-based care (pastoral counseling) through lay counseling, professional Christian counseling, and the likeness of Stephen's Ministry.[206]

Thus, the literature in this review entreats pastoral counseling as a proactive means to

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[203] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 329.

[204] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 314.

[205] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 78.

[206] Haugk, *Stephen's Ministry*, 15.

facilitate Christian intrapersonal spiritual growth. The logic behind the impetus suggests that Christian intrapersonal spiritual formation is the desired result and can develop in two ways: 1) surrender to the Holy Spirit and 2) to think scripturally—intrapersonal conflict fades when a spiritually discerning mindset takes control over all other thought processes induced by spiritual disciplines (2 Cor 10:5). Yet, one must ask, "How can non-Christians think about Christian spirituality, let alone employ a pastoral counselor if they are unaware that intrapersonal formation is possible through Christ?" In that light, the literature review finds a few existing gaps.

First, the literature does not address proactive steps for a pastoral counselor to engage with those lacking spiritual maturity. Second, although the literature connotates intrapersonal chaos as a spiritual problem, it does not explain how or why spiritual struggles are necessary for creating intrapersonal well-being (a synonymous relationship). Third, Timoney's perspective on current intrapersonal literature asserts, "The research largely neglected or, in some cases, even negated the influence of the Christian tradition concerning humility."[207] To ask, "Is the lack of humility the key element that hinders Christian intrapersonal formation," may bring about more significant insights relating to one's overall spiritual growth.

Last, Oleś and his colleagues comment on how exploring age and cultural differences in intrapersonal communication might provide fruit for future research.[208] Similarly, extended study on the relationship between a believer's character, spiritual apathy, and intrapersonal formation might also prove worthy. Essentially, without receiving the care of a pastoral counselor to

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[207] Martin Bernard Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components of Christian Humility" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2020), 7.

[208] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 10.

address such issues, Christian intrapersonal growth might not occur in believers.

In summary, proactive pastoral counseling intentionally engages others to procure Christian intrapersonal formation. Reactive counseling only provides a temporary fix and inhibits spiritual growth. Proactive pastoral counseling must become the norm to effect intrapersonal change that lasts.

2.2 Theological Foundations in Pastoral Counseling

Under the Holy Spirit's influence, effective pastoral counseling utilizes God's Word to establish relationships with others and to help them experience spiritual well-being and rest in Christ (Matt 11:28–30).[209] As mentioned before, Wilkins says, "Christian counseling in its purest form, is a covenant between a caregiver and a care seeker to labor collaboratively for the possession of the soul, through the power of the Holy Spirit, under the authority of the Word of God."[210] Respectively, pastoral counselors must emphasize the power of Christ, the object of intrapersonal change, especially within the counselor-client relationship.[211] In other words, the power behind God's Word is "Holy Spirit" power, which, through Spirit-directed transformation, helps others overcome intrapersonal conflict.[212]

In this section, theological foundations in pastoral counseling (such as listening to and believing God's Word is "all-sufficient" and Holy Spirit-powered) describe the spiritual direction needed to experience cognitive transformation—intrapersonal change comes from the work of

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[209] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 52.

[210] Ibid., 17.

[211] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 7.

[212] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 176.

God in a person's life (Rom 10:9–1).[213] Likewise, reading books of the Bible (such as John, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, and Deuteronomy) helps one to understand biblical characters who proclaimed God's power through the word of the cross (Deut 18:15–9; 1 Cor 1:18). Similarly, the life and narratives of these noted biblical characters illustrate that comprehending God's power begins with understanding the beneficence of one's pursuit toward Christlikeness (Matt 5:1–2). Ultimately, when the word of God fills a person's mind, intrapersonal struggles decrease, and Christian intrapersonal formation follows.[214]

2.2.1 God's Word Is All-Sufficient

God's Word is the most righteous, life-giving power that people can ever know (John 6:63). To experience Christian intrapersonal formation, then, is to "listen" to and "uphold" the word of God (theological applications), disciplining oneself toward godliness (1 Tim 4:7), taking "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Luke records the words that God spoke at the Mount of Transfiguration, saying, "This is My Son. My Chosen One; listen to Him" (Luke 9:35). Aquinas recognized that, "God's plan from all eternity had been to establish the kingdom of Christ" (Isa 46:10).[215] Therefore, Jesus Christ is God's Word in the flesh (John 1:14; grace and truth), who provides the means and spiritual food required for a man to receive Spirit-filled power while on earth (John 6:53).[216]

For instance, the book of Hebrews discusses the nature of God's life-giving power and

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[213] Aadne, "Radical Discipleship," 80.

[214] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 314.

[215] Thomas Aquinas et al., *Commentary on the Gospel of John, chapters 6–12* (Catholic University of America, 2010), 11.

[216] Ibid., 21.

how its purpose is to affect the hearts of man. The author writes, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). Thistelton expresses, "The function and effect of the 'word of God' is to probe and to diagnose the condition of the human heart, including the self-examination."[217] Therefore, people's words might gain power when they surrender their power to a biblical heart.[218]

Pearl recognizes God's Word as the all-sufficient power for people (2 Tim 3:16–7). He claims the power in man's words originates not from his choice of words but from the power of God Himself. With Hebrews 1:3 as a guide, Pearl notes that in a Christian era of positive speaking (word of faith theology), people believe power comes from speaking the right words. He says, "The text does not say that Jesus upholds all things by the power that comes from his word; it says that his word originates in his power . . . Until God moves in power, our words are powerless."[219] In other words, God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gives humanity everything it needs to overcome life's struggles, even against all its enemies (Ps 19:7–14).

2.2.2 God's Word is Holy Spirit Power

Morley contends the Holy Spirit (God's power) is infinitely more powerful than all man's enemies combined,[220] including the enemy of sin (Rom 7:14-25). Moo adds that God's power through the Gospel of Christ is something possible for the least of men (2 Cor 12:9), even

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[217] Anthony C. Thistelton, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible: Hebrews*, ed. John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 43.

[218] Freeman C. Sleeper, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: James* (Nashville: Abington, 1998), 49.

[219] Michael Pearl, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews: A Word by Word Commentary* (No Greater Joy Ministries, 2021), 3.

[220] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 184.

those who might continuously struggle after salvation (Rom 8:1). He comments, "The gospel unleashes God's power so that people, by embracing it, can be rescued from the disastrous effects of sin, being pronounced 'righteous' in God's sight and having a secure hope for salvation from wrath in the last day."[221] Overall, God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit provide people with what they need to live, move, and exist (Acts 17:28), and without Him, neither man nor his words would exist or contain any power.

2.2.3 God's Word Is Life

In the Gospel of John, the writer professes all things came into existence through His Word. He explains, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:3). At the same time, John reflects on the power of God's Word giving life to men, saying, "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men" (John 1:4). Carson notes, "John is largely interested in 'light' and 'life' as they relate to salvation: the 'light' is revelation which people may receive in active faith and be saved, the 'life' is either resurrection life or spiritual life that is its foretaste."[222] In short, the Word is the Light of the world (John 8:12).

This "righteous" power–the Light–is the salvation promised by God, who would be born of the Jews (John 4:22). The Bible describes Jesus as the exact representation of godliness, emulating the embodiment of righteousness of earth (Heb 1:3). Through His righteousness, Jesus opens the door for eternal life with God in heaven (John 4:14). He also provides "the way" to receive "Holy Spirit" power in the flesh, providing the means to experience inner peace: "Jesus

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[221] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 745.

[222] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 119.

is the peace that passes all understanding" (Phil 4:7). Choosing a Spirit-filled life in Christ, though, one must first deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23). Marshall notes, "Only through the willingness to surrender one's life for Jesus will one really gain it, for the person who tries to preserve his life for himself, will ultimately lose it."[223]

For example, the life of the Apostle Paul radically changed after his experience with Christ on the Damascus road, an involuntary incursion (See Acts 9).[224] His intrapersonal world had transformed entirely because of his encounter with Christ, causing him to see and hear God differently (Acts 9:18). His internal change was so significant that others, too, recognized his change (Acts 9:20). Comparatively, Paul could not escape the power of Christ, His words, or the effect of his overall state of being; even more, the spirit of his mind also became renewed (Eph 4:23). Ultimately, the life of Paul changed because of Christ.

2.2.4 God's Word Is Truth

God's Word proclaims there is no other way to receive eternal life with God other than through Jesus, His Son (John 14:6). Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:25–6). As described in John 1:17, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Therefore, one might conclude that whether one hears God's Word voluntarily or involuntarily, "receiving" God's Word is the key to Christian intrapersonal growth and salvation, as prompted in James 1:21.[225]

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[223] Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 372.

[224] Ibid.

[225] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 92.

Garland agrees that intrapersonal formation comes first by hearing the words of Jesus as a command (Luke 9:35). He adds, "The command to listen to Jesus means . . . listen to the revelation of God that comes through Jesus rather than the fickle speculations of public opinion."[226] Essentially, Christlike intrapersonal change occurs when one receives the words spoken by God throughout all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27), particularly in these last days in whom He has spoken through His Son (Heb 1:2).

In other words, without Christ, there can be no spiritual activity inside a person,[227] such as Christian intrapersonal formation. Therefore, one must diligently believe in God's revelation—the person and works of His Son, Jesus Christ—and trust in Him for Christian intrapersonal formation to occur (Rom 12:2). Jesus says, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63).

Paul lived on the words of Christ, and from those words, he experienced life. In the book of Romans, Paul mentions, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom 8:6–8). Taylor notes, "The 'unrighteous,' in contrast to the 'saints,' will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:11–2).[228] Jesus, the righteousness by which God portrays His grace, displays His desire for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). In other words, Paul chose Christ because he knew no power existed except that power the name of Christ beheld (Phil 2:10).

Ultimately, the Word is the Truth (Christ), giving people power behind their words and

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[226] David E. Garland, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins, 2011), 402.

[227] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 301.

[228] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 145.

hearts.[229] The desire of one's heart to draw closer to understanding the Truth becomes realized from being elevated in His strength, manifesting a renewed heart. Ezekiel illustrates, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:26). Hence, the power of the Truth executed in one's life turns fleshly pursuits toward a Christlike desire as one's internal activity and focus fixes itself on Christ (Heb 11:2). Nonetheless, becoming more like Christ requires an internal impetus for intrapersonal change.[230]

Change in the heart and mind comes from a willingness to submit to godly discipline, which makes way for God's presence in one's life (1 Tim 4:7).[231] Cockerill notes, "The Son provided the ultimate revelation of God through his high-priestly work, by which he cleansed God's people from sin and thus brought them into God's presence. By so doing, he has become the Pioneer and Perfecter who has initiated and completed the way for the faithful to enter God's presence."[232] Cockerill's use of the term "the way" might suggest the Holy Scriptures exist so people may learn the written words in them and, believing in those words (faith), become renewed in the "spirit of the mind" through Christ (Eph 4:23).

Furthermore, Christian intrapersonal formation as "a way" to experience Christlikeness occurs when the cognitive process shifts from ungodly thinking to thinking scripturally (1Tim 4:6). In contrast, Koester mentions those who do not seek or listen to God's Word do not appear

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[229] Pearl, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews*, 3–4.

[230] Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 267.
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[231] Ibid., 267–8.

[232] Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. by Ned. B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 601.

guilty of heinous crimes but are susceptible to drift and neglect.[233] Garland adds, "Those who do

not listen and obey will be cut off from the people of God and Salvation."[234] The Psalmist says,

"But My people did not listen to My voice, and Israel did not obey Me" (Psalms 81:11).

Concisely, for Christian intrapersonal change to occur, one must seek His Word and become

empowered by the Holy Spirit to effect that change—walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16).[235]

Alternatively, one might argue that intrapersonal change toward Christlikeness also

occurs involuntarily, such as Paul's conversion on the Damascus road and his "revelation of

Christ" consummation noted in Acts 9:6. As mentioned, Paul experienced an unplanned spiritual

awakening, and his transformation manifested in a new life in Christ—Paul received the ministry

of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:14–7). One might then consider life itself changes, ready or not, when

the Holy Spirit is at work in a person's life. For Paul, the power of the Holy Spirit changed his

life entirely and became a staple in his preaching ministry. Taylor comments, "Paul's preaching

was effective for God's purposes because of the empowerment of the Spirit. The Spirit bore

witness to the truth of the message."[236] As such, acting on the Message of Truth paves the way

for Christlike intrapersonal

growth.[237]

For example, intentionally feeding one's mind with Scripture stimulates new thinking,

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[233] Craig Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 36, Anchor Yale Bible (Yale University, 2008), 312.

[234] Garland, *Luke*, 402.

[235] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 125.

[236] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 81.

[237] McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality*, 106.

invoking a "letting go"[238] between worldly and godly thought. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, saying, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). One might ask, "How does the mind experience renewal?" As Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." As a result, when a man faithfully receives the revelation of God, a power emits itself that man, even in his sin, becomes a new creature. Therefore, as a man chooses life and lives by God's Word in mind, heart, and spirit (his intrapersonal world), he also experiences the wholeness of new life, just like Moses described to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:19–2.

Moses, for instance, knew the power of God's word and instructed the Israelites to place God's Word in their hearts and souls. He expressed the vitality of teaching the words given by God, saying, "Teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house, walk along the road, lie down, and rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut 11:18). Similarly, Paul writes to Timothy, saying, "You will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following" (1 Tim 4:6). From King Solomon, the teacher, he offers this application: "Apply your heart to discipline and your ears to words of knowledge" (Prov 23:12).

Moreover, shifting from self-thinking to godly formation generates intrapersonal growth and Christlike behavior. Leaf says, "Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are granted a 'new nature' resulting from the Holy Spirit's regeneration. This new nature enables each believer to develop

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[238] Macchia says, "Releasing the fullness of our attachments is profitable for the soul. A healthy dependence on God's Spirit to define and refine you as an individual and as a group will lead you into a posture of releasing. Letting go is what defines most of our spirituality and our maturity," *The Discerning Life*, 155.

thinking, a worldview based on the mind of Christ."[239]

Furthermore, Campbell observes, "Individuals are not left to wander on their own, but are called to conduct that is worthy of their Lord and his earthly community. The Spirit lays demands upon each individual completely and concretely in his particular relationships and makes him capable of a new manner of life."[240] One might suggest that pastoral counselors who are proactive rather than reactive might better facilitate this process, yet not being the substance of change themselves.

2.2.5 God's Word Is Christ

Campbell emphasizes body and mind as part of one indissoluble but distinguishable self. He says, "They are affected by being in Christ and should not be flattened to a cipher for the person."[241] In his Pauline letters, Paul emphasized Christianity as faithful action in hearing and applying God's Word (the teachings of Jesus) to one's life. He states, "Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:14–5). Moreover, Paul proclaims to Timothy that no other word stands the test of time than the words of Jesus (Heb 1:3): Jesus is "The Word" made flesh (John 1:14).

Besides his letters to Timothy, one might consider Paul's commencement to the Church in Colossae as the most pertinent instructions for intrapersonal Christlikeness. He says, "Set your

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[239] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 7.

[240] William S. Campbell, *Romans: A Social Identity Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2023), 329.

[241] Ibid.

mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col 3:2). Thistelton writes, "The Christian must keep his or her feet on the ground. Paul wants us to set our minds on things above not so as to avoid the nitty-gritty of everyday life on earth but because looking to the exalted Christ provides the vantage point for seeing our lives."[242] Paul exemplifies that there is no other way to grow in Christ than through thinking toward Christ.[243] He prays, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (Col 3:16).

But others, too, believed in the power of God to effect spiritual change in the hearts and minds of His people. Moses encouraged the people of Israel to impress, teach, speak, and bind God's Word on every heart and soul (Deut 11:18–23). Solomon implored his son to receive his words and within him treasure his commandments (Prov 2:1). Jesus made His words known by speaking a new testament, saying, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12). As one reads, listens to and obeys God's Word, one understands more clearly as to why Paul, Moses, Solomon, John, David, and many others express and proclaim that nothing more life-giving exists in the universe than the power of God's Word (Deut 30:18–9).

2.3 Theoretical Foundations in Pastoral Counseling

Theoretical foundations in pastoral counseling, such as Christian Cognitive Therapy (CCT), Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Integration Perspective (IP), Narrative Therapy (NT), and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), integrate psychology and theology to

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[242] Thiselton, *Colossians*, 88.

[243] Campbell, *Romans*, 329.

help believers navigate intrapersonal conflict."[244] Generally, counseling itself subscribes to a platform that allows individuals and couples to achieve their desired change, hoping to reduce conflict from within while increasing positive cognitive functioning. Leins comments, "Most counseling theories or psychotherapy and evidence-based protocols have been about meaningfully reducing symptom severities indicative of identifiable psychopathology and increasing the psychobehavioral functionality of individuals."[245] Although not all counseling theories represent a Christian pursuit, theoretical approaches combined with the presence of theology allow the pastoral counselor to keep cognitive behavioral change in mind.

However, fully understanding the purpose of integrating theoretical approaches within pastoral counseling must also consider the counselor from a religious perspective (Christian). Wilkins states, "The Christian counselor works through the 'Spirit of Truth,' counsels through the 'Counselor,' and is under His guidance and auspices throughout the process."[246] In that process, pastoral counselors employ the appropriate theoretical application depending on a person's intrapersonal needs. Therefore, theoretical applications utilized in a pastoral counseling setting can help people become more self-aware and more accepting of their past, present, and future narratives yet empower them to traverse intrapersonal struggles.[247]

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[244] Victor Hinson, "Integrationist Perspective," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 454.

[245] Chris Leins, "What Makes Pastoral Counseling so Pastoral? Distinguishing between Pastoral Care and Clinical Practice in Modern Life," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 40, no. 4 (2021): 345.

[246] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 46.

[247] Kari McDonald, and Lorraine Walker, "Qualitative Research on Self-Transcendence in Older Adults: A Scoping Review," *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* 49, no. 9 (2023): 46, https://doi.org/10.3928/00989134-20230816-04.

Similarly, Stephen's Ministry (SM), a Christian lay counseling ministry, applies a holistic approach premised on the ministry of presence in Christlikeness, reaching others through proactive lay counseling.[248] In a sense, Stephen's ministers act as church ministers who emulate the characteristics of a church deacon working as a social worker. Syahdin describes, "The word deacon is one of the terms used in the Bible for social service positions in the church."[249] Respectively, Stephen's Ministers personify the actions of lay ministers, whether church deacons or not, reaching out to those hurting from life's daily struggles.

2.3.1 Christian Cognitive Therapy (CCT)

Christian Cognitive Therapy is a form of Christian therapy that focuses on how negative, irrational, extreme, unreasonable, maladaptive, and distorted thinking creates problem feelings such as depression, anger, and other problem behaviors.[250] Like Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC), CCT focuses more specifically on unbiblical thinking as the root of the problem, feelings, and behaviors—CCT acknowledges God's Word as the sole authority for Christian intrapersonal formation.[251] Crabb notes, "Scripture trumps psychological principles even if empirically supported, Scripture is God's inerrant Word, Scripture supersedes psychological opinions, and counselors must commit to a deep understanding of the Scripture."[252] PPC aligns with CCT

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[248] Haugk, *Stephen's Ministry*, 15.

[249] Syahdin et al., "Stephen's Ministry Concept as a Transformative Deacon Prototype Model Based on Acts 6:5 in Pontianak City," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 48, (2023): 321, https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v48i1.9523.

[250] Tan, "Christian Cognitive and Strength-Based Therapy," 481.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Larry Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling: A Model for Helping Caring Christians become Capable Counselors* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 50–1.

because they consider problem behavior and feelings with biblical thinking.

2.3.2 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavior Therapy is a collaborative approach that assumes psychological distress results from disturbances in mental processes, and changing the way one thinks results in a positive, healthy change in behavior and affect.[253] Cheng notes, "Some instruments designed to measure faith formation take a different approach. Instead of measuring the frequency of engagement in conventional spiritual disciples or assent to doctrinal belief, they focus on measuring psychological states."[254] Moorey states, "Helping people change their view of the world is a key component of cognitive behavioral therapies."[255] When comparing PPC against all other theoretical foundations in pastoral counseling, CBT appears to align well for several reasons.

First, CBT addresses cognitive dissonance with a focus on intrapersonal resolve. Second, CBT supports the role of clients in that change occurs both in and outside of therapy. Third, CBT addresses faulty thinking, intending to change it. As such, CBT, like PPC, seeks to elicit insight into the positive results of changing one's self-thoughts and how that leads to changing one's responses and behaviors.[256] In so doing, PPC can perform biblically and still comply with the CBT application even though the theory does not promote intrapersonal wellness in Christ.

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[253] Jeanne Brooks, "Cognitive-Behavior Therapy," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 456.

[254] Cheng, Green, and Smith, "Development and Validation," 69.

[255] Stirling Moorey, "Three Ways to Change Your Mind: An Epistemic Framework for Cognitive Interventions," *Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy* 51, no. 3 (2023): 187, doi:10.1017/S1352465822000698.

[256] Brooks, "Cognitive-Behavior Therapy," 456.

2.3.3 Integrative Therapy: Integrative Perspective

Integrative Therapy (IT) encompasses the integration of the Christian faith, the discipline of psychology, the pastoral presence and identity of the pastoral counselor, and one's ability to interchange between faith and psychology in the session.[257] Integrating psychology and Christian belief becomes an art form when applying its faculties, such as the Integrative Perspective (IP), to help bring sense to irrational thinking and behavioral problems to Christians and others.[258] However, like the premise of change within theories such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, and Stephen's Ministry, proactive pastoral counseling works best when the pastoral counselor displays a personal character that promotes a high sense of spirituality. Tan notes, "Personal or intrapersonal integration, including the spirituality of the integrator or therapist, is the most foundational area of integration."[259]

While the pastoral perspective is critical for procuring cognitive change, IT in a small group setting helps produce interpersonal conversations to reveal and manage inner dialogues (perhaps from past significant parental/peer conflict given through present responses)[260] that cause continual inner turmoil. Oleś mentions, "Self-critical self-talk might reveal the presence of confrontational dialogues, whereas self-managing self-talk might be more frequent when people engage in integrative dialogues."[261] Still, as Harris notes, "It is important to remember that the

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[257] Hinson, "Integrationist Perspective," 454.

[258] Vanderstelt, Dijk and Lasair, "Transformational Education," 89.

[259] Siang-Yang Tan, "Applying Theology in the Psychology Classroom: Reflections on Integration in the Trenches for 35 Years," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 42, no. 1 (2023): 61.

[260] See demographics–initial response in chapter four.

[261] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 3.

Holy Spirit is involved in every aspect of salvation and spiritual growth."[262]

As mentioned, an outgoing personality propelled by a highly spirited pastoral counselor provides the best results for those participating in Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC). White mentions, "Clients are wise to seek therapists who have both willingness and training to actively integrate spirituality into therapy."[263] One might suggest people are more intrapersonally engaged when addressed with a sense of pastoral authority from one who administrates from personal experience with spiritual things.[264] Arguably, people also might experience a higher level of change with someone who emits a unique persona of pastoral experience, identity, and presence. Ultimately, the ideal Integrative Therapist reflects a genuine attitude and desire for people to grow toward Christlikeness and is readily visible to others.

Additionally, by allowing others to be in the presence of the pastoral counselor, people might learn more about how one overcomes intrapersonal chaos through biblical applications supported by spiritual disciplines.[265] The visual alone helps draw others to a healthier relationship with God.[266] However, overcoming intrapersonal conflict takes more than the presence of a pastoral counselor in action. Scazzero states, "Mature spiritual leadership is forged in the crucible of difficult conversations, the pressure of conflicted relationships, the pain of

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[262] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 54.

[263] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 99.

[264] Carlson, "Adult Development," 17.

[265] Jill Freedman, "Feeling, Thinking and Action as a Coherent Whole: A Reflection on 'Travelling Down the Neuro-Pathway,'" *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 3 (2019): 62.

[266] Victor Hinson, "Integrationist Perspective," 454–5.

setbacks, and dark nights of the soul."[267]

Nevertheless, IT relies on the leadership and work of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the pastoral counselor. Van der Watt adds, "Pastoral caregivers (lay and ordained) guide Christian believers on their journey of spiritual formation to grow into a loving, mature body focused on Christ, its head."[268] Combined, PPC and IT make an excellent proactive approach for eliciting Christian intrapersonal growth in believers.

2.3.4 Narrative Therapy

Narrative Therapy (NT) maintains that one's identity is the account of one's life defined by personal stories,[269] also known as selfhood. Bulteau records, "In healthy people, selfhood is strengthened by an adequate balance and coherence between positive internalized self-defining memories (internal referential) and the representation of actual positive feed-backs resulting from engagement in goal-directed behavior in the environment (external referential)."[270] Moschella notes, "Narrative conversations involve care seekers in examining problems in their social and cultural contexts. This approach avoids conflating the problem with the person and the negative identity conclusions that often result."[271] Hence, Christian intrapersonal formation and

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[267] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 118.

[268] Van der Watt, "Mission-Minded Pastoral Theology," 7.

[269] Philip Jamieson, "Narrative Therapy," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 460.

[270] Bulteau et al., "The Update of Self-Identity: Importance of Assessing Autobiographical Memory in Major Depressive Disorder," *WIREs Cognitive Science* 14, no. 3 (2023): 3, https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1644.

[271] Moschella, "Affect in Narrative Spiritual Care," 2.

Narrative Therapy might work best when the goal of resolve supports Christian intrapersonal growth and discipleship.

However, this approach also brings a sense of caution for proactive pastoral counseling efforts. Although NT can sometimes highlight a "self-help" approach to coping with intrapersonal conflict by reframing the life story of the believer, NT might become incompatible with Christian intrapersonal formation if it does not first seek a Christlike, discipleship goal in mind. Wilkins affirms, "Discipleship effectively begins when people are challenged to grow spiritually through consistent, practical, and spiritual teachings. Spiritual maturity occurs then in the individual who develops discipleship patterns that may be taught for adoption by other believers."[272] In that light, Christian intrapersonal formation proposes "self-reflection" in Christ, and not just merely an act of "self-reflection" facilitated by a therapeutic approach.

2.3.5 Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), formed by psychologist Albert Ellis in the mid-50s, constructs itself from a psychotherapeutic approach to help others uncover personal feelings and thoughts while seeking "unconditional self-acceptance."[273] Ellis opened a door for assisting others in understanding how unwholesome self-talk creates intrapersonal conflict, which alludes to actions and behaviors that draw a person away from achieving life-driven goals. Okeke says, "People choose to disturb themselves by adverse circumstances in their lives. The theory (REBT) emphasizes the significant role that thoughts and beliefs about adverse

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[272] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 71.

[273] Suchismita Pramanik and Rooplekha Khuntia, "Decoding Unconditional Self-Acceptance: A Qualitative Report," *Journal of Rational Emotive Cognitive-Behavior Therapy* 15, no. 1 (2023): 5, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-02300517-y.

phenomena play in patients' mental and emotional disturbances."[274]

Ellis also believed that by labeling the cause of how cognitive dissonance surfaced, a mental shift to a more positive posture might become the choice of reason, and the newness of intrapersonal conduct might produce new feelings and behaviors.[275] Under the influence of PPC, REBT helps others build hope to achieve new behaviors that have not yet come to life.[276] For instance, one might recognize how replacing low self-esteem with unconditional self-acceptance promotes intrapersonal well-being. Once rational thought surfaces, feelings become bearable, and low self-esteem turns to unconditional self-acceptance, a central theme behind REBT.[277] At this point, the pastoral counselor can proactively implement God's Word (and the Christian worldview) and provide a solid foundation for thinking and creating an intrapersonal life worth living.

2.3.6 Stephen's Ministry: Stephen's Ministers

Stephen's Ministry is an organized group of lay leaders within a congregation who intentionally seek others out to provide spiritual care. Like proactive pastoral counseling, Stephen's Minister aims to engage others during emotional and cognitive distress to provide aid during one's intrapersonal conflict. Stephen's Ministry delivers a sense of hope to others (a

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[274] Nkechi Mercy Okeke et al., "Effect of a Religious Coping Intervention of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on Mental Health of Adult Learners with Type II Diabetes," *Medicine (Baltimore)* 102, no. 39 (2023): 3, doi:10.1097/MD.0000000000034485.

[275] "Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy," *Psychology Today*, accessed September 10, 2023, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/rational-emotive-behavior-therapy.

[276] Anita Knight, "Rogerian Therapy," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 451.

[277] Ibid.

ministry of Christian presence) that other clinical therapies do not offer.[278]

Stephen's Ministers meet others in life right where they are rather than being "session-minded."[279] Treatment occurs in the individual's home at a convenient time, in comfortable environments that allow for self-talk and narrative therapy in those who might be hurting, such as in coffee shops, parks, and church-building settings. The Stephen's Ministry website defines its goal as: "To provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties."[280]

Proactive pastoral counseling relates with this approach most because its counseling measures are Christian-minded and involve being proactive rather than reactive. Such efforts include intentionally reaching others right where they are, addressing where a person might hurt most, actively listening and engaging with others, demonstrating genuine care for the other person, expressing positive regard (Rogerian principles),[281] and emphasizing hope through prayer and Scripture to support inner healing.[282]

Most importantly, Stephen's Ministry, like Proactive Pastoral Counseling, offers an approach to intrapersonal conflict as a means for others to grow toward Christlikeness. Ultimately, the goal is to implement God's Word as the means to renew the "spirit of the mind"

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[278] What is Stephen Ministry," Stephen's Ministry, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/917?mnbsm=1.

[279] Carlson, "Adult Development," 69.

[280] "What is Stephen's Ministry."

[281] Pramanik and Khuntia, "Decoding Unconditional Self-Acceptance," 5.

[282] Fernando Garzon, "Lay Counseling," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 69.

in others while helping people achieve a new intrapersonal perspective about their lives and the new life to come.

2.4 Conclusion

In life, man's most extreme intrapersonal struggle is his desire to understand how to grow in Christ.[283] At FBC, the passion for Christian intrapersonal formation is lacking due to an unwillingness in its believers to submit to Proactive Pastoral Counseling and grow. Aadne says, "Finding creative ways to strengthen the communal and relational aspect of discipleship can help churches realize the transformational power within the sphere of covenantal relationships characterized by the grace and unconditional love of the triune God."[284] Therefore, without a proactive pastoral counseling program addressing the need for Christian intrapersonal formation, FBC might stagnate and lose sight of future spiritual growth.

However, by implementing a proactive pastoral counseling program, FBC might come to learn, discern, and understand spiritual things by integrating theological and psychological therapeutics. Blunt suggests, "An understanding of embodied cognition can help us to understand the application of biblical principles in our lives and to facilitate psychological counseling."[285] Ortberg notes, "The spiritual life begins with paying attention to our thoughts."[286]

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[283] Dwight Rice, "Subject Matter Conversations: Initial" (video lecture in PACO 825 at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, January 11, 2022).

[284] Aadne, "Radical Discipleship," 93.

[285] R. J. Brunt, "The Role of Embodied Cognition in Performing the Word of God," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 35, no. 3 (2016): 242.

[286] John Ortberg, *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 91.

Klaus suggests, "To narrow our gaps and become more like Jesus, we need to recognize the important role that core beliefs hold in our character, from which flow our thoughts and actions."[287] In His temptation, Jesus illustrates the perfect response: "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matt 4:4).

In that light, one might better understand the nature of pastoral counseling, that holding to a proactive approach with a scripturally minded impetus might spiritually affect others toward Christian intrapersonal formation. Haykin asserts, "The Christian Scriptures are the primary text for Christian spirituality. We don't form our personal spiritual lives out of a random assemblage of favorite texts in combination with individual circumstances; the Holy Spirit forms us following the text of the Holy Scriptures."[288] In other words, Christian intrapersonal growth takes time while the Holy Spirit inwardly works His will in man.[289]

Unfortunately, the research available does not provide much support associating PPC directly with Christian intrapersonal formation. However, this writer agrees with Kim, who suggests those who seek Christian intrapersonal growth stand out in the capacity to engage how the mind works as it corresponds to becoming more like Christ, such as understanding the function between schema (rational thinking) and thema (relational thought).[290] Respectively, schema and thema are considered spiritual faculties in which intrapersonal communication

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[287] Klaus Issler, *Living in the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012), 28.

[288] Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near*, 63.

[289] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

[290] James Riley Estep et al., *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), chapter 3.

occurs.

Spurgeon mentions spiritual faculties compose his inner being for a purpose. He notes, "My spiritual faculties, and my inner life, are my battle axe and weapons of war."[291] Although one must employ sound doctrine to overcome spiritual conflict intrapersonally, Christian intrapersonal formation intentionally fashions, formulates, engages, confronts, directs, navigates, and manages how one's cognition becomes analyzed by the individual. For example, Schema and Thema provide one approach for understanding how to interpret intrapersonal conflict.[292] One might identify PPC as the composition of each theory's best practices—Eclecticism, distinguished only by its proactive Christian nature. Essentially, PPC promotes Christian intrapersonal formation in the individual, holding to new life through the eyes of God's Word.

God's Word offers life-giving hope, creating more than just a thought of "Holy Spirit" power or the act of one receiving the saving grace of Christ: God's Word for the believer is life itself (John 6:63). Replacing unworldly thinking with Scripture allows God's heart and mind to rule the believer's heart, mind, and spirit (Rom 12:2). Similarly, briefly viewing theoretical applications such as CBT, CCT, IT, NT, REBT, and SM, a broader view of understanding intrapersonal matters developed. Therefore, for a pastoral counselor to encourage Christian intrapersonal growth, one must proactively engage others and help them redirect their mindset toward the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Pastoral counseling is critical to helping others realize and revitalize intrapersonal health and overall spiritual well-being.[293] Wilkins states, "Pastoral counseling as an integral part of

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[291] Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students*, 8.

[292] Estep et al., *Christian Formation*, chapter 7.

[293] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

pastoral care for any congregation is paramount for the life and vitality of that congregation, as well as the surrounding community."[294] Stokes adds, "Pastoral counseling presents as a methodology addressing mental health care in a manner that utilizes the understanding of psychology and the behavioral sciences, in conjunction with spirituality, religion, and theology."[295]

    For future study and to learn more about alternative approaches and techniques not discussed in this thesis, one might consider the following theoretical methods: Interpersonal Neurobiology, Emotion-Focused Therapy, Interpersonal Psychotherapy, and Logotherapy.

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[294] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 16.

[295] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0.1 Pastoral Counseling (PC)

Pastoral Counseling provides a platform for faith-based pastors and pastoral counselors to empower those who struggle with intrapersonal conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[296] Leins confirms, "The pastor's focus in 'counseling' is the message of the cross; the foremost priority of his work is articulating that message well."[297] Likewise, Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC), a form of Christian Integrative Therapeutics (CIT), directs believers toward understanding the truth about their life narrative through the gospel story, helping them see their lives more clearly.[298]

Likewise, pastors and pastoral counselors seek to encourage those broken in their minds and hearts to pursue spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture, and applying biblical thinking. Morley says, "Spiritual disciplines will change the core reactions of your heart. They will usher you into a deeper communion with God. You will grow in your knowledge and love for God. You will gain confidence about how to discern His will. You will find yourself yearning, aching, to follow the example of Jesus."[299]

Some counseling circles even suggest that Christian Therapy might consider itself a spiritual discipline and not just an integrative platform for therapy.[300] Nonetheless, by

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[296] Mark McMinn and Clark Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), abstract.

[297] Leins, "What Makes Pastoral Counseling So Pastoral," 344.

[298] McMinn, *Integrative Psychotherapy*, 37.

[299] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 10.

[300] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 91.

emphasizing spiritual disciplines, pastors and pastoral counselors might effectively guide others toward Christlike change.

In so doing, believers might experience a three-fold event: increased self-awareness in Christ, decreased intrapersonal conflict, and Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF). In this chapter, Christian therapy reflects pastoral counseling not so much as a reactive treatment to intrapersonal conflict (per se) but as a proactive means for helping believers understand better how spiritual disciplines, through the Holy Spirit, lead others toward Christlikeness. Tan contends, "From a Christian perspective, prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit is crucial and essential to effectively conduct Christian therapy and to help clients deal with spiritual issues, including spiritual struggles in therapy in a constructive way that leads to growth and spiritual formation into deeper Christlikeness."[301]

Therefore, this thesis's methodology proposes that changing the selection and use of one's vocabulary words from secular to biblical and staying focused on God—in everything— creates Christian intrapersonal formation. Macchia says, "The spiritual discipline of noticing God is the focal point of our formation into Christlikeness."[302] Luke stresses the idea from Jesus in his gospel, saying, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

In contrast, Leaf says, "Since every person's worldview is continually being modified, it becomes ever more challenging for believers to keep their thinking consistent with Scripture."[303] One might agree then that intentionally filling one's mind with God's Word produces biblical

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[301] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 314.

[302] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 112.

[303] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 7.

thinking and helps believers maintain their Christian worldview—a biblical life is a "Spirit-filled" life (John 6:63).

Essentially, by changing the words that one uses for cognitive processing, past and present life narratives change, internal concepts change, ideas readjust, and new life commitments are illuminated. Morely says, "The Bible is the starting point for all spiritual discipline, for everything that glorifies God, and for all growth and sanctification."[304] Leaf describes, "A believer's changed cognitive faculties (their thinking) enable them to formulate an orderly and related set of beliefs about life based upon a committed trust in the person and message of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible."[305] Not only that, but when intrapersonal change occurs because of Christ, core beliefs change, too, and the desire to trust and follow God heightens.

In perspective, the applications, faculties, administrations, and guidance of pastoral counseling offer the spiritual tools and sources needed for others to gain control of their intrapersonal world. Marshall highlights, "Those who are filled with the Spirit live continually under the influence of the Spirit by letting the Word control them. . . . Being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting his mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done."[306] However, because people are prone to walking in the flesh, pastoral counseling often occurs in response to someone presently hurting (or in crisis mode) or from something preexisting that causes continual inner turmoil.

Regardless, when those struggling with intrapersonal chaos reach the point of session,

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[304] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 42.

[305] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 51.

[306] Marshall, *When Words Matter Most*, 40.

steps to help find resolve elevate immensely. When this happens, integrating psychology and

behavioral sciences is often advantageous for building hope in the individual(s) and maintaining

the counselor-client relationship. Stokes suggests pastoral counseling as a methodology

addressing mental health care in a manner that utilizes the understanding of psychology and the

behavioral sciences in conjunction with spirituality, religion, and theology. [307]

Similarly, within the session, the pastoral counselor aims to teach others to reexamine

their life narrative through the Bible story to effect Christlike change intrapersonally. As such,

hope restores faith in the ability to change, while the Holy Spirit exacts and produces longevity

for that change."[308]

Hence, this study regards pastoral counseling as a method that helps draw others out of

their intrapersonal world and apply practical, biblical insights for cognitive resolve. Instead of

administering pastoral counseling from a reactive state, the pastoral counselor proactively

engages others to address intrapersonal issues and concerns not often discussed, meeting others

right where they are. This Christian Integrative Therapeutic (CIT) is called Proactive Pastoral

Counseling (PPC).

3.0.2 Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC)

Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) is an upbeat method of Christian therapy that

incorporates the pastoral counselor's identity, integrating his pastoral experience, education, and

pastoral presence (Integrative Perspective) with theoretical applications such as Christian

Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Narrative Therapy to proactively encounter

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[307] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

[308] Ibid., 135.

and affect intrapersonal conflict of believers. Grounded on the Christian worldview and undergirded by Christian Education (CE), PPC aims to proactively draw others out of their current cognitive state and help reconstruct their thinking environment by redirecting their life's spiritual direction toward biblical thinking. To produce biblical thinking, one must "self-reflect" in "Christ," which, through the inspiration of God's Word, motivates Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF).[309]

For example, the Apostle Paul was an "Ambassador for Christ" who preached God's Word as the "substance of change" (2 Cor 5:19). Paul shared God's Word adamantly, proclaiming life with God through the "ministry of reconciliation" and "the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18–9). He preached, "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20), so Christ might become revealed as the object of change and become effectual "doers of the word" (James 1:22).[310] Cox notes, "It is relatively rare that Christian education for adults organically incorporates discipleship within academic and professional programs, much less make discipleship the guiding conceptual framework."[311]

Like Paul, PPC interacts with others to become more Scripture-minded, enabling believers to understand themselves more clearly. In one sense, PPC guides and helps others understand how to implement biblical thinking in one's mind to function in Christlikeness. In so doing, one can hope for intrapersonal conflict to decrease, as applying God's Word to one's intrapersonal world in the form of Christian education brings about Christian intrapersonal

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[309] Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 542.

[310] This process of change portrays the likeness of Christian intrapersonal formation and its purpose for use.

[311] Cox and Peck, "Christian Education as Discipleship Formation," 246.

formation.[312]

PPC also addresses one's intrapersonal culture—core beliefs that dictate social behavior and normalities found in human societies—to help prevent future cognitive disruptions.[313] For example, Christian Cognitive Therapy (CCT), aligned with Christian Education, helps PPC cultivate a safe space[314] to discuss individual problem issues such as depression, anger, and irrational thinking that creates maladaptive feelings. While doing so, PPC hopes to teach others how to display heartfelt acceptance toward oneself and emotional openness toward others.

The Apostle Paul writes, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Eph 4:32). The Gospel of Mark exposes how one should apply love in life as a whole: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Timoney writes, "The capacity to accept oneself and one's limitations when encountering others with different perspectives, abilities, and worldviews requires an openness to learn from others and an openness to see the potential for growth within oneself."[315] Therefore, the advantage of implementing PPC is that it increases the ability of others to navigate and overcome intrapersonal conflict, and more so, it allows them to experience Christian intrapersonal formation.

Moreover, PPC counseling intensifies one's ability to communicate interpersonally, strengthens a person's overall health, and offers a lasting narrative. Stokes illustrates, "Narrative, as practiced in pastoral counseling, frames the Word of God into the context of a caring alliance

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[312] Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 542.

[313] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 146.

[314] Haugk, *Stephen Ministry*, 15.

[315] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 4.

built on faith."[316] Acting proactively (PPC), the pastoral counselor can help build a foundation of care and trust with others to help stabilize one's ability to recognize, accept, and manage one's intrapersonal world biblically.[317] The following methodology helps to explain that undertaking.

3.1 Intervention Design

3.1.1 Problem Statement

The problem is First Baptist Church in Harmony, ME, does not offer proactive pastoral counseling to help believers grow intrapersonally in Christ.

3.1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to implement a proactive pastoral counseling program that equips believers to grow intrapersonally in Christ.

3.1.3 Thesis Statement

If believers at FBC submit to proactive pastoral counseling, then intrapersonal conflict will decrease and procure Christian intrapersonal formation.

3.1.4 Setting

Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) is a method of Christlike therapeutics that decreases intrapersonal conflict while procuring Christian intrapersonal formation in believers.[318] In fostering a Christlike environment within a small group, CIF seeks to draw believers out of their

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[316] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 102.

[317] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 51.

[318] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 3.

present cognitive state while helping them reengage their intrapersonal world with a renewed

"spirit of the mind" (Eph 4:23). Through the implementation of proactive pastoral counseling

measures, such as the pastoral counselor's Integrative Perspective (IP), Christian Intrapersonal

Formation (CIF) inspires fellowship with other participants, increases biblical literacy and self-

esteem, decreases intrapersonal chaos, enhances interpersonal communication with others, and

allows participants to understand in more depth any intrapersonal activity in themselves that

might bring light to one's inward strife. Likewise, incorporating the integrative perspective and

guidance of the pastoral counselor (PPC), CIF can become the conduit for self-reflection[319] in

Christ for believers in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

Having that as an impetus, the CIF small group comprises no more than six active

believers who meet for three hours once a week for six weeks—the more crowded the classes

become, the less intrapersonal conversations might become genuinely transparent. The small

group approach does not suggest that CIF will not work in a larger capacity; instead, it is only

that the nature of PPC gears itself toward faith-based counseling from an intimate, personal,

engaging, and life-changing level, which is more feasible in smaller groups. In other words,

smaller groups encourage the emotional openness of the participant while providing a sense of

confidentiality for each participant and their life narratives.[320]

Class meeting areas may change from church rooms to home gatherings or visiting a park

on a nice day for comfort and inspiration. Near the end of each class, a brief discussion with

participants finalizes any unanswered questions while seeking to identify new insights or

changes experienced intrapersonally. In view, the nature of Proactive Pastoral Counseling aims to

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[319] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 15.

[320] Haugk, *Stephen Ministry*, 15.

develop Christian intrapersonal formation in believers through direct personal engagement and to pursue intrapersonal conflict in others intentionally.

3.1.5 Detailed Intervention Plan: Overview

Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) addresses cognitive issues that hinder believers from healthy relationships and Christlike ministry. By inspiring change in others through Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF), PPC strives for believers to know and grow more in Christ while teaching others how to decrease intrapersonal conflict. PPC desires to empower others to become the person God created them to become, such as men and women of God who can uphold healthy relationships, interact with the community, and lead others toward Christlikeness–to help others increase their capacity to engage themselves and others with a Christlike attitude (Phil 2:1–5).[321] In that likeness, the CIF training program employs the pastoral counselor's Integrative Perspective (IP) to help others realize that Christlike change in themselves and others is possible.

Similarly, the CIF program underscores the purpose and need for the involvement of participants and discusses how each participant might respond that can contribute to the study. Upon IRB approval, once participants agree to the terms of the CIF program outline, decide to commit to the six-week CIF training course, and sign the consent form to undergo a case study (qualitative research),[322] the training can commence. As an announcement from the podium during Sunday morning worship service, believers are encouraged to participate in the six-week

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[321] Cheng, Green, and Smith, "Development and Validation," 83.

[322] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 183.

research project. While CIF works best with no more than six participants at a time per small group, the number of small groups is not limited.

3.1.6 Qualitative Research: Triangulation Method

Because the methodology of this action research embodies the qualitative process, gathering data for efficacy must include (at a minimum) a triangulated approach to measure the effects of the intervention.[323] The triangulation method in this thesis includes 1) personal one-on-one interviews based upon 5–10 questions,[324] 2) a blended tool combining a questionnaire on the "Four Marks of a Disciple,"[325] a vocabulary list of words for each participant to express one's dynamic state,[326] a spiritual assessment using the letters of the alphabet,[327] and 3) an analysis of the narratives gathered by each individual throughout the training course. Essentially, participants record any observations that aid them in analyzing their contributions while assessing contributions made by other participants and the pastoral counselor, such as life narratives and illustrations expressed by others in the group through crosstalk and interpersonal communication.

The pastoral counselor also produces a weekly record in a minister's reflection journal, noting any participant observations or program features relevant to the study. At the end of the course, the pastoral counselor synthesizes the results of the qualitative research assessing the change each participant experienced over the six weeks, recording those changes as final

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[323] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72.

[324] See Appendix D.

[325] See Appendix A.

[326] See Appendix B.

[327] See Appendix C.

observations and placing them in the pastoral counselor's reflection journal. Although an initial interview with each participant occurs during the first class, at the end of weeks three and six, an additional one-on-one interview grants extra measurement to the spiritual growth of each participant. The final interview of the participant also helps eliminate any bias from the pastoral counselor.

3.1.7 Reflection Journal

A reflection journal shall record, keep, and display personal evaluations made by each participant to measure any Christian intrapersonal growth during the CIF course. The pastoral counselor will also register, observe, and follow any noted comments in the participants' weekly journal entries throughout the training course to help eliminate any bias from the study. PPC hopes that, along with recording any new insights realized within the group, participants might also become more self-aware of any intrapersonal change and better understand how to manage that change in the coming days.

Likewise, as group discussions transpire throughout each class, participants grow by learning how to openly express any newly discovered ideas, concepts, or self-awareness about themselves or the group.[328] As that happens, each participant records newly discovered insights in the reflection journal for future discussion or to maintain a sense of personal awareness throughout the study. The pastoral counselor also includes an analysis of the reflection journals for later use, if necessary, to help encourage that cause. However, if a participant decides to drop out during the training course, information from that participant becomes eliminated, but the process with others will continue as scheduled.

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[328] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 24. In other words, both intrapersonal and interpersonal growth are closely intertwined and mutually activating.

3.1.8 Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for evaluating each participant are as follows: one must be a Christian actively pursuing godliness, attend weekly worship services, be willing to engage in Christian intrapersonal formation, and faithfully agree to submit to the six-week training course without fail. Although being over sixty is demographic-specific to First Baptist Church of Harmony, the CIF training program encourages all Christian congregations of all ages and demographics seeking intrapersonal formation in Christlikeness to participate. Still, the course does not benefit those who seek not to pursue intrapersonal growth in Christ or are not honest about their walk with Christ, regardless of the believer's age, demographic, religion, or spiritual orientation.

With that in mind, proactive pastoral counseling can bring about awareness of personal issues from a participant commonly suppressed when among others. Sudden awareness of the unknown problems in others might also create adverse behavior and conditions while in class. Similarly, suppose a person becomes resistant and chooses not to participate, or a situation arises with someone in the group that is unseen or newly realized. In that case, a few steps might prove advantageous for the individual and the group: 1) a one-on-one conversation between the pastoral counselor and the individual outside of the class, 2) seeking to find the stumbling block in the participant–incidentally, PPC prides itself upon this premise.

At the same time, if the problem or issue is organic, such as bipolar disorder, major depression, alcohol or drug addiction struggles, and anxiety, or currently experiencing an ongoing condition that requires clinical treatment, a referral to a Christian counselor must be encouraged. PPC formulates not to address clinical issues directly or assume itself to be a therapeutic approach to replace a clinical approach; however, CIF can act as an instigator in creating new thinking toward one's clinical or addictive behavior if the issue encompasses the cognitive process.

Nonetheless, each participant must agree to perform in the group without reservation and maintain a spiritual goal of increasing one's intrapersonal world toward obtaining a more in-depth biblical perspective on life. Although life does happen and the probability of a participant dropping out is unseen, for those who seek to grow intrapersonally in Christ, the pastoral counselor anticipates at least some change toward Christlikeness in each participant.

3.2 Implementation of Intervention Design

The Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) implementation plan occurs over six weeks. The CIF training course comprises six three-hour sessions held once a week in a Christlike setting. No more than six participants compose a small group of Christians seeking to grow intrapersonally in Christ. All participants selected for the CIF training course agreed and consented by form to submit to proactive pastoral counseling for the course duration.[329]

To implement the plan, the pastoral counselor begins part one of week one of the CIF training course by introducing pastoral counseling and explaining the nature and goal of the counselor-client session. The pastoral counselor explains the relationship between participant and counselor, the purpose and efficacy of the course, and how proactive pastoral counseling can help others grow in Christ intrapersonally. Elevating one's biblical literacy, increasing one's level of spiritual discernment, decreasing intrapersonal conflict in oneself, and improving one's ability to communicate interpersonally is part of the growing process and the intended focus of proactive pastoral counseling.

Next, the pastoral counselor introduces and defines Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC)

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[329] See Appendix F.

and its ability to guide others through intrapersonal struggle by providing a four-step program for learning how to overcome intrapersonal conflict by thinking biblically. The following intervention plan highlights that process and method: 1) address the nature of the believer's intrapersonal conflict (need for intervention), 2) encourage Scripture reading and prayer for refocusing, 3) provide a biblical application of Scripture based upon the believer's need, 4) and apply the desired theoretical application required to help address any irrational thinking that might stop the participant from thinking biblically.

PPC suggests that without biblical thinking, one might suffer from continuous personal struggle and experience a lack of spiritual rest.[330] Those who are unable to overcome internal turmoil create unhealthy people, and unhealthy people create unhealthy churches. Tozer explains, "The health of the Church is in direct proportion to the health of each Christian. If the Church is to grow and be healthy, the individual Christians comprising the Church must grow spiritually."[331] Therefore, the goal of the proactive pastoral counselor is to engage and discuss the areas of intrapersonal conflict chosen among the group with hopes of eliciting any desired change in the participants throughout the six-week CIF training course.

Next, the pastoral counselor defines the Integrative Perspective (IP) and purpose within the course setting. The IP[332] of the pastoral counselor incorporates his (her) education, experience, identity, and pastoral presence to discuss and help others navigate any cognitive struggles that stem from things such as the lack of spiritual leadership, spiritual apathy among believers, lack of faith (trust in God), spiritual oppression, and the inability to communicate (lack

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[330] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 50.

[331] Tozer, *The Crucified Life*, 13.

[332] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 99.

of communication). In that process, other issues addressed include but are not limited to low self-esteem, fear of judgment and rejection, feelings of unworthiness and brokenness, pride, selfishness, and ego combined with self-centeredness, all while seeking a biblical approach for procuring Christian intrapersonal formation.

Finally, as each participant grasps the nature of pastoral counseling and its purpose, the pastoral counselor explains the four steps and how each believer participates in the Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) group. First, the group identifies the problem(s) within the FBC setting to discuss each week (corporately). Second, participants seek Scripture each week according to the situation to help them overcome one's intrapersonal conflict in the matter. Third, each participant assesses the text chosen in step two to determine its spiritual application and apply it to one's life. Fourth, employing theoretical applications such as Christian Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy help identify any irrational or adverse thinking that might inhibit one from thinking biblically. In so doing, further discussion might develop and assist others to become stronger intrapersonally by turning from self-thinking to biblical thinking to overcome intrapersonal struggles.

Ultimately, PPC focuses on helping others realize that intrapersonal conflict decreases when biblical thinking becomes the bedrock of processing one's thoughts. Likewise, Christian intrapersonal formation elevates in people when biblical thinking becomes the way one's intrapersonal world processes daily thought.[333] In other words, healing occurs in one's inner world when a Christlike focus prevails in the hearts of those who struggle to cope with their hurt.[334]

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[333] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 7.

[334] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 92–3.

3.2.1 CIF Training Course Intervention Plan

In part two of week one, the CIF training course begins with a group exercise called "Pass the Phrase." To start, the pastoral counselor writes a phrase of eight to ten words on paper, not showing them to anyone. With the words face down in front of everyone, the pastoral counselor whispers the phrase to the first participant, asking them to "pass the phrase" on to the next person in the group. Passing the phrase repeats until each person in the group hears the phrase, having the last participant reveal the phrase that passed through the group. The moral of the experiment is to see whether or not the final phrase spoken by the last participant is the exact phrase of words as the original ten-word phrase passed on by the pastoral counselor.

Suppose the first person who received the eight to ten-word phrase passed on by the pastoral counselor heard the words correctly and whispered it to the next person. Then, each person who heard it from the person before them also spoke it clearly to the person in line next to them. In that case, the phrase revealed by the last person should match the words prewritten on the paper that is face down on the table. If not, someone either spoke the phrase incorrectly or someone heard the words mistakenly, creating miscommunication. Here are some questions and thoughts each participant might undergo during this process:

- Is what I listened to the exact words written on the paper before me?

- Will I believe them?

- How would I know if what I hear is correct?

- The only thing I know is what has been told to me. Is what I have been told the truth?

- Will I believe what I hear?

- Oh, no, I hope I am not the one who messes this up!

The "Pass the Phrase" exercise illustrates how thoughts and beliefs transpire from what

one hears. At the same time, what one hears determines how one might behave. Timoney

mentions that what one hears determines the controlling factor in the Christians' thoughts,

feelings, and behaviors.[335] As emphasized in proactive pastoral counseling, words determine

how one thinks about oneself, exposing negative cognitive patterns inhibiting rational thought.

In contrast, each participant might also better understand why it is critical to process

thought and one's life narrative through Scripture (Prov 3:5–7)—biblical thinking is the

cognitive process that provides one's intrapersonal world to function rationally. Therefore, the

"Pass the Phrase" exercise highlights that what one hears intrapersonally (inner dialogue; self-

talk) does not always represent the truth, nor can one always believe in the words one uses when

conversing with oneself, mainly if words and beliefs do not stem from biblical thinking.

Overall, the exercise hopes to inspire each participant to look inside themselves, evaluate

how they produce thought, and examine what they might say about themselves and others. For

example, some may ask, "Is what I say about myself true?" and "How do I think about myself?"

Ideally, the exercise intends to provoke new thoughts and awareness in each participant, alluding

that the stories, phrases, and words people hear do not always represent the truth, extending even

to one's internal dialogues and self-talk conversations with oneself.

Oleś says, "Self-talk seems to occur in reaction to or anticipation of specific events or

circumstances, whereas inner dialogue appears to involve more reflective or contemplative kinds

of intrapersonal communication."[336] In that light, assessing what and how one thinks might help

others reframe what they believe and how they feel—to decrease intrapersonal conflict and

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[335] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 11.

[336] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 2.

provide a means for finding a cognitive resolution much sooner.[337]

Ultimately, inner conversations about personal confidence, fear of what others say, and think, and what one thinks of oneself comes to life. Becoming self-aware of intrapersonal conversations and where truth manifests allows one to make (when necessary) any newly informed decisions about the nature of their intrapersonal demeanor and spiritual well-being. Upon any heightened self-awareness, if the area of intrapersonal conflict of the participant needs changing, the pastoral counselor can help facilitate any anticipated change to a more desired setting and express any observations necessary to inspire Christlike change.[338] Macchia says, "The way of Jesus is our continual objective. But it takes daily practice to live life open-handedly in submission to the Father, to learn how to breathe deep, receive humbly, release indiscriminately, and respond intentionally in the power of the Spirit."[339] Once the exercise ends, the pastoral counselor begins the class assessment.

3.2.2 Class Assessment

In the class assessment stage in part two of week one, the group takes a few moments to decide explicitly on the areas of internal strife that hinder Christian intrapersonal formation. Specific to this study, five areas (five weeks) of intrapersonal conflict chosen by the CIF small group are as follows: lack of spiritual leadership within FBC, spiritual apathy among believers, lack of faith (trust in God) within the church, spiritual oppression between each other, and the inability of believers at FBC to communicate (lack of communication) interpersonally with each

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[337] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 97.

[338] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 88.

[339] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 153.

other. Each week, one topic highlights the discussion area while each participant comes closer to finding an intrapersonal resolution per the problem discussed each week.

Next, the pastoral counselor employs a blended tool to measure where participants stand intrapersonally within themselves and as believers. Distributed to each participant are the "Four Marks of a Disciple" questionnaire (see Appendix A), a "feelings" vocabulary list (see Appendix B), and a theological assessment to determine one's relationship with Christ using the letters of the alphabet (see Appendix C). While each participant undergoes the evaluation in class, the pastoral counselor takes aside one person at a time and performs a one-on-one interview until all assessments and interviews have finished. Each interview should take no more than five to ten minutes.

After completing the interviews and before the class ends in week one, the proactive pastoral counselor sets up the following week's study by reminding the group about the problem the class previously chose to investigate in week two. The time between classes allows each participant to seek Scripture, learn more about spiritual applications, and identify irrational thinking that inhibits one from seeking Scripture for intrapersonal resolve. However, although the intended focus selected for each week's class determines how discussions within the group might transpire, the PPC process remains the same throughout weeks two through six, regardless of how long it takes to complete the class curriculum. With these things in mind, the following four steps describe the PPC process for procuring Christian intrapersonal formation.

3.2.3 CIF Step One: Address the Problem

In weeks two through six, the class begins by "passing the phrase" around the group. As mentioned, this exercise prompts each participant to focus on one's cognitive process and get in tune as a group. After the exercise, the pastoral counselor begins the small group conversation by

defining the nature of the problem, and in this case, week two starts by discussing intrapersonal conflict caused by the "Lack of Spiritual Leadership" at FBC. As the discussion develops, each participant adds to the debate by responding with a personal narrative of how the problem directly relates to each believer and why it is a problem to them—emotional and cognitive disruptions.

Eventually, trust in the group develops, and participants begin to crosstalk more steadily; interpersonal communication helps reveal the intrapersonal world of the participants involved in the discussion.[340] As each believer increases participation in the conversation, others gain new perspectives on their life narratives by hearing the perceptions of others with the same problem. The hope is that each group member might learn how to reframe intrapersonal conflict as it relates directly to their life narrative to understand better how to manage and overcome inner chaos in the present and the future.

Additionally, for each group member to better understand the workings of the problem, the pastoral counselor helps guide each participant's narrative (Integrative Perspective) toward biblical thinking while softly addressing any hurts along the way. Depending on the energy and attitude in the group, the pastoral counselor can dive deeper into the narrative of one participant to bring about the depth of the struggle or maintain the discussion by holding to a group perspective. If the discussion does not produce any participation or a participant experiences an adverse reaction, encouraging a future conversation on the topic (maybe privately or in a smaller group) at a later time might become most appropriate. Nevertheless, each participant recorded insights or necessary comments from the discussion, and the pastoral counselor made any observations essential for the study.

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[340] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 14.

3.2.4 CIF Step Two: Seek Scripture

After the group has had time to examine the problem during the week, turning to Scripture next becomes most important for learning how to cope better. Depending upon the nature of the concern and the level of need for intervention each week, the pastoral counselor might provide some relative Scripture to initiate intrapersonal and interpersonal movement within the group.

For example, because each believer's issues entail identity, such as experiencing a lack of confidence, personal rejection, and religious judgment from others, the pastoral counselor might consider turning to Scripture on God's lovingkindness that can help one begin thinking biblically. This approach might help one better understand intrapersonal conflict regarding rejection and identity struggles. The Psalms provide deep encouragement for those who struggle with confidence, self-identity, and trust, as do many stories throughout the Bible, providing spiritual food to help others grow toward Christlikeness.

In this example, one might consider Psalm 118 for discussion. Psalm 118 talks about God's lovingkindness (among other things) and how taking refuge in the Lord is better "than to trust in man" (Ps 118:8). By reading verses from the Bible such as this, each participant might come to realize there is more than one way to think about things (self-thinking vs. thinking biblically), allowing each believer an opportunity to think about themselves in a new light (identified in God's love), which provides a reformed view of how oneself is perceived. The more each believer seeks out Scripture for thinking through intrapersonal conflict and applies Scripture and Christian constructs for controlling one's intrapersonal functioning, the more one might experience a decrease in cognitive conflict and procure CIF.[341] To help make that happen,

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[341] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 71.

the pastoral counselor moves to help explain the Scripture's purpose and application for each participant.

3.2.5 CIF Step Three: Biblical Application

God desires all men "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim 2:4). As such, for things to change in one's intrapersonal world, the participant must submit to the control of biblical thinking and its application, believe in the Scripture, and act on it (look, think, act).[342] Incidentally, this construct defines Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) and how Christian intrapersonal formation develops in the believer.

In the present case, one way to apply the spiritual application within Psalm 118:8 is to understand how thoughts control how one behaves.[343] With this in mind, Paul recommends believers to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5), knowing that God, through Christ, provides all the identity one could ever imagine needing, let alone resting in the trust God provides so mightily. Just thinking biblically instead of secularly about the power and lovingkindness of God and that He considers each person "more valuable than many sparrows" (Matt 10:31) magnifies the sense of one's worth and creates new thinking, giving a person a new identity and confidence in Christ.

Furthermore, submitting one's thinking to Christ gives that person not only a sense of new life but also gives one's life a new meaning altogether (2 Cor 5:17). Once the intrapersonal life of a person becomes new from biblical thinking, Christian intrapersonal formation becomes the norm and manifests in the daily walk of humility in front of the Lord. James writes, "In

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[342] Ernest, T. Stringer, and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2020), 123.

[343] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 11.

humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save you" (Jas 1:21).

Learning the spiritual applications found within Scripture and then applying those in one's life are designed to help others overcome intrapersonal struggles. Understanding the power of reading and using Scripture in one's life is the key to developing thinking with power—biblical thinking is thinking with the Holy Spirit's power and provides rest from intrapersonal conflict (Matt 11:28–30). Biblical applications derived from reading the Scripture also presume daily submission to spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and godly meditation. At the same time, the Holy Spirit affects the hearts and minds of the believers' walk in Christ to help reduce future possibilities of inner turmoil.[344]

3.2.6 CIF Step Four: Theoretical Application

In the final step, the pastoral counselor assesses the conversations relayed throughout the class and provides the group with additional insights motivated by a theoretical perspective. Applying the appropriate therapeutic applications (previously mentioned), the pastoral counselor asks, "Are there any irrational thoughts or adverse thinking that stop you from thinking biblically?" The pastoral counselor then redirects the group to understand the purpose of the illustration from the "pass the phrase" exercise at the beginning of the class.

The lesson in step four hopes for others to grasp that what a person hears and tells themselves does not always represent the truth, especially when looking intrapersonally, and can experience change by becoming aware of who they are in Christ. By integrating the pastoral counselor's perspective and counseling therapies, such as Christian Cognitive Therapy and Narrative Therapy, the proactive pastoral counselor might bring a sense of renewal to the story

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[344] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 54.

and narratives of each participant and procure Christian intrapersonal formation.

Near the end of each class, each participant reflects on the class discussion by providing a final journal entry. At the same time, the pastoral counselor briefs the group on the problem for the following week and the study to come—each participant notes any new intrapersonal movement or insights the individual or group might discuss to prepare for the next week. Writing down all observations and pertinent comments in the reflection journal becomes part of the study; steps one through four are repeated for weeks two through six. The course ends once all assessments, interviews, and journals have recorded the data to complete the research.

3.2.7 Conclusion

The problem at FBC stems from believers' unwillingness to submit to proactive pastoral counseling and address the ongoing spiritual issues that inhibit them from Christian intrapersonal formation. Issues addressed by believers include the lack of spiritual leadership, lack of trust in God, inability to communicate interpersonally, spiritual oppression, and spiritual apathy. PPC engages believers to help them overcome intrapersonal conflict by implementing a four-step process that includes each participant to 1) identify the problem, 2) seek Scripture, 3) apply the spiritual application found in Scripture, 4) and employ therapeutic approaches such as Christian Cognitive Therapy and Narrative Therapy to address any irrational thinking that might hinder a believer from thinking biblically. The PPC approach procures Christian intrapersonal formation while helping believers decrease cognitive conflict.

Unlike Pastoral Counseling (reactive counseling), Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) intentionally seeks out intrapersonal conflict (proactive counseling) in others. PPC provokes believers to revisit and reframe internal struggles by increasing biblical literacy and encouraging the practice of daily spiritual disciplines. Like pastoral counseling, PPC provides a Christlike

atmosphere and safe space for others to come together and communicate heart-to-heart without fear of judgment. By building trust through the counselor-client relationship and others in the group, intrapersonal and interpersonal communication develops, increasing one's ability to understand oneself and others more healthily. In so doing, each believer experiences Christian intrapersonal formation, inner conflict decreases in each participant, and believers become more confident to walk in the ways of Christ.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Over six weeks, six members at FBC voluntarily submitted to the Christian Intrapersonal

Formation (CIF) training course implemented by Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC), a

Christlike Integrative Therapeutic (CIT). A Christian environment set the stage for each week's

proactive pastoral counseling sessions. This chapter discusses the nature of each week and those

results.

In week one, a blended tool was used to assess each member before the program began

(see Appendices A–D). Weeks two through six examined the intrapersonal struggles generated by

the problem and how each believer was affected. Weekly sessions concentrated on five of the

most common church-related issues (one problem each week) pressing on the hearts and minds

of believers at FBC (see weeks two through six). The results of the four-step implementation of

the CIF process are provided in the summary. All responses reflect both individual and group

reactions collectively.

4.1 Collective Results

4.1.1 Study Overview

Proactive Pastoral Counseling seeks to help decrease intrapersonal conflict in others

while developing Christian intrapersonal formation. Wilkins says, "Counseling from a Christian

perspective covers a variety of problems for people: helping people deal with severe loss,

conflict resolution, stress management or elimination, and other issues that plague

individuals."[345] In this light, the CIF program succeeded on many levels.

Each week during the CIF program, participants' self-reflection in Christ grew (Eph

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[345] Wilkins, "Educating the Congregation," 51.

4:22–4). One might suggest a moral shift occurred within the group, and the awareness of one's spiritual ethics heightened. Leaf suggests, "A person's moral nature results from God impressing His moral standards on their soul."[346] Participants became more aware they were not alone in their struggle with faith at FBC.

Gathering in a Christian small group setting, participants began to develop trust within the group.[347] As each member lessened one's condemnation in the heart and became more confident (as in 1 John 3:21), internal struggles began surfacing, and participants started sharing them without fear of rejection or judgment—spiritual confidence increased individually and as a group. Interestingly, participants learned truthful insights as to why people felt like they did about their church-related issues(s).

The essence of the Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training program began taking shape in steps two and three of the program. Whereas step one addressed the nature of the problem, steps two and three encouraged the participant to seek God's Word for overall spiritual support. While referring to 2 Timothy 3:14–7, the pastoral counselor pointed out the importance of reading the Bible and understanding its underlying spiritual applications, especially when approaching each week's problem. As a result, participants learned to see their stories from a biblical perspective and not just from their own (Prov 3:5–6), and new insights about their life narratives (past and present) and future spiritual goals began to take shape (as described in Luke 9:23).

Subsequently, the high-spirited approach from the pastoral counselor accentuated the small-group discussions—his pastoral presence and identity were evident. As more trust

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[346] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 42.

[347] Haugk, *Stephen's Ministry*, 15.

developed, group members opened up with each other, and a sense of synergy developed. Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner mention, "Group cohesiveness is a dynamic and bilateral process involving various intrapersonal and interpersonal processes."[348]

In step four, participants began realizing their stories of woes, suffering, and complaints had value. Although step four addressed irrational thinking, each participant's struggle helped bring about the life struggle in others. As such, by listening to the testimonies of others, members gained new insights about the accuracy of their internal processes. Eubanks notes, "Maybe their internal guidance system isn't as broken as they feared."[349]

From one perspective, CIF teaches others to avoid secular thinking when assessing intrapersonal struggles. Instead, CIF explored each week's problem from a biblical perspective. Participants began to understand the importance of the counselor-client relationship as a spiritual discipline, not just a therapy session. Encouraging therapy as a spiritual discipline might inspire believers to seek and regain deep transformation of persons and communities.[350]

Although it took some time, participants noticed themselves shifting spiritually throughout the program—they began to see growth in each other. Essentially, CIF's biblical approach to coping with intrapersonal conflict spawned a "transformation of the mind" in believers (Rom 12:2). This new life suggests that when believers start paying attention to what goes into their minds, they can stop the cognitive cycle of disintegration and embrace the acts of confession and repentance that lead to redemption. In this, one might better understand why Paul

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[348] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 14.

[349] Eubanks, *How We Relate*, 210.

[350] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 97.

links regeneration with the healing, or integration, of the mind.[351]

Overall, the CIF training course emphasized how to approach internal issues better and those embedded in the FBC community. The CIF four-step training program supplied the tools[352] others needed to cope better (Christian formation)[353] with intrapersonal struggles, increase biblical literacy, and grow toward Christlikeness. CIF also helped participants better understand how to manage ongoing personal struggles such as low self-esteem and self-worth and the fear of rejection. Each participant gained new spiritual truths about their lives while better understanding the reason behind their intrapersonal struggles.

At the end of the course, it was discovered that each participant achieved an elevated sense of awareness about their internal narratives. At the same time, by applying spiritual disciplines more intentionally, believers experienced a more profound, relational knowing of self and God, which is inherently transformational. As a result, what emerges is the best version of ourselves, held in deep intimacy with the Triune God.[354] Each believer envisioned their life and struggles with a new hope (1 Pet 1:3–6). The participants left the CIF training program feeling more biblically literate, less conflicted internally and inspired with a new confidence in their walk with Christ.

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[351] Curt Thompon, *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections Between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that Can Transform Your Life and Relationships* (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2010), 184.

[352] Harris suggests that while the Bible can and should be used in the educational process, it is not sufficient to merely say read or study your Bible. He comments, "Curriculums are valuable tools that have been used throughout history and are helpful in intentionally equipping others." See Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 81.

[353] Setran and Wilhoit note, "Character formation could be accomplished in a moment by 'a right adjustment,' and that adjustment did not require education or ongoing training for its achievement. It tended to de-emphasize formational practices and instead to emphasize other ministries like revival services, preaching, and directive mentoring." See Setran and Wilhoit, "Christian Education," 532.

[354] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 93.

4.1.2 Demographic Backgrounds

The demographic information of each member is intended only to describe the general

nature of each group member. Age, gender, vocation, marital status, family life, personal

struggles, intrapersonal management skills, and personal characteristics ranging from early

childhood to adulthood are mentioned. Although some discussion on drug and alcohol abuse was

had, it was ascertained not to be a component of the study as no participant struggled with those

addictions in the past or at the time of this program.

4.1.2.1 Participant #1 (P1): Steve

Steve (P1) is a sixty-four-year-old Caucasian male raised on a farm by his parents in

Honesdale, PA. After his high school graduation, P1 earned a certificate in auto mechanics at

college, later working as a propane truck driver and in "receiving" at a paper mill. Steve has been

married twice, has two children, and describes himself as a loner, shy, sensitive to others, and a

"momma's boy."

Growing up on the farm, Steve struggled with making healthy connections and was often

bullied by his peers. Similarly, when asked about his relationship with his father, P1 responded,

"My dad was a tough guy, and his discipline was rough." As a result, P1 never learned how to

manage his emotions and developed anger as a way to cope with his struggles.

Steve's childhood "bully" struggles permeated into his married life. He began feeling

adverse opposition from his wife, noting, "She was always against me." After reaching a point of

irreconcilability in the relationship, they divorced, and Steve began to struggle with depression

and anxiety. After voluntarily seeking professional care, Steve was diagnosed with Chronic

Depressive Disorder (CDD),[355] where he has been managing his condition with assorted

medications for twenty-five years. Steve is now retired and disabled from multiple health issues

but serves faithfully as an usher and greeter at FBC.

4.1.2.2 Participant #2 (P2): Clarice

Clarice (P2) is a sixty-seven-year-old Caucasian female raised by her parents in

Brooklyn, NY. Clarice attended a Catholic school for girls as a youth and later graduated from

High School there. At twenty-one, Clarice married and began working as a secretary at an

insurance firm—she later became a "stay-at-home mom" raising her two boys. While at home,

P2 earned an associate degree in nursing. Clarice later became an adult caregiver, working in

multiple genres of caregiving (nursing, geriatrics, CNA) throughout her career.

Growing up in Brooklyn, Clarice struggled with making friends and maintaining healthy

relationships. When asked about her family togetherness, she said, "I became defiant early on

because my parents never let me do anything." In her rebellion, P2 turned to herself for guidance

and purposely inhibited others from connecting with her inwardly (including her parents). P2's

inability to cope produced irrational thinking—"I will never meet my parents' expectations,"

using blame as a defense mechanism to protect herself from present or future hurt. P2 became

distant from others, never learning how to build healthy relationships.

As a result, Clarice struggled with self-judgmentalism, low self-esteem, and the inability

to connect with others. Having no luck with self-help books to deal with her intrapersonal

conflict, P2 sought help from a psychiatrist but was unsuccessful. Eventually, P2 was

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[355] With this condition, one suffers from continuous episodes of sadness, emptiness, and the lack of motivation. Low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness are common. Mayo Clinic, "Diseases and Conditions: Persistent Depressive Disorder," accessed January 29, 2024, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseasesconditions/persistent-depressive-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20350929.

hospitalized twice for PDD[356] and now struggles with Seasonal Affective Disorder.[357] Though P2

has been taking medications for thirty-four years to manage her condition(s), Clarice maintains

an active membership at FBC with her second husband, serving in church hospitality for nearly

twenty years.

4.1.2.3 Participant #3 (P3): Sara

Sara (P3), born in Louisville, KY, is a sixty-four-year-old Caucasian female raised by her

mom in Harmony, ME. After graduating high school, P3 married and raised three children while

staying home. Twenty-nine years later, her husband had an affair, and they separated. With no

possibility of reconciling the relationship, they decided to separate permanently but stayed

married for the siblings' sake. She describes herself as quiet, shy, introverted, girly-girl,

non-athletic, who loves reading.

Sara struggled throughout her marriage to overcome the emptiness she felt from leaving

her father as a child. Although her confidence needed work and she had few friends, Sara learned

to adapt at home alone in private. In many cases, Sara confronted her issues (early on) using

drugs and alcohol—she had no one to turn to for support. She still struggles with confidence

issues but has learned how to manage her feelings of emptiness. Interestingly, Sara has no

addictions, no medical or clinical conditions, and takes no medications.

Despite all her struggles, Sara maintains faithful involvement with FBC, serving within

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[356] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 97.

[357] Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is feeling hopeless and worthless with no energy or interest in doing things. In some cases, suicidal tendencies manifest during certain seasons. Mayo Clinic, "Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)," accessed February 9, 2024, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20364651.

various ministries, such as hospitality and church administration. Sara has been a steadfast believer (Christian) for thirty-five years.

4.1.2.4 Participant #4 (P4): Jasper

Jasper (P4) is a thirty-year-old Native American male born and raised by his parents in Baltimore, MD. After graduating high school, P4 attended college but soon dropped out and was married, finding work as an electrician with his father. A few years later, he and his wife moved to Maine, where they became the owner-operators of a small-town general store. P4 describes himself as obnoxious, loud, annoying, abrasive, hard-working, and kind-hearted, and he frequently can be funny.

Jasper's greatest family struggle was maintaining a healthy relationship with his mother. From early on, P4 sought a connection with his mother but was restricted due to his fear of her and how she might react to him. As a result, P4 struggles with reaching out to others, which he recognizes stems from his inability to cope with inner conflict. His philosophy of coping: "I just ignore it." Jasper also struggles with anger, depression, anxiety, and self-hate issues.

Similarly, P4 struggles with low self-esteem and an inability to confront internal conflict. Although P4 is not taking any medications currently, he was diagnosed with ADHD as a youth (3rd – 8th grades). He had, in the past, also been prescribed a Marijuana card to manage his anger, depression, and anxiety. Regardless of his past issues, P4 is now an active member at FBC and serves as an associate pastor (Youth Pastor). P4 has been a believer for fourteen years and strives to grow his business in rural Maine.

4.1.2.5 Participant #5 (P5): Kelly

Kelly (P5) is a thirty-one-year-old Caucasian female born and raised by her mom in

Baltimore, MD. After graduating High School, P5 began her educational advancement and attended college for nursing, where she eventually met her future husband and was married. After earning her RN status and working in the NICU for five years, P5 moved to Maine and became the owner of a small-town convenience store. She describes herself as kind, compassionate, emotional, intelligent, empathetic, and hard-working.

As a child, Kelly struggled emotionally, first with the loss of her father and then with bullying. P5 developed trust issues, closed herself off from others, and withdrew from those around her, making it hard to make friends. Without a therapeutic option to help her, P5 dove inwardly to cope with her conflict. P5 is still greatly affected by her past and struggles even more now since her mom has passed. Although she is taking no medications at this time, P5 has been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and has been on and off prescription medications for ten years.

P5 exhibits compassionate care toward others daily. P5 has served in multiple ministry settings, such as helping people without transportation, kids' ministries, and providing moral support to those in need. P5 has been a believer (Christian) for twenty years and continues working as a nurse where there is a need.

4.1.2.6 Participant #6 (P6): Edith

Edith (P6) is a sixty-five-year-old Caucasian female born and raised by her parents in Springfield, MA. After graduating high school, P6 married but got a divorce after thirteen years, keeping her two children with her. In that process, Edith realized she wanted to be a caregiver, and at thirty-five, she began her caregiving career working with adults with disabilities. Twenty-five years later, P6 left her job due to COVID-19 but remains available for private care when needed. P6 describes herself as witty, funny, generous to a fault, struggling with trust issues,

loyal to friends and family, and selfless.

As a youth, P6 struggled deeply due to the limited ability she had to spend time with her dad (work-related). She was also unable to connect with her mother and was bullied at school. As a result, she developed trust issues, withdrew from others, and became dependent upon her grandmother to help her manage the struggles she endured with her mom and life. When asked, "How do you cope with the struggles that come into your life?" she said, "Anything I am not able to deal with, I don't think or speak about. I bury it." P6 has been diagnosed with depression and anxiety and currently takes medications for her condition(s).

Despite her struggles with trust, P6 actively supports her community by volunteering at the local food bank and providing caregiving services (cooking, cleaning, ministry of presence) to people who need physical care (stroke victims, disabled). P6 manages her intrapersonal conflict by making home quilts, crocheting, and embroidery. Edith is a believer (Christian) of fifty-six years and lives a widowed life with her friends and family in Maine.

4.2 Data Analysis

For six weeks, Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) implemented its Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training course for six actively involved Christian believers. In those sessions, five of the most prevalent problems experienced at FBC were discussed, evaluated, and analyzed through each participant's personal testimonies and life narratives. As Sensing states, "The participants in the project are often the most valuable sources of evaluation for your project . . . Your expertise as the minister, researcher, and active participant will be the filter of all the data."[358]

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[358] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 151.

The results of the CIF program emphasize PPC is possible for those (Christians and non-Christians) willing to submit to Christian intrapersonal formation. Incidentally, PPC and the CIF training programs are not exclusive to FBC but intend to reach other congregations and communities. As Hill notes, "The DMIN action research project researcher should be a co-participant among a specific community to investigate and enable transformative modes of action to be introduced to and infused into said community."[359] In that light, the study encompassed a case-study approach using a blended tool[360] to measure Christian intrapersonal formation. The following section details the combined results of employing those tools.

4.2.1.1 Initial Assessment: One-on-one Interview

Each participant was asked the following five questions in a one-on-one interview in week one of class:

- How would you describe your walk with Christ?
- How often during the week do you submit to spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible and prayer?
- How do you feel about the "You" in you right now?
- Why did you become a participant in this study?
- What do you seek to learn from the CIF training course?

Answers provided by each participant varied and were based on the nature of each question.

For example, question one asks the participant to define their present relationship status with Christ. In this case, responses were recorded using three categories: "Close, OK, or Needs Work." Question two asks how often spiritual disciplines are practiced weekly, notated by "1-3/week, 4-6/week, or every day." Question three is specific to how one might feel toward

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[359] Marcy Hill, "Integrative Narrative Therapy in Counseling: Experiencing Strengthened Spiritual Resiliency: A Phenomenological Study" (DMin Thesis Project, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2020), 64.

[360] See Appendices A, B, C, and D.

oneself, such as "I feel good about me, needs work, bad about me, I don't know." Stokes says, "A Christian counselor could assert a Christian accommodative treatment like intradisciplinary integration as useful for effecting outcomes that are good psychologically but are even better spiritually for Christian counselees."[361]

Question four narrows down the individuals' purpose for taking the class, categorizing their responses as "Increase Self-Awareness, Strengthen Coping Skills, Grow in Christ." Finally, question five provides three categories to determine what each individual seeks to accomplish by taking the course: decrease intrapersonal struggles, increase biblical literacy, and grow in Christlikeness. Fig. 1 below represents each participant's response to the five one-on-one interview questions.

Fig. 1—Initial Interview

Question One:	Close	OK	Needs Work
Steve	X		
Clarice		X	
Sara	X		
Jasper			X
Kelly			X
Edith			X

(P for prayer, B for Bible,
J for journal)

Question Two:	1-3/week	4-6/week	Everyday
Steve	B		P
Clarice		B	P
Sara			B, P, J
Jasper	P		
Kelly	B	P	
Edith	B, P		

Question Three:	Good	Needs Work	Bad
Steve		X	

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361 Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 40.

Clarice	X	
Sara	X	
Jasper		X
Kelly	X	
Edith		X

Question Four:	Increase Self-Awareness	Strengthen Coping Skills	Grow In Christ
Steve		X	
Clarice	X		
Sara	X		
Jasper			X
Kelly	X		
Edith			X

Question Five:	Decrease Intrapersonal Struggles	Increase Biblical Literacy	Pursue Christ
Steve		X	
Clarice	X		
Sara	X		
Jasper			X
Kelly	X		
Edith			X

4.2.1.2 Initial Assessment: Feelings Vocabulary List

Following the one-on-one interview, a feelings vocabulary list was provided for each participant to select words that might evaluate their emotional well-being and represent their present feeling. In other words, each participant was asked to pick a word that best described their emotional state at the beginning and end of class. Comparatively, an emotion graph is provided each week to display the shift of emotion each participant experienced while taking the CIF course. Fig. 2 below provides an example.

Fig. 2–Week One Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Achy	Unfocused

Clarice	Impatient	Relaxed
Sara	Interested	Excited
Jasper	Anxious	Motivated
Kelly	Tired	Happy
Edith	Curious	Uplifted

4.2.1.3 Initial Assessment: Spiritual Evaluation

The initial spiritual evaluation worksheet provided by the counselor assessed the

understanding of theological concepts and themes, biblical terminology awareness, and how one

might define one's relationship with Christ. Some suggest there is a benefit for counselor

educators to outline mechanisms that might procure personal growth.[362] Spiritual aptitude was

measured by word choice per letter prompt and the ability to fill in all letter prompts.

For example, one might choose "Christian" as the word choice for the letter C prompt (C

– Christian). However, the word "Crucified" would be a "best fit" (C – Crucified) scenario as it

focuses more on Christ and not the individual. In some cases, more than one word was a best-fit

solution (S – Sacrifice, Salvation, Servant). As an example, the "A" prompt was provided for

each participant (Atonement). A best-fit solution is noted in parenthesis (see Appendix E).

4.2.1.4 Four Marks of a Disciple Questionnaire

The biblical persona of each participant was measured by examining four marks of a

biblical disciple. The questionnaire produced each participant's understanding of how they might

compare to a biblical disciple. The four marks included Servant, Evangelist, Worshiper, and

Missionary.

Per each mark, participants assessed seven statements, comparing themselves by

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[362] Yanhong, Zhu, and Turner, "Counselor Trainees," 25–6.

choosing a rating of one to five (see Appendix A). Fig. 4 below gives a display of what that looks

like.

Fig. 4—Missionary Mark

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I believe in the work of missions			X		
I accept people for who they are				X	
I think of others more than myself			X		

Upon completion, a tally was taken using a Likert scale (35 points possible per category), where

each participant's highest and lowest marks were recorded. A high score indicated the mark most

closely related to the participant, whereas a low score represented the least in comparison. As an

example, see Fig. 5.

Fig. 5—Four Marks of a Disciple Questionnaire

Four Marks of a Disciple:	Servant	Evangelist	Worshiper	Missionary
Sara		X – Low	X - High	
Jasper	X – Low			X – High

4.2.2 CIF Program: Weeks Two through Six

In week one, the CIF small group selected the five most pressing issues affecting their

faith and spiritual well-being at FBC. Each participant expressed the problem and why the

situation should be addressed. In weeks two through six, those problems were approached by

implementing PPC and the CIF four-step program.

First, the week's problem was defined, intrapersonal struggles were examined, and the effect of those struggles was noted. Second, Scripture was sought for study to understand how to combat the issue. Third, once Scripture had been reviewed, the pastoral counselor helped each individual better understand the content and its spiritual applications for administering to the problem. Fourth, therapeutic approaches such as Christian cognitive behavior, cognitive behavior, and narrative therapy were used to identify psychological inhibitors (triggers) that might keep one from thinking biblically.

In so doing, each week's sessions produced a high volume of responses. Each specific response was recorded, analyzed, and tallied collectively, composing a "group response." The group response, then, is the accumulation of the most commonly stated reactions from each individual in the group. Data collected stemmed from various questions, such as, "What is the problem? Why is the problem a problem for the participant? What is the intrapersonal struggle most associated with the problem? How does the intrapersonal struggle affect each participant?"

In the same way, in steps two and three, each participant responded biblically to the problem. The responses were tallied and analyzed, producing a group response outlining the PPC approach and how CIF manifests. In contrast, step four identifies adverse thinking that might inhibit one from applying biblical thinking and displays the responses from a group perspective. The participant's feelings are shown to highlight any change of emotion that might have occurred throughout each class.

4.2.2.1 Week Two: Problem #1 - Lack of Spiritual Leadership

Problem one looked at FBC's "Lack of Spiritual Leadership." Men at FBC who were given ecclesiastical authority failed to lead the congregation spiritually. Jasper mentioned, "The men are more focused on the rules than growing in Christ." Kelly and Clarice felt unfairly

treated, stating, "I did not belong in the church clique." Edith experienced trust issues with other members, bringing back negative memories from her past experiences with other churches. Ultimately, the group was not learning spiritual things because the men who led FBC were religion-minded instead of Spirit-filled.[363]

The group felt neglected, ununified, distant, and disconnected from others, deflating any personal desire to serve others. Essentially, the desire to be fed spiritually led to disappointment. They also struggled with internal notions such as, "No one cares about me," "Why go to church if my needs are not being met," and more specifically, "What is wrong with me?" Sara was overcome with frustration and was unable to cope with apathetic people.

Furthermore, Steve and Clarice experienced an increase in their depression. Like Jasper and Kelly, they stopped attending church weekly, feeling unworthy of participating in the services. Sara felt alone in her walk with Christ and developed negative coping skills toward others. Edith lost trust in others and felt unequipped to build new relationships. The group suffered from decreased spiritual growth and fought to maintain their Christian walk.

However, the group's thinking renewed when viewing the problem from a biblical perspective. Clarice recognized her life focus was in the wrong place and refocused her spiritual motivations (Luke 9:23). Steve experienced a decrease in his depression by casting all his cares on the Lord (1 Pet 5:7). Jasper and Kelly recognized the same as Sara, noting permanent resolve to intrapersonal struggle is to turn to God for understanding (Prov 3:5–6). Edith proclaimed, "God is my refuge, not man" (Ps 118:8), and became enlightened (See Fig. 6 for individual emotions).

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[363] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 40.

Fig. 6—Week Two Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Restless	Focused
Clarice	Refreshed	Sad
Sara	Curious	Interested
Jasper	Eager	Determined
Kelly	Tired	Lifted
Edith	Exhausted	Worthy

4.2.2.2 Week Three: Problem #2 – Spiritual Apathy

Week three discussed "Spiritual Apathy," wherein participants viewed FBC as lacking interest, enthusiasm, or concern over spiritual growth and Christian outreach. Steve and Jasper acknowledged people's behavior as a social activity, stating, "They are all just going through the motions: no one cares!" Clarice described the church as having "no life: no real sense of fellowship." Sara mentioned, "No one is ministry-minded. There is no love of the Spirit. No one is sensitive to His leading." Kelly and Edith refrained from serving altogether, fearing that asking others for ministry help might produce personal rejection. In short, no one wanted to do anything spiritual.

Spiritual apathy at FBC left all the participants feeling ununified, unsatisfied, and distant. Although the group's desire for ministry and fellowship was great, they struggled with the lack of interest in others to build spiritual relationships. The group noted, "Fellowship at FBC seems to extend only to a monthly potluck." Sara asked, "Where is Christ?"

Some told themselves they were the problem. Others felt unworthy of themselves or not good enough, and anxiety and depression increased. Some group members no longer desired to attend FBC, even after years of attendance. They felt rejected, struggled with Christian friendships, and found no one interested in ministry work. The church was disconnected, and those spiritually discerning were set aside.

Addressing the situation biblically, the minds of each participant realized an approach that had not yet been taken. The group recognized that they were all thinking in the flesh, not the Spirit. Steve suggested focusing on living in the Spirit (Gal 5:16–8). Jasper commented, "If your mind is on the flesh, then you have no interest in doing things for the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). Edith mentioned, "People who are apathetic spiritually will not listen to God's Word." The group recognized that paying attention to God's Word keeps one from thinking where others fail. They were all moved (See Fig. 7 for individual emotions).

Fig. 7—Week Three Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Peaceful	Excellent
Clarice	Serene	Refreshed
Sara	Relaxed	Content
Jasper	Anxious	Motivated
Kelly	Interested	Relaxed
Edith	Confident	Worthy

4.2.2.3 Week Four: Problem #3 – Lack of Faith

The book of Hebrews states, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). FBC struggles greatly with practicing faith in that they place their trust not in God but in themselves. In other words, FBC submits to religious motivations compelled by self-preservation, holding firmly to a preference-driven church.[364] Steve commented, "My walk with Christ started to suffer."

The greatest struggle the group experienced manifested in the desire to be taught how to have more faith in their lives. Unfortunately, the heart of the church centered its worship around self-pursuits instead of being other-focused, so building faith in others was not a concept for

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[364] Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 29.

FBC. The group began questioning their faith, and their spiritual growth became stunted. As such, Sara asked, "How can I grow in faith if faith is not something on the table to eat?"

Additionally, adverse thinking among the group increased. Steve felt FBC tried to manipulate him, making him think he was wrong about the whole faith idea—tried telling him something other than the truth. Some of the group thought they were the problem in that they needed to know more about biblical things. Others questioned, "Why am I here?" whereas others expressed that they were the cause of the problem. Ultimately, they were confused about faith and did not have anyone to help them understand how to manage faith issues.

Turning to Scripture, participants began to see the struggle with faith they had been experiencing all along was the very thing that was helping them grow in faith (Acts 20:22). In that, the group realized others who are supposed to demonstrate faith might not even have faith themselves. They noted, "One can know Jesus but never come into faith with Him. In short, if no one teaches faith, they don't have it."

The CIF process helped remind the group that faith comes from hearing God's Word (Rom 10:17). Kelly said, "Right! Although someone else might not have faith or teach how to have faith, we grow by seeking God, not man." Sara exclaimed, "I get it now! Fight the faithless with faith" (Eph 6:10-17; see Fig. 8 for individual emotions).

Fig. 8—Week Four Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Peaceful	Excellent
Clarice	Serene	Refreshed
Sara	Interested	Agitated
Jasper	Anxious	Motivated
Kelly	Interested	Relaxed
Edith	Confident	Worthy

4.2.2.4 Week Five: Problem #4 – Spiritual Oppression

The Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) small group defined spiritual oppression as "an outside force being forced upon another person." They understood feelings of being oppressed associated with being weighed down spiritually, overburdened emotionally, and having a constant feeling of being controlled. In other words, spiritual oppression is what happens when people grow their own sense of power, comfort, and security at the expense of others. Steve described spiritual oppression as "constant satanic attacks on the mind."

While discussing the problem, Jasper commented, "Spiritual oppression is damaging. It is the worst of kinds, and some people never get over being hurt by those who call themselves Christians." The group responded, "I feel I am always in a spiritual fight, with myself, for myself." Clarice said, "It is hard to get up emotionally when constantly beaten spiritually. My depression already takes hold of me enough." Some believed they would never be good enough, stating, "How can I be approved if they are always oppressing me?" The group realized they were stuck in themselves, "living in the FBC void."

The group grew in frustration daily, depression and anxiety heightened, and they withdrew from other members of FBC. Not only that, participants stopped reading their Bibles, failed to attend church faithfully, and looked elsewhere for spiritual help. Spiritual decline progressed, and the group suffered in their thinking. Fighting adverse cognition, the group slowly began changing their inner dialogues, saying, "I'm not adequate, not worthy enough for this place. I am not equipped to deal with this kind of spiritual warfare."

Turning to Scripture helped bring the group's thinking "out of the FBC void." They recognized they had turned to themselves for help as though they were losing spiritual strength. After a review of Scripture, Clarice noted the power of God in her, saying, "The Lord will renew

my strength" (Isa 40:31). Edith realized after all her years in church what "He is my Rock and stronghold" meant (Ps 62:1–2).

Overall, the group was strengthened spiritually. They were reminded that strength for the battle comes from the power only God gives. Realizing that power comes by standing firm on God's Word, the group responded, "Placing God's Word in your mind while on the battlefield gives you the strength to fight against the forces of spiritual oppression. Let's try that!" (2 Cor 10:4–5; see Fig. 9 for individual emotions).

Fig. 9—Week Five Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Excited	Energized
Clarice	Rattled	Hopeful
Sara	Disappointed	Regretful
Jasper	Worried	Encouraged
Kelly	Displaced	Interested
Edith	Hopeful	Calm

4.2.2.5 Week Six: Problem #5 – Inability to Communicate

The inability to communicate within FBC's walls holds many perspectives. The CIF small group agrees that the failure to communicate is possibly the most spiritually damaging of all the problems discussed in the past six weeks. Specifically, members of FBC neglect or refuse face-to-face conversations with ministry-minded individuals; the "Maine" way is not spiritual. Nonetheless, the lack of communication is not that communication at FBC does not exist; it exists to create stories between others that do not exist, creating false truth narratives that destroy the good character of others (see Neh 6:1–8).

FBC members "pride up" when confronted with accountability issues and backtalk those holding them spiritually accountable. In other words, they spread gossip to shame and defame those holding them spiritually responsible (1 Tim 4:1–2).

In perspective, the CIF group agreed that the communication problem at FBC is spiritual but stems from Puritan roots—a religiously enhanced, culturally generated curse.[365] Here is a list of perspectives the CIF small group noted when facing their intrapersonal struggles with the "inability to communicate" problem at FBC:

- FBC fears communicating directly with others, for they will be discovered for who they really are: non-Christians.

- FBC lacks interpersonal communication with others because face-to-face conversations would reveal their guilt from talking behind your back: gossipers, liars, and all those filled with the spirit of deceit.

- Speaking spiritual words and thoughts goes beyond the biblical understanding at FBC. FBC does not understand spiritual things, so they cannot communicate them to spiritual people. They gossip behind your back instead. It's the only alternative to communicate.

- FBC rejects what they don't want to hear, even biblically: "They want what they want…"

- If it does not matter to them, it has no meaning; perhaps this is why there is no ministry at FBC; ministry requires interpersonal communication and desire for others, not gossip and spiritual apathy.

- FBC fears evangelism because they do not know what to say; they are religiously motivated, not Spiritually minded.

- FBC struggles with communication because they have never been taught how to communicate with outsiders; a cultural shell protects them by shunning people before getting to know them. Interestingly, the lack of communication might also suggest their inability to understand spiritual things; growing requires learning.

- FBC members are selfishness-driven, with no concern for anyone or anything but the preservation of themselves. The Maine slogan is this: "If you are not from Maine, you are 'From Away.' If you are 'from away,' you are not one of us, even the pastor. We are the boss, not God!"

Similarly, the group also mentioned that people native to Maine generally communicate differently than people from other places. For example, "go around the barn" refers to passing

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[365] Pilsbury and Allen, *History of Methodism*, 5.

around a story behind a person's back, going back and forth until everyone agrees on what story to believe—a mobbish mentality. "Going around the barn" occurs so everyone not "from away" can participate in what story everyone will hold as truth. Unfortunately, this process stirs up deceit, spreading gossip and mistruths that people believe (see the "pass the phrase" exercise in week one). As a result, no one hears the truth, and those who represent the truth are shunned. Sara commented, "Maybe this is why no one communicates directly: fear of being shunned."

Because gossip supersedes the truth at FBC, fellowship between members sometimes causes a significant rift, causing a wider disconnect that produces more gossip. Kelly expressed, "They are not true. People put on fake smiles, but deep down inside, they mean something else. I feel unwelcome." As with Edith, trusting others became an everyday issue. She said, "I no longer wanted to communicate for fear of how others might twist what I say, then turn it around as something I never said to put me down while making themselves look better."

Overall, participants became stressed, mad, anxious, and felt alone. The group often took matters into their own hands for their own protection. Although they struggled with thinking ill of others, they desired to connect deep down.

For Clarice and Steve, they struggled with their depression so much that they stopped attending regularly. Many in the group stopped reading their Bibles. The entire CIF group noted, "It affected me personally and deeply. I wanted to retaliate with harm." Jasper, Kelly, and Edith said, "I am not biblically literate to handle this as a Christian." Some thought, "Maybe I am what they say about me, even though they did not say it to me directly."

The inability to communicate also created negative motivations with other members. Sara felt compelled to address everyone's wrongs daily. Steve wanted to shoot the windows out at the church. Clarice lost herself and wanted nothing to do with any of them. Edith fought with her

trust issues, and Kelly struggled to overcome her emotions. The problem with the inability to communicate created an inability for others to see the truth, and each participant struggled immensely.

However, when turning to Scripture, the life in each participant was stirred. Steve notes, "You can walk through the talk when you have the talk (God's Words) to walk" (Luke 10:19). Jasper was encouraged by his study of James 1:19, which impresses, "Be quick to hear, and slow to speak." Edith found new Scripture and application: "I never thought to just dwell on God's Word, or consider it honorable, pure, and lovely. It changes things for me (Phil 4:8)." The problem with the lack of communication affected everyone deeply. Still, they became empowered by God's Word and moved forward (See Fig. 10 for individual emotions).

Fig. 10—Week Six Individual Emotions

Participant Feeling:	Beginning of Class	End of Class
Steve	Frustrated	Fantastic
Clarice	Content	Content
Sara	Lively	Joyful
Jasper	Exhausted	Encouraged
Kelly	Stressed	Lifted
Edith	Inspired	Worthy

4.2.3.1 Final Assessment: One-on-one Interview

At the end of the CIF training class, each participant was asked five follow-up questions in a one-on-one interview to measure growth (if any) from the initial interview in week one. They are:

- Since your initial interview, how has your relationship with Christ changed?
- What spiritual disciplines have become steadier in your life because of CIF?
- How do you feel about the "You" in you right now?
- What new insights or personal awareness have you experienced from participating in this study?
- How has CIF helped you in your Christian walk?

Answers provided by each participant varied and were based on the nature of each question (See

Fig. 11).

Fig. 11—Final Interview

Question One:	Significantly	Some Change	Not So Much
Steve	X		
Clarice	X		
Sara	X		
Jasper	X		
Kelly		X	
Edith	X		

(P for prayer, B for Bible,
J for journal)

Question Two:	1-3/week	4-6/week	Everyday
Steve		B	P
Clarice		B	P
Sara			B, P, J
Jasper	B	P	
Kelly	B		P
Edith		B, P	

Question Three:	Good	Needs Work	Bad
Steve	X		
Clarice	X		
Sara	X		
Jasper	X		
Kelly	X		
Edith	X		

Question Four:	Increase Self-Awareness	Strengthen Coping Skills	Grow In Christ
Steve	X	X	X
Clarice	X	X	X
Sara	X	X	X
Jasper	X	X	X
Kelly	X	X	X
Edith	X	X	X

Question Five:	Decrease Intrapersonal Struggles	Increase Biblical Literacy	Increase Christlikeness
Steve	X	X	X
Clarice	X		
Sara	X	X	X
Jasper	X		
Kelly	X	X	X
Edith	X	X	X

4.2.3.2 Final Assessment: Spiritual Evaluation

The initial spiritual evaluation worksheet provided by the counselor assessed the understanding of theological concepts and themes, biblical terminology awareness, and how one might define one's relationship with Christ. The final assessment provides the same worksheet to assess changes in one's ability to evaluate things from a biblical perspective. The worksheet was given to each participant at the end of the CIF training course. The results are defined more clearly in the next section. For a quick overall view, see Appendix F.

4.3 Summary of Results

This portion of chapter four provides an overall tally of responses from the participants who submitted to the CIF program. The proactive pastoral counselor used a blended tool (See Appendices A–D) and weekly journal entries from class discussions to measure Christian intrapersonal formation. The following final assessments summarize the findings procured by the CIF training course.

4.3.1 Four Marks of a Disciple

The Four Marks of a Disciple questionnaire was used to define the view of each participant when compared to the traits of a biblical disciple. Four marks were used: Servant, Evangelist, Worshipper, and Missionary. However, there is no right or wrong answer; the tool

depicts how each individual perceives themselves compared to a biblical perspective. High scoring represents the most closely related, whereas low scoring represents the most unrelated to each mark. An overall tally was performed to note the high and low marks collectively within the group.

For example, four participants related most to the worshiper mark, four unrelated to the missionary mark, and one participant related most to a missionary. One participant noted themselves relating most to a servant and one low. Edith was the only servant in the group, and evangelism was unrelated to most.

As such, sixty-seven percent of the CIF group identified as worshippers, sixty-seven percent identified themselves as unrelated to the mark of a missionary, and there were no evangelists. The group admits they lack servanthood and evangelistic pursuits but agrees their spiritual motivations are reflected in their heart for worship (See Fig. 12).

Fig. 12—Four Marks of a Disciple Questionnaire

Four Marks of a Disciple:	Servant	Evangelist	Worshiper	Missionary
Steve			X - High	X - Low
Clarice			X - High	X - Low
Sara		X – Low	X - High	
Jasper	X – Low			X – High
Kelly			X – High	X - Low
Edith	X - High			X - Low

4.3.2 Feelings Vocabulary List

Each week, participants were provided a vocabulary list of feelings to help them identify their emotions. The list of feelings was designed for participants to recognize, label, and record them to help identify any emotional changes resulting from the class. Similarly, the list's purpose was to help participants understand better how personal emotions surface, what triggers their feelings, and how to approach them without judgment. Changes in feelings help others identify

any new nature that might arise among the participants.

Timoney suggests thoughts, feelings, and behaviors represent the newness of one's nature: they are the controlling factor.[366] Although all participants naturally experienced a change of feelings during class each week (a brief synopsis will be provided), lists of feelings for weeks one and six will be used to demonstrate the emotional shift in each individual and the group (see Fig. 13 below).

In week one, most participants felt anxious, impatient, and tired, whereas others in the CIF group expressed curiosity and interest in the class. Throughout the CIF program, participants' feelings ranged from sad, agitated, exhausted, anxious, displaced, and worried about life, whereas other times, participants felt hopeful, confident, relaxed, and eager to learn more. At the end of class in week six, a final list of feelings was recorded and compared to week one's feelings (See Fig. 13).

Fig. 13—Final Assessment of Feelings

Participant Feeling:	Week One	Week Six
Steve	Achy	Fantastic
Clarice	Impatient	Content
Sara	Interested	Joyful
Jasper	Anxious	Encouraged
Kelly	Tired	Lifted
Edith	Curious	Worthy

Given this, each participant experienced an overall sense of well-being. By increasing one's biblical literacy and strengthening one's coping mechanisms with biblical terms and concepts, each participant's feelings changed for the better. Therefore, from a "feelings" perspective, Christian intrapersonal formation occurred in one hundred percent of individuals who submitted to take the CIF training program.

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[366] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 11.

4.3.3 Spiritual Assessment

The initial spiritual evaluation worksheet provided by the counselor assessed the understanding of theological concepts and themes, biblical terminology awareness, and how one might define one's relationship with Christ. The final spiritual assessment uses the same worksheet to compare changes within those parameters—any positive change represents Christian intrapersonal formation.

Spiritual aptitude was measured by two standards: the nature of the selected word per letter prompt and the individual's ability to fill in all letter prompts. CIF in each individual was evaluated by completion rate, the accuracy of word selection, and the number of times a "best-fit" word was used. On some level, CIF was experienced by each participant during this assessment. The following account provides those results (See Appendix F for specific word selections).

For example, Steve completed the initial assessment with a 64% completion rate, whereas his completion rate was 100% in week six. Steve's initial accuracy rate was 60%, whereas his accuracy rate rose to 76% in week six. He also selected six best-fit words initially and seven best-fit words in the final assessment. Steve's completion rate increased by 36%, his accuracy rate improved by 16%, and his best-fit word choice increased by one (See Fig. 14).

Fig. 14—Steve's Spiritual Assessment

Steve	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	64% complete	100%	+36%
	60% accurate	76%	+16%
		Best-Fit Word	
	6	7	+1

Clarice completed the initial assessment with an 88% completion rate, whereas her completion rate was 100% in week six. Her initial accuracy rate was 52%, whereas her accuracy rate rose to 80% in week six. Clarice also selected five best-fit words initially and thirteen best-fit words in the final assessment. Clarice's completion rate increased by 12%, her accuracy rate improved by 28%, and her best-fit word choice increased by eight (See Fig. 15).

Fig. 15—Clarice Spiritual Assessment

Clarice	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	88% complete	100%	+12%
	52% accurate	80%	+28%
		Best-Fit Word	
	5	13	+8

Sara completed the initial assessment with an 84% completion rate, whereas her completion rate was 100% in week six. Her initial accuracy rate was 60%, whereas her accuracy rate rose to 76% in week six. Sara also selected six best-fit words initially and eleven best-fit words in the final assessment. Sara's completion rate increased by 16%, her accuracy rate improved by 16%, and her best-fit word choice increased by five (See Fig. 16).

Fig. 16—Sara's Spiritual Assessment

Sara	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	84% complete	100%	+16%
	60% accurate	76%	+16%
		Best-Fit Word	
	6	11	+5

Jasper completed the initial assessment with an 88% completion rate, whereas his completion rate was 100% in week six. Jasper's initial accuracy rate was 60%, whereas his accuracy rate rose to 96% in week six. He also selected five best-fit words initially and seven

best-fit words in the final assessment. Jasper's completion rate increased by 8%, his accuracy rate improved by 20%, and his best-fit word choice increased by two (See Fig. 17 on the next page).

Fig. 17—Jasper's Spiritual Assessment

Jasper	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	88% complete	96%	+8%
	56% accurate	76%	+20%
		Best-Fit Word	
	5	7	+2

Kelly completed the initial assessment with a 44% completion rate, whereas her completion rate was 84% in week six. Her initial accuracy rate was 32%, whereas her accuracy rate rose to 64% in week six. Kelly also selected two best-fit words initially and seven best-fit words in the final assessment. Kelly's completion rate increased by 40%, her accuracy rate improved by 32%, and her best-fit word choice increased by five (See Figure 18).

Fig. 18—Kelly's Spiritual Assessment

Kelly	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	44% complete	88%	+44%
	32% accurate	64%	+32%
		Best-Fit Word	
	2	5	+3

Edith completed the initial assessment with a 48% completion rate, whereas her completion rate was 88% in week six. Her initial accuracy rate was 64%, whereas her accuracy rate rose to 72% in week six. Edith also selected two best-fit words initially and seven best-fit words in the final assessment. Edith's completion rate increased by 40%, her accuracy rate improved by 8%, and her best-fit word choice increased by five (See Fig. 19).

Fig. 19—Edith's Spiritual Assessment

Edith	Initial Assessment	Final Assessment	+/-
	48% complete	88%	+40%
	64% accurate	72%	+8%
		Best-Fit Word	
	2	7	+5

4.3.4 Final Assessment: One-on-One Interview

One-on-one interviews are testimonies identifying where one might recognize oneself spiritually. Questions are formulated to elicit what the participant desires to learn, how they would like to grow, and what can be done to become more like Christ. At the end of the CIF training course, a final one-on-one interview with five questions was given and compared to the initial responses in week one. Each question in the final interview was related to the questions in week one, providing an opportunity to compose an overall comparison.

In question one, participants were asked to define their walk with Christ as "Good, Okay, Needs Work." Initially, 16% felt okay, 33% felt close, and 50% felt their walk with Christ needed work. The final interview asked if any change was made and to reflect that change by selecting "Significant, Some Change, Not So Much." Comparatively, the results show that 100% of the CIF group experienced Christian intrapersonal formation, noting 83% expressed a significant change from week one, while 17% experienced some change. In short, all CIF group members grew closer in their relationship to Christ.

Question two asked about the use and frequency of spiritual disciplines in one's life. Bible reading, prayer, and journaling were three disciplines displayed. As a group, 50% of participants recognized an increase in their Bible reading, 33% maintained regular routines, whereas 16% began reading their Bible weekly. Some participants witnessed a 33% increase in

their prayer life, whereas 83% experienced a deeper prayer life altogether.

Question three asked how the participant felt about their person. Initially, 50% showed a negative attitude toward oneself, whereas 50% of participants felt good about themselves. After implementing the CIF program, 100% of the group felt good about themselves, boosting overall morale by 50%. The final "feelings list" results also reflect a similar outcome (See Fig. 13).

Question four asked why the group member participated in the CIF training class. Three categories of measurement were provided: Increase self-awareness, Strengthen Coping Skills, and Increase Christlikeness. Initially, 50% of participants took the class to increase their self-awareness, 16% desired to improve their coping skills, and 33% sought to grow in Christ. The results show each participant grew in Christian intrapersonal formation, 50% in self-awareness, 83% in strengthening coping skills, and 67% in one's relationship with Christ. Essentially, all participants significantly grew in all categories.

Question five asked the participants why they participated in the CIF training class. Three categories of measurement were also provided in this question: Decrease Intrapersonal Conflict, Increase Biblical Literacy, and Increase Christlikeness. Initially, 50% of participants took the class to decrease intrapersonal conflict, 16% desired to increase biblical literacy, and 33% sought to grow in Christ. The results reveal that 100% of the class experienced CIF, increasing biblical literacy by 67%, decreasing intrapersonal conflict in 100% of the participants, and the group's relationship with Christ improved by 67%. Essentially, each participant grew significantly in all categories.

4.3.5 Counselor's Notes

Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC), a Christian Integrative Therapeutic (CIT),

implemented its Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training course for six active believers and was successful on all levels. Participants initially displayed curiosity and eagerness, yet after learning how to manage one's world of feelings and emotions more appropriately, participants left the class feeling worthy and encouraged. Participants grew in the ability to assess life problems through increasing biblical literacy, leading to a decrease in intrapersonal conflict, an increase in self-awareness, and stronger coping skills while growing closer to Christ.

The CIF program worked exceptionally well for adult learners and young adults alike. It was interactive, personal, and enlightening, and everyone had an opportunity to learn more about themselves in a Christian light. Working the program in a small group forum, allowing participants to address their intrapersonal struggles, worked best to procure Christian intrapersonal formation. In contrast, the program did not experience significant difficulties or negative concerns.

Instead, Christian intrapersonal formation occurred in each individual in the CIF small group. The outline and approach of the CIF program were a great fit for meeting people right where they were, intrapersonally and interpersonally. As such, the counselor's notes intend to mention some things that worked, a few program challenges, and recommendations for future use.

First, providing a four-step approach to dealing with intrapersonal struggles helped participants better understand the importance of accurately 1) recognizing their issues, 2) accepting their problem with the problem at hand, 3) understanding the struggle and effect, and 4) learning how to manage those conflicts from a biblical perspective. In so doing, most participants began realizing that steps one through four of the CIF training program acted as a spiritual discipline one could apply anytime when encountering inner turmoil. More than that,

the group also praised the proactive pastoral counselor's highly-spirited Integrative Perspective (IP), calling him inspiring, and was deemed one of the most significant elements that brought success to the program.

For example, the group described the pastoral counselor as encouraging, compassionate, and sensitive and always seemed to create a sense of trust and compassion within the CIF group. In other words, the integrity of the counselor within the counselor-client relationship paved the way for others to open up, feel safe, and share their life narratives transparently. The following is a short list of comments from the CIF group about the counselor: teacher enthusiasm was excellent, a great educator, speaks clearly, uses the whole Bible, teaches spiritual applications well, can explain the biblical language in a way for lay persons to understand, and is a great dynamic speaker.

In the final class, one participant mentioned, "Listening to the conflict in others made my eyes open to other people's struggles, which is important to me." Another said, "I have never known any counseling to be like this." Each participant grew in understanding the purpose of pastoral counseling, how not to judge others too soon, and the importance of being open with themselves and others.

The blended tool was an excellent fit for measuring Christian intrapersonal formation in the course. The group responded to the overall process well, enjoyed learning more about themselves spiritually, and blossomed in the group when they felt more secure. The blended tool helped participants identify their spiritual, psychological, and emotional states in a way that created positive responses rather than negative ones. Essentially, the blended tool assessed the overall well-being of each participant while teaching others how to grow toward Christ-likeness.

Challenges occurred throughout the program, but not with the program itself. Participants

experienced commitment issues, such as studying the Scripture each week, being prepared and on time, and feeling good about sharing what they learned about themselves. Most participants had to discover how to overcome how they felt about themselves while trying to overcome their emotions. In short, it took some time for participants to understand the connection between feelings and emotions and how they relate to others during intrapersonal conflict.

The greatest challenge was to get participants to think biblically. The purpose of the CIF program was to help others decrease intrapersonal conflict by increasing one's biblical literacy. By avoiding secular thinking to allow biblical thinking to take over, inner chaos decreases, coping skills strengthen, and self-awareness becomes more stable. Participants finally realized that creating a discipline to help recognize, accept, and manage daily intrapersonal conflict decreases inner chaos, and Christian intrapersonal formation occurs.

Finally, there are two recommendations for future use: provide a formal, preliminary class (Introduction to Proactive Pastoral Counseling) to help participants become fully aware of the nature of the class and the commitment required, and extend the time of each class to allow additional conversations to help build and maintain trust in the group sooner. Although this program works for those who believe in Christ, it is recommended for use in helping in other counseling capacities.

Overall, the CIF small group learned through experiencing God's Word firsthand that one can walk more confidently in Christ and know where to turn for help when struggling spiritually. Ultimately, one can walk closer to Christ daily through reading His Word and practicing spiritual disciplines more frequently. In so doing, one might realize God is working within them, helping them discern things more spiritually and allowing others to determine things more often with a godly perspective. As a result, Christian intrapersonal formation will become routine, and

growing in Christ will become evident to those who walk in the dark.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As Paul describes in 1 Timothy 2:4, God desires everyone to know the truth and be in a relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ. To better understand the truth, one must begin a spiritually disciplined pursuit by learning to read God's Word, understand God's Word, and apply His Word to one's intrapersonal world. As such, biblical literacy empowers others with the means for conflict resolution, finding rest "in Christ" rather than "in the world" (Matt 11:28–3). As a result, the intrapersonal world of the believer intentionally shifts toward Christlikeness, and internal conflict begins to decrease.[367]

In contrast, Christian intrapersonal formation naturally develops when biblical thinking supersedes secular thinking.[368] For example, employing spiritual disciplines found only in the Bible as a daily routine in life manifests spiritual maturity, keeping one at bay from worldly pursuits. In 1 John 2:15, John emphasizes, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Therefore, according to the research in this thesis, Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) and the Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training program, and Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:2, *To change a culture is to change the way it thinks* is a trustworthy statement.

Unfortunately, the problem is that FBC congregants who profess Christianity are too often religion-minded, preference-driven, judgmental, selfish, ritualistic, and self-preserving, do not display Christian behavior, and oppose the teaching of the Spirit.[369] Specifically, FBC members had too often been unaware when they wronged others, do not understand things of the

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[367] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 11.

[368] Eubanks, *How We Relate,* 167.

[369] Pilsbury and Allen, *History of Methodism in Maine*, 4.

Spirit, do not seek Christlike change, nor have they been willing to submit to proactive pastoral counseling to help them become mature Christians, just as Paul expresses in his second letter to the church in Corinth. In that likeness, and according to Paul's proclamation in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Be reconciled to God," the concern of this writer for FBC is this: without the Spirit to discern what dictates sin or the need for forgiveness, FBC might never experience Christian intrapersonal formation or the likeness of new life.[370]

Similarly, without the desire to make changes toward Christlikeness, FBC might miss out on God's intentions for each other and the purpose of their presence in the Harmony community. Acts 2:46–7 shows that daily, people broke bread from house to house, ate meals together, expressed sincerity of heart—heart-to-heart conversations (nothing fake)—and praised God communally. Thus, a significant spiritual shift at FBC must emerge to create a culture of Christlike discernment.[371]

Therefore, the impetus behind PPC is to help parishioners of FBC and all persons and congregations seeking CIF to reexamine themselves (pre-existing life narratives, to self-reflect in Christ) and the spirit in which their mind operates (Eph 4:23). The hope of Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) is to assist others to change what they think by helping them change the words they use to process thought. As Paul exhorts in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"—to cultivate a shift from secular and irrational thinking to thinking biblically.

Many agree that recognizing one's thought process helps one understand how to resolve

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[370] Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 21–3.

[371] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 126.

intrapersonal conflict—applying the correct label to inner turmoil (PPC).[372] From this perspective, and based on this study's results, believers willing to submit to Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) will likely experience spiritual transformation and decrease conflict inwardly. PPC and the CIF program have shown that participants who take their internal strife and "reflect in Christ" realize, more often than not, that intrapersonal conflict stems from the words a person chooses to fuel their cognitive process. In short, words are the culprit of intrapersonal conflict.[373]

Therefore, PPC assumes that intrapersonal conflict decreases from increased spiritually enhanced biblical thinking. As Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 2:12–3, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."

Pursuing a Christlike mindset sets the stage for yielding fruit from within a Christian culture, making CIF possible. In Proverbs 18:21, King Solomon says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Keeping that in mind, PPC guides believers into understanding new insights gained from thinking biblically, such as applying and employing those insights for greater spiritual well-being. Ultimately, PPC's overarching goal is to affect the believers' intrapersonal world so that conflict inwardly might be reduced and Christian intrapersonal formation increased.[374]

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[372] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 71.

[373] McDonald and Walker, "Qualitative Research on Self-Transcendence in Older Adults," 46.

[374] See Fig. 22 for an in-class example of the CIF four-step process.

5.1 Research Implications

This study examined whether or not intrapersonal conflict in the participant(s) might decrease, and Christian intrapersonal formation increases by replacing secular thinking with biblical thinking. The findings reveal a positive outcome in the program's efficacy for addressing intrapersonal conflict and its ability to increase the spiritual well-being of others. In contrast, those without faith or humility might experience growth limitations. That said, the research demonstrates that those willing to submit to proactive pastoral counseling will encounter a change in cognitive health and experience authentic Christian intrapersonal formation.

Specifically, CIF helped participants recognize and openly discuss the truth behind their intrapersonal conflict.[375] In a religious culture filled with staunch judgmentalism, safe places to speak openly about deeply profound life occurrences are rare. Essentially, PPC broke through the intolerant spirit of the FBC culture with the CIF four-step program by providing participants with an authentic Christian atmosphere to open up about themselves—a place of trust. The CIF small group environment encouraged participants to express old and new truths about their life narratives, and participants grew spiritually from witnessing the testimonies of others.[376] Ultimately, the CIF program allowed others to confront themselves in a way that helped them express and manage internal conflict while safely addressing their feelings and cognitive disruptions more boldly.

In so doing, the CIF program also assisted participants in underlying areas associated with cognitive dissonance. Positive side effects included increased participants' ability to trust

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[375] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 44.

[376] The initial and final interview questions approach each participant from this perspective. In both one-on-one interviews, question three asks, "Who is the 'YOU' in you that you see right now?"

others, improved interpersonal communication and self-esteem, inner dialogues shifted from negative to positive self-talk, sharpened ability to discern spiritual things, and fewer worries about what others think manifested throughout the program. Empirical results conclude that the CIF program facilitated by the Christian Integrative Therapeutic CIT)—Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC)—helped participants increase biblical literacy, elevate self-awareness, strengthen coping skills, develop a more profound relationship with Christ, and lessen intrapersonal conflict.

5.1.1 Biblical Literacy

One of the most significant aspects of proactive pastoral counseling and the Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) program is its ability to guide others toward biblical literacy. In steps two and three of the CIF program, "Seek Scripture" and "Scriptural Application," participants become challenged to find cognitive resolve with biblical applications, such as striving for godliness. Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7, "Have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."

Unfortunately, the secular world does not consider God or the Bible a valid resource for resolving spiritual matters. As James points out in James 1:4, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Yet, herein lies the uniqueness of the CIF training program: CIF relies solely on the Bible and its spiritual applications for resolving intrapersonal conflict, producing spiritual growth and maturity.[377]

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[377] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 45–6.

Leaf suggests that a believer's changed cognitive faculties enable others to formulate a belief system about life based upon knowing Jesus Christ personally, as revealed in the Bible.[378] Specifically, understanding the biblical Jesus and walking with Him is distinct and must be realized.[379] Therefore, reading the Bible increases one's ability to understand spiritual things (relationship with Christ) only if the person believes what it says and follows its instructions. In Luke 9:23–4, Jesus says, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." In short, biblical literacy and CIF are complementary and do not perform outside the other.[380]

Similarly, the essential component of biblical literacy requires a relationship with Christ and acknowledgment of the work of the Holy Spirit.[381] Biblical literacy, then, evolves from Holy Spirit power,[382] empowering one with a deeper meaning behind the Bible story, the ability to discern and apply biblical applications according to God's will for a person's life, and the desire for a deeper relationship with Christ. Morley notes that the gospel of Jesus Christ calls believers to repent, have faith daily, and pursue spiritual disciplines as a grateful response to God's grace.[383] That said, biblical literacy manifests as one gets closer to becoming what God's Word says.

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[378] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 51.

[379] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 80.

[380] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 15.

[381] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 9.

[382] God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit provide people with what they need to live, move, and exist (Acts 17:28), and without Him, neither man nor his words would exist or contain any power.

[383] Morley, *A Man's Guide*, 190.

True believers seek nothing less than God's authority and spiritual instructions to rule their world.[384] Essentially, God's Word is His power to man (enforced by the Holy Spirit), enabling believers peace of mind. Knowing these things reflects one's biblical literacy, spiritual discernment, and ability to find cognitive resolve. Unfortunately, internal interference hinders one's ability to gain Christlike perspectives on how to cope with struggle. Fortunately, CIF intervenes to help others address that conflict.

To do that, Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC) conducts small group meetings in a safe space to facilitate any previous or present hurt or confusion a believer might have or presently experience. The Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) training program is a non-judgmental approach within a Christlike atmosphere to encourage others to share what they might be experiencing internally. PPC finds intrapersonal conflict is often lessened by speaking up and reading His Word aloud to others.[385] Additionally, the more one becomes biblically literate, the more CIF occurs, and the more intrapersonal conflict decreases—thus, the importance of PPC and CIF training and applications.

Ultimately, biblical literacy allows the believer to know God's heart more profoundly, which CIF promotes, opening the door for the believer's heart and mind to be transformed by His Word (Rom 12:2).

5.1.2 Self Awareness

PPC is an intentional act—pastoral counseling "on wheels"—to engage in a counselor-client relationship with active believers striving for Christlikeness. Using the spiritual

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[384] Harris, "Christocentric Discipleship," 17.

[385] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 16.

infrastructure of the CIF program, PPC inspired others to become more aware of themselves in a manner that produced positive results when looking at one's life, such as realizing new narratives about old stories and people. Some instances proved that although most of the participants in the CIF small group knew each other before the program began, participants learned new things about each other, sometimes changing their perceptions altogether—negative to compassionately positive. Proactive pastoral counseling proved the CIF training program promotes Christlike self-awareness when implementing an intrapersonal process geared toward biblical literacy and applying spiritual disciplines.[386]

Generally, self-awareness is the ability to see oneself for who they are, incorporating an understanding of one's personality, values, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.[387] However, self-awareness in Christ is understood best as one paying attention to the presence of God in one's life. Macchia mentions that choosing to live together with intentionality and a growing awareness of God's presence, power, protection, and peace demands a culture change—general self-awareness to self-awareness in Christ.[388] PPC's utilization of the CIF program brings that culture to life, making self-awareness possible in participants willing to allow God to work.[389]

Through PPC, self-awareness rose by one hundred percent among the participants. Each participant gained newfound perspectives on God and how to apply God's Word in one's mind, resulting from participants' increased biblical literacy. Induced by the pastoral counselor's Integrative Perspective (IP), believers became more transparent with themselves because God

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[386] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 176.

[387] Macchia, *The Discerning Life*, 162.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Hessert, *Introduction to Christianity*, 311.

became to them more than just a reading lesson taken from the Bible: God became an authentic, living, and intimate being in the participants' lives. Incidentally, when participants began to leave at the end of class, some commented on their anticipation for the following week.

While CIF aided in increasing one's frequency of reading the Bible and prayer, PPC also facilitated an understanding of how to apply spiritual disciplines and the purpose of those applications in one's life. One of the most significant realizations the group experienced was that as much as there is a process to growing spiritually, one also naturally employs a cognitive process (default thinking) to inhibit Christlike growth. Step four of the CIF program, "Address Irrational Thinking," successfully helped others identify adverse thought processes that inhibit one from pursuing Christlikeness.

For example, when new believers or undiscipled Christians begin thinking about themselves in Christ and moving toward Christlike pursuits, they often struggle to avoid old ways of thinking—biblical thinking takes time. Instead of saying, "I am wonderfully made," one might say to themselves, "I am not worthy of God in my life." From this perspective, participants realized that intrapersonal growth stems from understanding one's negative thought process just as much as acknowledging one's positive process, demonstrating one's pursuit of spiritual maturity. Rhodes comments that spiritual maturity happens when the power of the Holy Spirit begins to transform an individual into becoming more Christlike.[390]

In other words, self-awareness alone can often be limited in scope and hinder Christian intrapersonal formation.[391] PPC, however, breaks down the limitations of self-thinking by addressing the words and thoughts one uses that deter them from Christlike thoughts. As a result,

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[390] Rhodes, "Discipling Leadership," 12.

[391] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 4.

participants discovered the origin of their negative thought processes and irrational thinking (adverse thought). In so doing, participants learned to rethink who they are in Christ (not in self), allowing Christlike thinking to move them forward rather than selfish thought (Rom 12:2). In essence, PPC brings biblical thinking vs. self-thinking to focus with this statement: "The most extraordinary sense of self-awareness is what comes to mind when a person thinks about God."[392]

Fig. 19—Biblical Thinking vs. Self Thinking (Col 3:1-2)
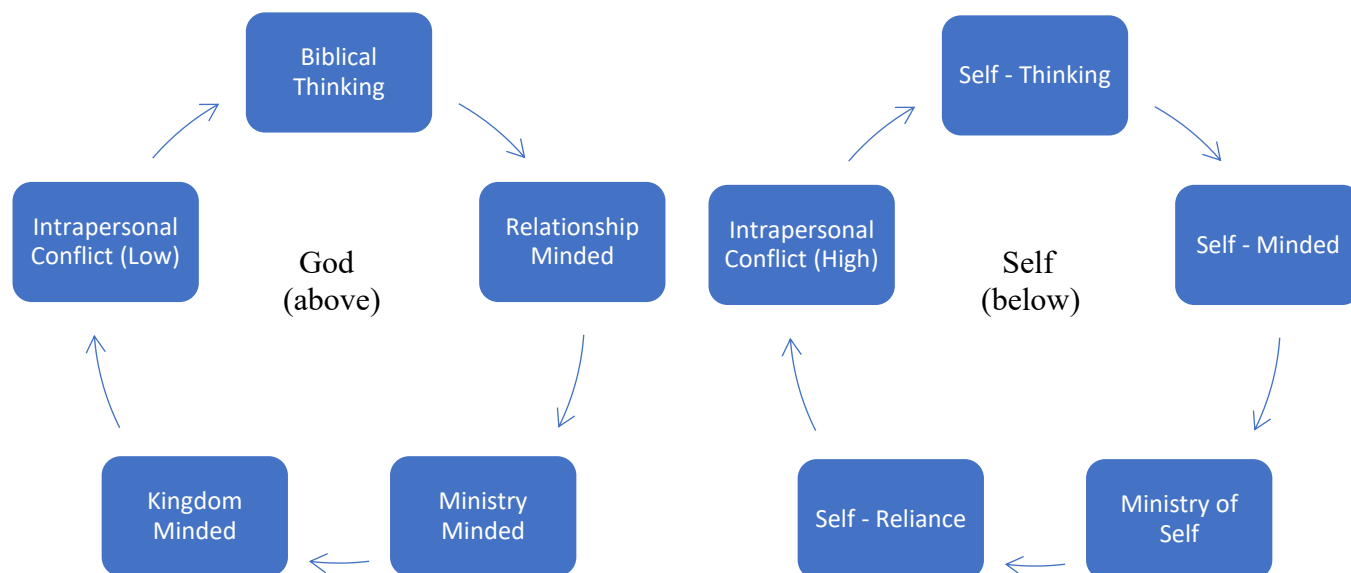
5.1.3 Coping Skills

PPC recognizes coping skills as the necessary components to aid others in managing one's emotions and feelings correctly.[393] By implementing the CIF program, PPC improved the intrapersonal abilities of participants by allowing open discussions on the feelings, thoughts, and

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[392] A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (Harperone, 1978), 1.

[393] Stokes, "Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength," 26.

emotions of oneself and others experiencing the same struggle. For example, in weeks two through six of the CIF program, participants shared with others for the first time their experiences with the five most common spiritual disruptions within the FBC community (Spiritual Leadership, Spiritual Apathy, Lack of Faith, Spiritual Oppression, and Inability to Communicate). As a result, participants learned to recognize, accept, and manage new insights regarding past and present life narratives and beliefs toward themselves and others within the FBC culture and community.

Before PPC, members who submitted to the CIF program struggled to manage their spiritual health because there was no one at FBC available or spiritually equipped to help them cope with church-related or spiritual issues, as no pastoral counseling was available. Subsequently, the CIF small group collectively agreed that the spiritual leaders at FBC enforced the belief that following church rules and adhering to the religious status quo (preference-driven church) was more important than following Christlikeness.[394] The small group noted they could not cope with particular church-related issues because religion-minded men pursued control of others instead of leading others to spiritual health led by the Spirit.[395]

After implementing the CIF program, each participant gained new vantage points, providing alternatives to approach their problems differently. Participants began setting new boundaries,[396] such as learning to say no to irrational thinking, stopping believing what others

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[394] Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 29.

[395] Marshall and Newheiser, *When Words Matter Most*, 40.

[396] Marina Bergman-Pyykkönen, Ritva Engeström, and Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski, "Identities in Motion – Boundary-Crossing Learning from an Intrapersonal Perspective, *Culture and Social Interaction* 44 (2024): 4, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2023.100780.

might say, standing up for core beliefs, and disciplining themselves to a spiritual growth plan, resulting in an improved ability to communicate interpersonally. Instead of fearing judgment from others, participants began speaking up and speaking out about how they were feeling, raising their self-esteem and values for themselves and others.

Overall, PPC intentionally engaged participants regarding their intrapersonal conflict from attending FBC, making it possible for members to cope better with their spiritual health and to do so when no one is available.

5.1.4 Intrapersonal Conflict

Chapter Two in this thesis mentions intrapersonal as the internal space (cognition) in which a person conducts, deals with, copes, and facilitates rational and irrational thinking. As such, intrapersonal conflict, as laid out in this study, suggests that changes in one's internal space can alter a person's intrapersonal factors, forcing an alternative to rationalizing challenging situations or solutions that pertain to the intrapersonal well-being of oneself and others.[397] In other words, this study finds that intrapersonal conflict is nothing more than induced mental chaos in its pursuit of finding cognitive resolve.

In that light, proactive pastoral counseling addresses any unresolved cognitive struggles one might experience by illuminating the four self-talk functions of self-criticism, self-reinforcement, self-management, and social assessment.[398] The research of PPC revealed that the CIF program procured individual insights into intrapersonal chaos, such as where it begins and how to change it. PPC then equipped each participant with the spiritual tools to approach

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[397] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 5.

[398] Ibid., 4.

intrapersonal conflict, allowing them to reconsider how they manage their inner chaos. In other words, PPC improved each participant's ability to adjust their thought process from secular thinking to thinking from a biblical standpoint, thereby decreasing intrapersonal conflict. PPC successfully guided others toward clarity in their cognitive processes and facilitated the necessary adjustments for each participant to find mental rest and spiritual resolve in Christ.

5.1.5 Relationship with Christ

PPC and the CIF four-step process are crucial to becoming healthy in one's mind, heart, and spirit.[399] However, the most essential aspect of the CIF program is its ability to help others grow deeper in their relationship with Christ. Utilizing the CIF program, PPC inspired all participants toward a deeper relationship with Christ by directing them to understand the application of Scripture when dealing with intrapersonal struggle.

The research shows that Christian intrapersonal formation increases and internal chaos decreases in participants when the Bible is applied. The study reveals that when one's intrapersonal conflict is high (fear of hurt, fear of judgment), biblical literacy is low (self-thinking). When biblical literacy is high, intrapersonal conflict is low in participants. (See Fig. 20). Therefore, a biblically literate person is more prone to cope with intrapersonal issues or when intrapersonal conflict arises (See Fig. 20).

Fig. 20—Intrapersonal Conflict vs. Biblical Literacy

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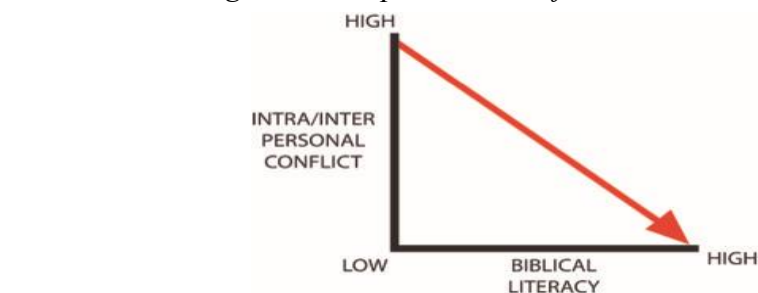
[399] Dodson, "Assessing Well-being," 62.

According to the study, PPC helped improve the spiritual welfare of each participant by assisting them in recognizing individual thought processes, the origin of feelings, how to manage emotions, and how to accurately identify and label the source of intrapersonal conflict.[400] From a biblical perspective, PPC empowered others with a newfound understanding of Christ, leading them out of their current intrapersonal chaos. Participants became renewed by applying spiritual disciplines, such as submitting their thoughts to God's Word and submitting to "Holy Spirit" power for intrapersonal resolve. CIF participants grew more profound in their walk with Christ, realizing that most intrapersonal chaos stems from self-thinking instead of thinking biblically.[401]

Therefore, participants willing to submit to PPC and the CIF program prove that intrapersonal conflict decreases and Christian intrapersonal formation occurs when biblical knowledge increases. As a result, the door for a deeper relationship with Christ opens.

5.2 Research Applications

One might suggest that PPC, as illustrated through the CIF program, displays the best parts of multiple therapies addressing the cognitive health of others.[402]In other words, therapies like Narrative Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Christian Cognitive Therapy, Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy, and Stephen's Ministry are comparable to PPC. With that in mind, the research applications entailing PPC and the CIF program might come to life more when contrasting the abovementioned therapies' essential tenets (See Fig. 21 on the next page).

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[400] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 44.

[401] Oleś et al., "Types of Inner Dialogues," 5.

[402] Ron Hawkins and George Ohlschlager, "Eclecticism," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling: An Indispensable Tool for Helping People with Their Problems*, ed. by Tim Clinton, and Ron Hawkins (Eugene: Harvard House, 2011), 468–7.

Fig. 21 – PPC Therapy Comparison List –<mark>*Proactive Pastoral Counseling*</mark>

Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (REBT)

Unconditional Self-Acceptance: You are worthy of self-acceptance………………………………✓

Collaborative Empiricism: Testing beliefs against reality……………………………………………….✓

Decatastrophizing: Challenges negative futuristic predictions………………………………✓

Disputing Irrational Beliefs: Replaces beliefs with rational thoughts……………………………✓

Emotional Regulation: Manage emotions by changing thought patterns and beliefs……………….✓

Christian Cognitive Therapy (CCT)

Biblical Integration: The Bible is the primary source of therapy………………………………✓

Awareness of Thought Patterns: Recognize negative thought………………………………………✓

Core Beliefs Examination: Challenges core beliefs…………………………………………..✓

Prayer and Meditation: Encourages clients in spiritual disciplines…………………………….✓

Transformation through Christ: No change is possible without the Holy Spirit……………….✓

Stephen's Ministry SM)

Ministry for All God's People: Ministry of care is not limited to clergy or professionals………...✓

Personal Humility: Humble approach to the ministry………………………………..………✓

Relational and Caring Skills: Practical skills to connect with others………………………………...✓

Spiritual Discernment: Integrates spiritual insights into care…………………………………..✓

Christ-Centered Care: Committed care that reflects the love of Christ……………✓

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

Automatic Negative Thoughts: Changing thought patterns lead to emotional improvement…...✓

Structured and Time-Based: Goal-oriented……………………………………………………...✓

Educative Approach: Teaches others to manage distorted thoughts without aid……….…….✓

Client-Therapist Relationship: Creates active participation in the client………………..✓

Balanced Outlook: Shifts negative thinking to positive thinking…………………………………✓

Narrative Therapy (NT)

Putting Together One's Narrative: Help others construct their life narrative…………..✓

Unique Outcomes: Widens perspectives by examining alternative stories…………………………✓

Empowerment and Agency: Empowers others with the ability to rewrite narratives…………….✓

Holistic Application: Considers various life domains—self-esteem, relationships…………..✓

Narrative as Action: Framing experiences helps engage in the therapeutic process……………………✓

Most notably, the one component distinguishing PPC from all other therapies (not

mentioned above) is its all-encompassing proactive nature. As with other therapies, the term

"proactive" means to engage with a client within a session—to challenge irrational thinking.[403] On the other hand, the nature of PPC is proactive in itself. In other words, instead of providing pastoral counseling normatively (reactive counseling), PPC intentionally targets those too timid or hurt to ask for support and helps them confront their issues using a more compassionate, Christlike approach, even when outside the session.

In that respect, the research finds that without the guidance of PPC and the CIF program, the six active FBC members who submitted to receiving PPC might never have overcome the intrapersonal chaos they experienced in the FBC church community and culture. In contrast, all other members at FBC who were unwilling to submit to PPC did not experience a decrease in intrapersonal conflict because they refused to pursue the path of Christian intrapersonal formation. The outline below provides an example of an in-class session and the results of the CIF four-step process:

1. Address the Problem: Lack of Spiritual Leadership

    a. What is your problem with the problem?

        • I desire to be spiritually led, but I go home starving for more; no spiritual growth or spiritual growth plan (SPG)
        • I desire godly relationships with others, but members are unwilling to engage with me

    b. How do you struggle intrapersonally?

        • I want to grow in my faith, but I get nowhere but frustrated
        • I cannot stop feeling those around me are fake Christians
        • I feel like I am alone in my walk with Christ

    c. How does your thinking about the problem affect you?

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[403] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 99.

- I no longer attend church regularly
- I have lost the desire to read my Bible
- I blame others for how I feel

2. Seek Scripture: Hebrews:1–3

   a. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

   b. How does one overcome intrapersonal conflict?

      - Combine spiritual thoughts with spiritual words taught by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13). Go to step three.

3. Apply Spiritual Application(s)

   a. Keep your mind on Christ for godly leadership
   b. Stay steady in God's Word and do not depend on people for validation

4. Identify Irrational Thinking

   - No one likes me
   - I am not good enough for others to spend time with me
   - Maybe if I change to what they want me to be, I will be good enough for discipleship
   - I am not worthy to be a part of their ministry
   - I am the problem

➢ **Results**:
   o Increase self-awareness in Christ
   o Decrease intrapersonal conflict
   o Increase biblical literacy
   o Coping skills strengthened (elevated interpersonal communication)
   o Deeper walk with Christ

5.3 Research Limitations

PPC benefits all those seeking emotional, spiritual, and intrapersonal health with a desire for a deeper relationship with Christ.[404] As this study demonstrates (although many FBC members chose not to submit to PPC), participants of FBC who participated in the CIF program significantly improved their lives and overall spiritual well-being. Sara recently commented that out of nowhere, she spontaneously prayed for someone in the hospital where she works; she had never done that before. Edith noted she would never have learned the things she did if it were not for PPC; she now works as a caregiver for a stroke patient. Still, some limitations surfaced regarding the study, such as the ability of one to accept themselves.[405]

First, PPC might not provide the necessary elements for those who experience high levels of psychosis, neurosis, or habitual addictive behaviors. Suppose a person already undergoes therapies that require high doses of medications for medical conditions and require elevated clinical care. In that case, PPC might not meet the clinical requirement for care. Moreover, PPC works best when clients are not forced to participate or attend sessions.

Second, implementing PPC in a secular environment might work for some but may not produce the expected results. PPC and the CIF program require faith in Jesus Christ for change to occur. Likewise, without faith, the Holy Spirit cannot work in the individual, nor can the individual understand spiritual things and grow. In other words, intrapersonal conflict becomes overcome by focusing on biblical words and spiritual thoughts taught by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13). However, PPC cannot dictate the level of growth one might or might not experience under the guidance of PPC.

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[404] Tan, "Applying Theology in the Psychology Classroom," 311.

[405] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 4.

Third, the participant must be willing to establish a counselor-client relationship. Without the sense of a relationship, the pastoral counselor's Integrative Perspective (IP) might not be as effective. The participant may perceive the counselor's approach as having no value. As Matthew says in Matthew 7:6, "Do not give what is holy to dogs and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." If the participant cannot relate to the pastoral counselor on any level, PPC might not best suit the participant, causing an adverse effect and creating more significant intrapersonal conflict.

Fourth, reading text in depth and length is declining for post-modernism. According to a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted January 25–February 8, 2021, roughly a quarter of American adults (23%) say they haven't read a book in whole or in part in the past year, whether in print, electronic or audio form.[406] One might conclude the Pew Research data suggests that reading is no longer critical due to the vast array of digital applications accessible to the public, such as online video platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. With such video platforms, others no longer have to read text to obtain information. Unfortunately, watching online videos might become the norm for future readers seeking to gain information.

Lastly, although the practice of PPC resembles many of the tenets of multiple therapies, PPC might also not best fit those experiencing grief or inner pain resulting from loss. PPC can help alleviate some of the thinking one might have to cope with while experiencing the duress of grief; however, the mourning process takes time, and no form of cognitive therapy might work at all.[407] In this case, PPC may work best after an individual's mourning process from losing

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[406] Risa Watnick and Andrew Perrin, "Who Doesn't Read Books in America," Pew Research Center, September 21, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/09/21/who-doesnt-read-books-in-america/.

[407] Francesco Gazzillo, Giancarlo Dimaggio, and John T. Curtis, "Case Formulation and Treatment Planning: How to Take Care of Relationship and Symptoms Together," *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* 31, no. 2 (2021): 115, https://doi.org/10.1037/int0000185.

someone close, limiting the efficacy of its proactive approach initially.

As with many other therapies, examining problems with individuals on a case-by-case basis might help to understand best when to employ PPC despite its limitations. In that light, one must ask if success is due to the program or the individual's effort.[408] In retrospect, PPC is entirely limited if the Holy Spirit is absent.[409]

5.4 Further Research

The research in this study displays how to minimize intrapersonal chaos while increasing Christian intrapersonal formation for all willing to submit to Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC). All participants in this study experienced growth in multiple areas (explained earlier), providing great insights into how one's overall spiritual health might become fortified through biblical literacy and the application of spiritual disciplines. However, there are three potential areas to examine for future research.

First, it is essential to know that PPC is a pastoral counseling approach that explicitly addresses intrapersonal conflict in believers. Because faith is a requirement to experience Christian intrapersonal formation,[410] non-believers might not be so prone or interested in enduring the CIF training program. Therefore, future research might examine the effects of the CIF program on non-believers (individuals or small groups in a positive environment) experiencing unresolved intrapersonal conflict. In so doing, one might inspire unknown

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[408] Timoney, "Identifying the Core Components," 52–3.

[409] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 95.

[410] Leaf, "Maintaining a Biblical Worldview," 50.

disciples to come forward in Christ.[411]

Second, utilizing the CIF program to encourage evangelism and Christlike discipleship (Discipleship Ministries) might benefit Christians and non-Christians alike. Through CIF, trainees become equipped to go out and train others by first learning how to overcome intrapersonal conflict themselves. Whether Christians or non-Christians are on the receiving end, PPC trainees who undergo the CIF training program gain the confidence needed to encourage all people to confront their inner struggles with compassion and genuine care. As a result, CIF reflects the growth in people as they create new disciples through caring for the spiritual needs of others.

Finally, PPC might be successful as a form of pre-counseling for those seeking a better understanding of one's internal being, such as younger couples who might consider marriage—pre-marital counseling. Maybe a person is taking on a new job and seeks a deeper understanding of one's ability to cope and maintain proper behavior in the workplace. Perhaps a person has never experienced counseling before, does not know what to expect, is embarrassed to talk about individual or family struggles, or is too timid to discover one's failures. These unknowns in a person's life might remain unknown without making PPC and the CIF program available.

In essence, the future of intrapersonal resolve lies not in the hopes of therapies or self-healing ideals.[412] Instead, Christian intrapersonal formation in people relies on Christlike grit and the power of the Holy Spirit.[413] PPC might help others rewrite their life stories, replace

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[411] Van der Watt, "Mission-minded Pastoral Theology," 7.

[412] Tan, "Dealing with Spiritual Struggles," 314.

[413] White, "Conceptualizing Therapy," 95.

secular thinking with biblical thinking, and decrease intrapersonal conflict. Still, in the end, the Holy Spirit alone transforms one's story from within, one page at a time.

Perhaps the future of pastoral counseling might become more proactive, where counselors no longer wait in an office for their clients to come (reactive counseling). Instead, pastoral counselors might (in the future) utilize the impetus of PPC and the premise behind the CIF training program as an outlet to reach out to others who struggle inwardly and do so in the name of Christ. No matter what the future holds, PPC will continue utilizing the CIF platform, hoping others will learn that God's Word is the only answer for resolving intrapersonal conflict and the power behind Christian intrapersonal formation.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE: FOUR MARKS OF A DISCIPLE
_____

Purpose:

Thank you for taking part in this Christ-centered questionnaire. The assessment herein aims to evaluate each participant, measuring one's understanding of the overarching essential marks of a *Biblical Disciple*. For example, a biblical disciple is a person who denies himself to live a life conforming to the likeness of Christ. This definition suggests 'spiritually disciplined' or 'obedient' as a spiritual mark. However, this assessment mandates that these four essential marks evaluate it: 1) Servant, 2) Worshiper, 3) Evangelist, and 4) Missionary.

Instructions:

As you spiritually traverse the following questionnaire, please take your time; there is no time limit. Select your answer by placing an "x" in the square next to each assertion that best describes your position. There is no wrong answer; however, be honest with yourself and think truthfully about where you are as an individual per each mark. The more time you spend properly evaluating yourself on each statement, the more advantageous this assessment will be for both the participant and assessor.*

Calculating Results:

When you complete each section of 'marks,' tally your results. Do this by placing your results in the '**Summary of Marks**' *column* according to your selection. Then, add your results using the corresponding numbers for each choice (1, 2, etc.). Place your final score in the '**Total Points**' *box* at the bottom of each section. Upon completion, record your 'Total Points' score for each section in the '**Summary of Marks**' *chart* provided at the *end of this questionnaire*. Insert your score next to its corresponding 'mark section' in the '**Points Total**' column. Repeat this process for each 'mark.'

After scoring each section, analyze your final results by identifying which mark(s) received the highest and lowest scores. In the '**Summary of Marks**' *chart*, place an "x (s)" in the box according to this value. The final score ends the assessment. Afterward, demonstrate your understanding by writing a summary exclusive of your analyzed findings.

Application:
The results are intended to bring about spiritual awareness of two things: 1) the marks of biblical discipleship and 2) the spiritual traits that undergird each mark. Ultimately, the hope is to encourage others in their walk with Christ; from the perspective of a biblical disciple, help participants evaluate themselves spiritually. In doing so, one can determine how to grow their faith in Christ.

Mark I: Servant

The life of a biblical disciple (Christian) walks according to the will of Christ. Christian *servants*, then, live by faith and love and live in peace with God (Rom. 5:1-6). Biblical disciples are distinguished by their *faithfulness* and *obedience* to Christ (Lk. 9:23).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I have a regenerated spirit through Christ					
I am committed to my relationship with Christ					
I desire to be an imitator of Christ					
My friends tell me I should think about myself more often					
Christ is more important to me than my family					
I listen and take directions well; obedient					
I enjoy abounding in the work of Christ					
Summary of Marks					
Total Points					

Mark II: Worshiper

According to the Apostle Paul, worship is an act of presenting the body as "a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5). Much like a servant, a worshiper gives up their heart's desires, and toward God, they offer themselves as a whole. They empty themselves in spirit, giving it back to God with thankfulness for all He has given. In submission, they present themselves to God by letting go of the heart and offering homage to the Lord in Spirit and Truth (Jn. 4:23-24).

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I enjoy being in the presence of God					
I begin my day with prayer and meditation					
Worship is responding to God for what He has done					
I revel in spending time in God's word					
Worship is surrendering my all for God					
My music choice is Christ-centered					
Worship is an act of spiritual discipline					
Summary of Marks					
Total Points					

Mark III: Evangelist

Evangelism stirs in the heart of every faithful Christian. The church makes disciples by taking the Gospel of Christ to the world (Matt. 28:19-20). Evangelism can occur through various means, such as preaching, teaching, mentoring others, bible studies, and home groups, to name a few. In layperson's terms, evangelism is spreading the good news of Christ to the world.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I love to share my salvation story with others					
I participate in Bible studies, D-groups, worship gatherings, etc.					
Making disciples brings joy to my life					
My love for Christ compels me to speak to others about His word					
I enjoy inviting people to church					
I enjoy spending time handing out Christ-centered paraphernalia					
I get excited about having an opportunity to share the Gospel of Christ					
Summary of Marks					
Total Points					

Mark IV: Missionary

Missionaries have the *Christian* marks because they abound in the work of God. Not only do they daily serve in Christ, worship God, and share the Gospel of Christ with others, but more importantly, they live out their lives in the community (communal), expressing those very traits. Missionaries help *revive* the spirit of the hurting, *comfort* those who suffer, and share the *love* of Christ with those who have no hope. They strive for communal unity in the faith of Jesus Christ.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I believe in the work of missions					
I accept people for who they are					
I think of others more than myself					
I love to engage others for Christ					
I enjoy sharing my life with others					
Living in a different country has always appealed to me					
Living for Jesus is my lifestyle, not a routine					
Summary of Marks					
Total Points					

Summary of Marks

	Point Total: 35	Highest Mark	Least Mark
Mark I: Servant			
Mark II: Worshiper			
Mark III: Evangelist			
Mark IV: Missionary			

Final Assessment

- The discipleship mark(s) that best describes me:_____

- The discipleship mark(s) that describes me the least:_____

According to this assessment, you have become more spiritually aware of your understanding according to the overarching essential marks of a biblical disciple. From your perspective, please analyze your findings by summarizing them. As you write, please mention at least one way this assessment has provided insight on taking steps toward a lifestyle as a biblical disciple.

Personal Summary:

APPENDIX B

FEELINGS VOCABULARY LIST

Accepting / Open
Calm
Centered
Content
Fulfilled
Patient
Peaceful
Present
Relaxed
Serene
Trusting

Aliveness / Joy
Amazed
Awe
Bliss
Delighted
Eager
Ecstatic
Enchanted
Energized
Engaged
Enthusiastic
Excited
Free
Happy
Inspired
Invigorated
Lively
Passionate
Playful
Radiant
Refreshed
Rejuvenated
Renewed
Satisfied
Thrilled
Vibrant

Angry / Annoyed
Agitated
Aggravated
Bitter
Contempt
Cynical
Disdain
Disgruntled
Disturbed
Edgy
Exasperated
Frustrated
Furious
Grouchy
Hostile
Impatient
Irritated
Irate
Moody
On edge
Outraged
Pissed
Resentful
Upset
Vindictive

Courageous / Powerful
Adventurous
Brave
Capable
Confident
Daring
Determined
Free
Grounded
Proud
Strong
Worthy
Valiant

Connected / Loving
Accepting
Affectionate
Caring
Compassion
Empathy
Fulfilled
Present
Safe
Warm
Worthy

Curious
Engaged
Exploring
Fascinated
Interested
Intrigued
Involved
Stimulated

Despair / Sad
Anguish
Depressed
Despondent
Disappointed
Discouraged
Forlorn
Gloomy
Grief
Heartbroken
Hopeless
Lonely
Longing
Melancholy
Sorrow
Teary
Unhappy
Upset
Weary
Yearning

Disconnected / Numb
Aloof
Bored
Confused
Distant
Empty
Indifferent
Isolated
Lethargic
Listless
Removed
Resistant
Shut Down
Uneasy
Withdrawn

Embarrassed / Shame
Ashamed
Humiliated
Inhibited
Mortified
Self-conscious
Useless
Weak
Worthless

Fear
Afraid
Anxious
Apprehensive
Frightened
Hesitant
Nervous
Panic
Paralyzed
Scared
Terrified
Worried

Fragile
Helpless
Sensitive

Grateful
Appreciative
Blessed
Delighted
Fortunate
Grace
Humbled
Lucky
Moved
Thankful
Touched

Guilt
Regret
Remorseful
Sorry

Hopeful
Encouraged
Expectant
Optimistic
Trusting

Powerless
Impotent
Incapable
Resigned
Trapped
Victim

Tender
Calm
Caring
Loving
Reflective
Self-loving
Serene
Vulnerable
Warm

Stressed / Tense
Anxious
Burned out
Cranky
Depleted
Edgy
Exhausted
Frazzled
Overwhelm
Rattled
Rejecting
Restless
Shaken
Tight
Weary
Worn out

Unsettled / Doubt
Apprehensive
Concerned
Dissatisfied
Disturbed
Grouchy
Hesitant
Inhibited
Perplexed
Questioning
Rejecting
Reluctant
Shocked
Skeptical
Suspicious
Ungrounded
Unsure
Worried

Body Sensations

Achy	Contracted	Gentle	Numb	Shaky	Sweaty
Airy	Dizzy	Hard	Pain	Shivery	Tender
Blocked	Drained	Heavy	Pounding	Slow	Tense
Breathless	Dull	Hollow	Prickly	Smooth	Throbbing
Bruised	Electric	Hot	Pulsing	Soft	Tight
Burning	Empty	Icy	Queasy	Sore	Tingling
Buzzy	Expanded	Itchy	Radiating	Spacey	Trembly
Clammy	Flowing	Jumpy	Relaxed	Spacious	Twitchy
Clenched	Fluid	Knotted	Releasing	Sparkly	Vibrating
Cold	Fluttery	Light	Rigid	Stiff	Warm
Constricted	Frozen	Loose	Sensitive	Still	Wobbly
Contained	Full	Nauseous	Settled	Suffocated	Wooden

APPENDIX C

SPIRITUAL MEASUREMENT
_____

The spiritual measurement exercise below intends to draw one's intrapersonal world from secular thinking toward biblical thinking. The purpose is to measure one's ability to think biblically. The practice below also intends to bring awareness to each believer's level of theological understanding. The impetus behind this exercise seeks to manifest Christian intrapersonal formation in the participant.

Instructions:
Write a word in the space next to the letter that most closely represents how you might explain to someone the meaning behind the Gospel of Jesus, what that means biblically to those who have faith in Jesus, and how you see Jesus in your relationship with Him. In other words, using one word, explain how Christ has acted on your behalf. The letter 'A' has been provided for you. (Note: the letter 'X' is omitted because no word in the Bible begins with the letter 'X').

A – Atonement   N –

B –   0 –

C –   P –

D –   Q –

E –   R –

F –   S –

G –   T –

H –   U –

I –   V –

J –   W –

K –   Y –

L –   Z –

M –

APPENDIX D

ONE-ON-ONE PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Initial Interview

1. How would you describe your walk with Christ?
2. How often during the week do you submit to spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible and prayer?
3. How do you feel about the "You" in you right now?
4. Why did you become a participant in this study?
5. What do you seek to learn from the CIF training course?

Final Interview

1. Since your initial interview, how has your relationship with Christ changed?
2. What spiritual disciplines have become steady in your life because of CIF?
3. How do you feel about the "You" in you right now?
4. What new insights or personal awareness have you experienced from participating in this study?
5. How has CIF helped you grow toward Christlikeness?

APPENDIX E

INITIAL SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Participant	Steve	Clarice	Sara	Jasper	Kelly	Edith
Letter Prompt	64% complete 60% accuracy	88% complete 52% accuracy	84% complete 60% accuracy	88% complete 56% accuracy	44% complete 32% accuracy	48% complete 64% accuracy
A	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)
B	Blood (Bruised)	Beatitudes (Bruised)	Blessed (Bruised)	Belief (Bruised)	Believer (Bruised)	Believer (Bruised)
C	Cross (Crucified)	Christian (Crucified)	Chosen (Crucified)	Condemned (Crucified)	--- (Crucified)	Commandments (Crucified)
D	Disciple (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Deliverer (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)
E	Eternity (Everlasting)	Evangelist (Everlasting)	Equipped (Everlasting)	Eternal (Everlasting)	--- (Everlasting)	Eternal (Everlasting)
F	Father (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Favored (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Faithful (Forgiven)
G	God (Gracious)	Grace (Gracious)	Gifted (Gracious)	Gentile (Gracious)	Grace (Gracious)	Godly (Gracious)
H	Holy (Healer)	Humble (Healer)	Honored (Healer)	Heavenly (Healer)	Humble (Healer)	Holy (Healer)
I	Immanuel (Intercessor)	Immanuel (Intercessor)	--- (Intercessor)	Inspired (Intercessor)	--- (Intercessor)	--- (Intercessor)
J	Jesus (Justice)	Jesus (Justice)	Justice (Justice)	Justified (Justice)	--- (Justice)	Justified (Justice)
K	King (King)	King (King)	Kinsman (King)	Kind (King)	--- (King)	--- (King)
L	Lord (Lord)	Lord (Lord)	Loved (Lord)	Love (Lord)	Love (Lord)	Loving (Lord)
M	Most High (Mercy)	Mercy (Mercy)	Mercy (Mercy)	Mercy (Mercy)	--- (Mercy)	--- (Mercy)
N	--- (Neverending)	Nazarene (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)
O	--- (Overcomer)	Oppressed (Overcomer)	Obedience (Overcomer)	Obsessed (Overcomer)	--- (Overcomer)	--- (Overcomer)

P	--- (Propitiation)	Prince (Propitiation)	Precious (Propitiation)	Perseverance (Propitiation)	--- (Propitiation)	--- (Propitiation)
Q	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)
R	--- (Redeemer)	Repent (Redeemer)	Redeemed (Redeemer)	Revelation (Redeemer)	Relationship (Redeemer)	Redeemer (Redeemer)
S	Shepherd (Savior)	Submission (Savior)	Saved (Savior)	Salvation (Savior)	Saved (Savior)	--- (Savior)
T	--- (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	--- (Truth)
U	--- (Unending)	--- (Unending)	Unity (Unending)	Understanding (Unending)	--- (Unending)	--- (Unending)
V	--- (Victory)	Victorious (Victory)	Value (Victory)	Vigilant (Victory)	--- (Victory)	Victorious (Victory)
W	Worshipped (Waymaker)	Way (Waymaker)	Worship (Waymaker)	Worthy (Waymaker)	Worship (Waymaker)	--- (Waymaker)
Y	--- (Yearning)	--- (Yearning)	--- (Yearning)	Yearning (Yearning)	--- (Yearning)	--- (Yearning)
Z	Zealous (Zealous)	Zealot (Zealous)	Zealous (Zealous)	--- (Zealous)	--- (Zealous)	--- (Zealous)

APPENDIX F

FINAL SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Participant	Steve	Clarice	Sara	Jasper	Kelly	Bonnie
Letter Prompt	100% complete 76% accuracy	100% complete 80% accuracy	100% complete 76% accuracy	96% complete 76% accuracy	84% complete 64% accuracy	88% complete 72% accuracy
A	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)	Atonement (Atonement)
B	Brother (Bruised)	Blood (Bruised)	Baptism (Bruised)	Belief (Bruised)	Blessed (Bruised)	Bible (Bruised)
C	Cross (Crucified)	Cross (Crucified)	Cross (Crucified)	Caring (Crucified)	Cross (Crucified)	Counselor (Crucified)
D	Died (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Deliverer (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Disciple (Deliverer)	Dedicated (Deliverer)
E	Efficient (Everlasting)	Eternal (Everlasting)	Eternal (Everlasting)	Everlasting (Everlasting)	Evangelize (Everlasting)	Everlasting (Everlasting)
F	Fellowship (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Fellowship (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Forgiven (Forgiven)	Friend (Forgiven)
G	Growth (Gracious)	Grace (Gracious)	Goodness (Gracious)	Godly (Gracious)	Grace (Gracious)	Godly (Gracious)
H	High (Healer)	Healer (Healer)	Holy (Healer)	Heavenly (Healer)	Heart (Healer)	Heavenly (Healer)
I	Immanuel (Intercessor)	Immanuel (Intercessor)	Inheritance (Intercessor)	Inspiring (Intercessor)	Intent (Intercessor)	Instructor (Intercessor)
J	Journey (Justice)	Joyful (Justice)	Justice (Justice)	Joyful (Justice)	Joy (Justice)	Jesus (Justice)
K	King (King)	King (King)	King (King)	Kindness (King)	Kind (King)	King (King)
L	Life (Lord)	Lord (Lord)	Light (Lord)	Love (Lord)	Love (Lord)	Love (Lord)
M	Ministry (Mercy)	Mercy (Mercy)	Meekness (Mercy)	Magnificent (Mercy)	--- (Mercy)	Ministry (Mercy)
N	Nativity (Neverending)	Nazareth (Neverending)	Near (Neverending)	Neverending (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)	--- (Neverending)
O	Onward (Overcomer)	Overcomer (Overcomer)	Obedience (Overcomer)	Outstanding (Overcomer)	Overcomer (Overcomer)	--- (Overcomer)
P	Purpose (Propitiation)	Propitiation (Propitiation)	Praise (Propitiation)	Perfect (Propitiation)	Promise (Propitiation)	Prayer (Propitiation)

Q	Quality (Quicken)	Quicken (Quicken)	Quicken (Quicken)	Qualified (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)	--- (Quicken)
R	Reconciliation (Redeemer)	Righteous (Redeemer)	Redeemer (Redeemer)	Redeemer (Redeemer)	Relationship (Redeemer)	Redeemer (Redeemer)
S	Sufficient (Savior)	Salvation (Savior)	Salvation (Savior)	Salvation (Savior)	Saved (Savior)	Savior (Savior)
T	Truth (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Trust (Truth)	Testimony (Truth)	Teacher (Truth)
U	Understanding (Unending)	Unity (Unending)	Unity (Unending)	Understanding (Unending)	--- (Unending)	Undeserved (Unending)
V	Victory (Victory)	Victory (Victory)	Victory (Victory)	Victory (Victory)	Vision (Victory)	Victory (Victory)
W	Wayward (Waymaker)	Waymaker (Waymaker)	Word (Waymaker)	Wise (Waymaker)	Worship (Waymaker)	Warrior (Waymaker)
Y	Yearning (Yearning)	Yearning (Yearning)	Yearning (Yearning)	Yahweh (Yearning)	Yahweh (Yearning)	Yearning (Yearning)
Z	Zeal (Zealous)	Zealous (Zealous)	Zealous (Zealous)	--- (Zealous)	Zealous (Zealous)	Zealous (Zealous)

APPENDIX G

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY TRAINING MATERIALS

Inductive Study: How to approach reading the Bible

1. Observation
2. Interpretation
3. Application

IMPORTANT:

In the *Observation* stage, you are guided by the question, "What does this text say?" At the *Interpretation* stage, you are answering the question, "What does this text mean?" In the *application* stage, you are reflecting on the question, "What does this text mean for me?"

I. **Observation** - We gather information to help us understand the *content* of the biblical passage: **What is its context?** What was the author trying to convey to the reader?

1) **What does the passage <u>say</u>?** Who, what, when, where, why, and how?
   a) Read the passage out loud, then repeat
   b) Gather the answers

2) Observe; Make notes according to the following:
   a) Time (this can be the period of time (Maccabees revolution), a specific time such as the day of crucifixion, or the time of day such as the hour Christ died on the cross)
   b) Place (where does the passage take place; what is the surrounding environment; what does that look like)
   c) People: who is involved; what does the passage mean when it says 'they' or them, for example? Who is the author, and to whom is the author referring? i) Who are the characters in the passage?
   d) What words or phrases highlight a topic or shift in the subject?
      i) i.e., repeated words or
      phrases ii) lists of things or ideas

3) What are the *structural relationships* in the passage? Be aware of any connections in the passage:
   a) Contrast or comparisons: Is the author trying to make a point with a contrasting idea between two people or bodies of influence, etc..... Are there

any comparisons trying to be made between what two people may have said: Old Testament ideas versus New Testament ideas or theological principles?

b) Cause and effect, or something that brings out a cause or effect in a relationship

c) What is the reason why something occurs? Where is the hate toward others or love toward others? What elements create the relationship, either good or bad, positive or negative?

d) Are any orders, commands, or requests made or given in the passage?

IMPORTANT: Ask these questions: "*How are statements in the passage related to one another?*" What does the author want the reader to understand? How might the original audience have felt or responded to these words? Comparing alternate translations at this point brings more profound meaning to the passage.

REMINDER: The goal of biblical study is to seek and answer questions about the context of the passage, investigate the immediate context and its larger context within the chapter, or apply cross-references that provide more profound meaning to the passage in mind. Although searching for the answers is vital, record any questions that might also come to mind. Often, new questions lead to solutions. (What are you wondering about when you read? What do you notice? How can what you seek to find relate to you personally?)

Additional Questions to ponder (a more in-depth approach to these types of questions will fall under the interpretation section)*:*

- Who was the writer?
- Who was the passage written to? Why? Purpose of intent?
- What kind of literature does this passage contain? Narrative? Prophecy? Sermon? Poetry?
- What is the logic of the narrative of the passage?
- How does the story fit together with the overall Bible story?
- When does the passage take place? What was the culture like?
- What events surround the passage at hand?
- What is the history that leads up to the point in the passage?

II. Interpretation – What does the text <u>mean</u>?

1) At this stage, the idea is to explore what the author is trying to communicate. To do this, consider the context of the passage by asking these questions:

a) What is the historical or cultural context in which the passage was written and received?

b) What other Scripture might be relevant to understanding this passage?

c) How might other scriptural uses of a word inform our understanding of its use in this passage?

d) What nuances might the author have intended in choosing one word over another related word?

IMPORTANT: Each group of verses within a chapter is linked up with the rest of its chapter, and each chapter of the Bible is linked to the book from which it comes, and each Bible book is linked to the whole Bible. The following is a workflow to help keep you organized while preparing for your Bible study or sermon:

Observe:

1) Read your passage. Take notes of any words, ideas, or phrases that seem important
2) Read the passage in other translations
3) Establish the boundaries of the passage
4) Identify people in your passage
5) Identify the places in your passage
6) Identify essential words, things, and objects

Interpret:

7) Examine the context of the book
8) Evaluate the type of literature in your passage
9) Examine the cultural context
10) Examine the historical context
11) Identify necessary biblical cross-references
12) Research important words
13) Review commentary discussions – A commentary discussion may alert you that something you thought was evident in the text is a complicated and debated issue. 14)Summarize your passage

Application:

15) Determine the passage's theological principles
16) Establish the primary application of the passage and apply the passage's principles to yourself
17) Share with others the insights from your inductive study

III. Application: How do I **<u>respond?</u>**

1) Review all notes
2) Ask these questions:
a. What does this passage mean to me?
b. Are there general truths or principles that apply to a variety of situations?
c. Are there actions or ideas judged right and per God's will?
d. What steps can I take based on the passage?
    i. How can you apply in the real world what has been learned?

Create a plan to put one or more of your application ideas into practice iii. Share your insights and plan with others

APPENDIX H

Christian Intrapersonal Formation (CIF) Intervention Design Outline

Each week (six-week program) consists of a two-part, three-hour session with a small group of six active Christian believers in a Christlike setting. The first session runs for an hour and 15 minutes, taking a 15-minute break before the second session, which lasts for one hour and twenty minutes. In the remaining ten minutes of class, each participant is to record any insights (journal entries) of themselves, another participant, the pastoral counselor, the class itself, or anything deemed relevant that applies to the study. Depending upon the level of participation, each class might experience additional time to discuss those things considered most appropriate to each participant. Expect each class to run at least three hours or more.

Week One
_____

I. Week One (Pt. 1): Introduce Pastoral Counseling (Faith-based counseling)
    A. Define
        i.   Nature of pastoral counseling
        ii. Counselor-client relationship
        iii. Counselor-client session
        iv. The goal of pastoral counseling
            1. Share the message of the cross
                a. Refocus others to Christ on the cross
            2. To elicit Christlike change; intrapersonal

    B. Introduce Proactive Pastoral Counseling (PPC)
        i. Define
            1. Nature of
            2. Purpose
                a. Address and intentionally engage one's intrapersonal chaos
                    i. Engage: What do you think about yourself? What does your inner dialogue look like? What is causing conflict in your mind?
                b. Increase biblical literacy and spiritual discernment
                c. Decrease intrapersonal conflict
                d. Help others move from secular to biblical thinking
            3. The goal of PPC: increase awareness of intrapersonal struggle; help others reform any life narratives, both past and present, causing intrapersonal conflict
                a. Encourage the pursuit of Christian intrapersonal formation

    C. Introduce Integrative Perspective
        i. Define

      1. Purpose of IP – provide experiential insights
      2. IP of the Pastoral Counselor within PPC
          a. Presence; pastoral
          b. Identity
          c. Education
          d. Experience

  D. Define CIF program: Four steps to overcoming intrapersonal conflict
      1. Step 1: Identify the problem
      2. Step 2: Seek Scripture
      3. Step 3: Apply the spiritual application found in the Scripture
      4. Step 4: Employ the appropriate theoretical application
          a. Define each theory and its purpose in PPC
              i. Christian Cognitive Therapy
                  1. Reshape intrapersonal conflict from a Christian perspective
              ii. Cognitive Behavior Therapy
                  1. Identify rational/irrational thinking
                  2. Understand why one thinks in the way they think
             iii. Narrative Therapy
                  1. Self-Talk
                      a. Inner dialogue
                      b. What is being said internally?
             iv. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy
                  1. Identify irrational behavior; address feelings
             v. Stephens Ministry
                  1. Ministry of Presence
                  2. Lay Counseling (away from the office)

15-minute Break
——————

II. Week One (Pt. 2): Class exercise: Pass the Phrase
          i. Purpose: bring awareness that what one hears intrapersonally does not always represent the truth; one cannot always believe what one hears or what one tells themselves
             1. Stage of awareness (prompting questions)
                  a. What words do you allow in your mind to define who you are?
                  b. What do you think about what you hear? How do you define your process of thinking?
                      i. Do you turn to negative thinking first? Positive?
                  c. At what point do you turn to the Bible for help when attempting to resolve intrapersonal conflict?

        2. Discuss any comments with the class. Record any new insights.

  B. Pastoral counselor begins class assessment
     i. Define five areas of intrapersonal conflict in believers within the FBC
      church setting
        1. Lack of Spiritual Leadership
        2. Spiritual Apathy
        3. Lack of Faith (trust in God)
        4. Spiritual Oppression
        5. Inability to Communicate (lack of communication)

  C. Spiritual Assessment
     i. Four Marks of a Disciple Questionnaire (see Appendix A)
     ii. Feelings Vocabulary List (see Appendix B)
        1. Each participant circles a word that best describes how they feel
        before the class begins and when each class ends
     iii. Spiritual Measurement exercise (see Appendix C)
     iv. Perform private one-on-one interviews while other participants are filling
      out each document (see Appendix D)

Weeks Two through Six
_____

III. Initiate the CIF Program
  A. Step One: Identify the problem (problems are identified in week one)
     i. Define and discuss the issue as a group; provide alternative perspectives
      through each participant
     ii. Each participant illustrates a time when the problem occurred for them;
      discuss

  B. Step Two: Seek Scripture
     i. Each participant finds a passage of Scripture that helps them think
      biblically about the problem being discussed (each participant has a week
      to seek the Scripture according to each issue identified in week one)

  C. Any new insights by the participants and pastoral counselor are recorded at any
    time during the class and noted as a journal entry

15-Minute Break
_____

  D. Step Three: Discuss the spiritual application of the chosen Scripture
     i. Each participant reads and defines the Scripture according to their view of
      the problem

      ii. Once the Scripture is read, each participant applies the spiritual application to one's thinking and discusses the application with the group

E. Step Four: Apply Theoretical Application
      i. Define any irrational thinking that inhibits the participant from thinking biblically
          1. Select and employ the appropriate theoretical application per participant as needed
              a. CCT
              b. CBT
              c. REBT

F. Each participant is to record any new insights pertinent to the study
          1. When finished, each participant writes down a word from the feeling vocabulary list that describes how they feel

G. Finalize any discussions and record

H. At the end of class, during weeks three and six, an additional one-on-one interview takes place before the class ends. Record the results.

I. After all assignments and assessments have concluded, the class ends.

APPENDIX I

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project:

Proactive Pastoral Counseling: A Christlike Integrative Therapeutic for Creating Christian Intrapersonal Formation in Believers at First Baptist Church of Harmony, ME

Principal Investigator

Yaron I. Kohen, Doctoral Candidate: Department of Behavioral Sciences (Pastoral Counseling), John W. Rawlins School of Divinity

Dear Potential Participants:

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be actively walking in a relationship with Jesus Christ, yearning to know God on a more personal level, and desiring to see God's hand in every aspect of your life. Participating in this research project is voluntary, but selected participants must be intentional about growing toward Christlikeness daily. Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

The study aims to implement a proactive pastoral counseling program that equips believers to grow intrapersonally in Christ. In so doing, one can discern things of the Spirit more aptly. Proactive pastoral counseling, then, encourages one to grow toward Christlikeness while helping believers maintain their spiritual direction and mature intrapersonally. Therefore, if you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Six-week commitment. Each participant must be willing to commit to a six-week training course (once a week, 3-hour sessions) to be held in a small group setting (4-6 participants) at the church; open conversations will take place, and others will hear personal information. After the end of every class, each participant will be asked to reflect on the training class openly within the group. An additional 5-10 minutes will be required after each class for the pastoral counselor to record any observations of change in the participant necessary to the study. Along with noting personal comments, participants at the end of the training course will also summarize the transformation witnessed in each participant in the group, if any.
2. One-on-one interview. The pastoral counselor and the participant in the study will hold three personal discussions: one before the class starts, one at the end of the third week, and one at the end of the course. Each interview will consist of 5-10 questions defining each participant's intrapersonal location and spiritual change throughout the training course. The interviews will take no more than 30 minutes and will be private.

3. Four Marks Of A Disciple Questionnaire. A questionnaire will be handed out at the beginning of the class to help bring awareness to the present spiritual state of each participant and how each mark of a disciple might be represented in each believer's life. Each believer will give their assessment and discuss the results in the CIF training group.

4. Feelings Vocabulary List. Each participant will choose from a list of vocabulary words that express their present emotions, body sensations, and emotional well-being. The vocabulary list of emotions will be provided at the beginning and end of the class.

5. Spiritual Measurement Exercise. Participants will be given an exercise that seeks awareness of one's ability to think biblically. Using the letters of the English alphabet as prompts, each participant will engage in biblical thinking by providing a word next to each of the 25 letters used to describe best their understanding of Christ and their relationship with Him.

6. Reflection Journal. Each week, each participant will provide a personal reflection journal expressing what the participant learns of themselves and any reflections from others, recording any shifts of intrapersonal location or identifying any changes in behavior one might experience. After the class, 5-10 minutes might be required to make further observations or notes.

The direct benefit participants should expect from participating in this study includes but is not limited to Christian intrapersonal formation. Personal benefits include an elevated ability to discern spiritual things, higher self-esteem, lower intrapersonal conflict and struggle, a deeper, more profound intimate relationship with Christ, and an increased ability to communicate interpersonally. As a result, each participant will experience increased spiritual discernment, a shift in one's heart and mind, and begin to help others grow toward Christlikeness.

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. However, if a spiritual awakening occurs in the participant, emotions and feelings of joy and surprise might become elevated and cause the participant to become overwhelmed with the newness of life. If this occurs, each participant should stay calm and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. The risk of fellowship with the Holy Spirit might create excitement and a high sense of emotional and spiritual well-being. Please do not be alarmed: God is at work in you.

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher can access the documents. Participant responses will be anonymous and kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms (e.g., participant 1, participant 2). All interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with people outside the group.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your participation will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

If you withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue participation and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study. Data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the investigation if you choose to withdraw.

The researcher conducting this study is Yaron I. Kohen. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Mr. Kohen at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. John S. Knox, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and want to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that human subjects research will be conducted ethically as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered, and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

By signing this document, you agree to be included in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to draft and/or record any information necessary from me as part of my participation in this study.

_____   _____
Printed Subject Name   Signature & Date

_____   _____
Printed Subject Name   Signature & Date

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

November 15, 2023

Yaron Kohen
John Knox

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY23-24-815 Proactive Pastoral Counseling: A Christlike Integrative Therapeutic for Creating Christian Intrapersonal Formation in Believers at First Baptist Church of Harmony, ME

Dear Yaron Kohen and John Knox,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office