

## **ABSTRACT**

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION TRAINING FOR PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTERS: MEASURING SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING AND JOB SATISFACTION FOR PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER STAFF**

by

Craig Stephans

Between 2500 and 4000 pregnancy resource centers (PRC's) exist in the United States. They persuade pregnant women to choose life for their babies rather than abortion. PRC's are inspired by the Christian conviction that life begins at conception and abortion is an avoidable tragedy for mother, child and all involved. Staff of PRC's work in an intense pro-life ministry. The stress and pressures of working in the ministry may cause their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction to suffer due.

This research project measured the impact of two three-hour training sessions in spiritual formation on the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of one PRC—Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) in Rocky Mount, NC. The research involved the development of an intervention featuring the practice and teaching of spiritual disciplines. The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) were used to measure quantitatively the impact of the training on spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. A qualitative questionnaire was used to solicit feedback on the impact of the training.

The research demonstrated that the staff of the YCRC possessed higher than average spiritual well-being and job satisfaction before and after the intervention. The intervention positively impacted the participants' level of job satisfaction according to the

SIMS results. The FMS indicated no significant change in the FMS, and no correlation was proven between changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The project indicated that the staff of PRC's appreciate training in spiritual formation and consider it a necessary and beneficial resource for their jobs and lives. Training in spiritual formation is something that should be offered regularly to staff and volunteers of PRC's.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
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CENTERS: MEASURING SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING AND JOB  
SATISFACTION FOR PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER STAFF**

presented by

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CENTERS: MEASURING SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING AND JOB  
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A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Craig Stephans

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **NATURE OF THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Chapter One provides the scope of the project that measures changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation.

This chapter explains the inspiration for the project and the rationale for its undertaking. This chapter includes the purpose of the project, its dynamics, participants, and the evaluation process. The researcher highlights themes of the literature review in this chapter and identifies the project's context. The research questions and the project's anticipated results are also discussed in this chapter. These indicate the project's expected relevancy to the ministries of Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRC's).

#### **Personal Introduction**

As a Christian who believes in the authority of Scripture and the sacredness of life as a gift from God, I am in the personhood and sanctity of life in the womb from the time of the child's conception. I believe that Scripture clearly teaches that each life conceived is a work of God's hands and a beloved person made in his image and likeness.

Scripture records that Jesus entered this world as a child conceived in the womb of Mary. The Holy Spirit's power and Jesus' presence sanctified the womb and demonstrated that life is present at conception and throughout a mother's pregnancy. Scripture even states that God sees us while we are in the womb. While in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, John the baptizer leaped at the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb (Luke 1.39-45). God emphasized to the prophet Jeremiah that God knew him even before

he was formed in the womb, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1.5).<sup>1</sup>

The Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), where I am ordained as a priest, asserts in its governing documents the sacredness of life and the priest’s duty to promote it:

God, and not man, is the creator of human life. The unjustified taking of life is sinful. Therefore, all members and clergy are called to promote and respect the sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death (ACNA 17).

The Scriptural emphasis on the sacredness of life translates not only to a pro-life theology but also to the inclusion of anti-abortion work in the Church’s mission in the world. As I promote life, I am working against abortions occurring, because I view them as ending a human life and opposing the work of God in the womb and in the world. I believe abortions are ultimately destructive for all the people involved.

I began serving as Rector of Church of the Redeemer in Camden, NC, in January of 2010. In 2011, the Director of our community pregnancy resource center invited me to begin leading a weekly devotional group for the staff and volunteers. The Albemarle Pregnancy Resource Center and Medical Clinic (APRC) serves several counties in northeastern North Carolina. The center has five staff and several volunteers. Like PRC’s in general, the APRC exists to persuade pregnant women and their families to choose life rather than abortion and to support them in their pregnancy and in the early years of their parenting. The inspiration of this ministry is Scripture and the belief that God is the author of all life. PRC’s believe that abortion ends the life in the womb and has negative and harmful consequences for the mother, family, and community.

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

At the time when I began leading the weekly devotions for the APRC, I had imagined that pastoring a church was probably the area of ministry that was most challenging to fulfill due to the stress and the many ministerial demands that pastors face. However, after becoming Chaplain to the APRC, I soon learned that the ministry for life often faces contentious opposition from those who earnestly support abortion and often aggressively assert their positions. It did not take a long time before I understood that the ministry for life exists on the front lines of the spiritual battle between life and death, light and darkness, and the kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil.

Over the last several years, I have witnessed the intensity of this ministry in the lives of the staff and volunteers of the APRC and in the ministry. Their passion for their clients and for seeing parents choose life is matched only by the stressful challenges of their work.

Each week, I lead a devotional time that includes sharing needs and stressors, studying Scripture, prayer, and ministry. The feedback I have received from the staff and volunteers indicates that my role and ministry among them has been helpful in spiritually equipping them for their ministries and in their lives. The focus of my ministry at APRC has been their spiritual formation and spiritual well-being. This has included teaching and demonstrating spiritual disciplines that sustain Christian ministry. I believe this research project will show that other PRC's can benefit from receiving this type of ministry, even in a limited scope (e.g., a training event).

The folks serving in the ministries of PRC's come to the ministry with various backgrounds and levels of Christian maturity. What they have in common is the impact of experiencing the stress of this ministry that undermines their spiritual well-being and



job satisfaction. While they love the ministry and believe in the cause, their job satisfaction can suffer from a lack of comprehensive Christian faith formation. They would benefit from comprehensive training in Biblical theology and Christian disciplines that can empower and sustain ministry in the face of the pressure of the life and death outcomes.

My experience of serving as Chaplain to our community's PRC has prepared me to develop a training in spiritual formation for the staff of other PRC's. I have led the staff of APRC through Scripture, listened to their challenges and experiences, taught them, prayed for them, anointed them, and ministered to them. I have taken calls at various hours to give counsel and prayer. Through this tenure, I have gained insights regarding how to offer a much-needed resource to those who work in this ministry.

Similarly, I have a desire to see PRC's thrive in their purpose of saving babies from death by abortion and saving the mothers, fathers, and families from the correlated heartaches and consequences. I want to equip them to walk beside pregnant women who may be experiencing unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. The success of PRC's aligns with the work of God's kingdom and his handiwork in the world. I hope to develop a teaching resource for all ministers in the pro-life arena that will equip and empower them to maintain spiritual well-being and job satisfaction through the difficulties of their daily work.

The staff of several PRC's encouraged me to pursue this project. The APRC staff and volunteers have assured me that my ministry among them has been fruitful and impactful. They are eager for me to develop a focused and thorough training for other PRC's. God has led me in this direction based on conversations with trusted advisors and

through the revelation that has come to me through prayer and the study of Scripture. This ministry project fulfills God's calling to me as priest and pastor.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The staff serving in PRC's experience the joy of mothers choosing life and then bringing their newborn babies to the center for everyone to see. Conversely, they know the sorrow and pain of hearing that a mother chose to abort a baby that now nobody will ever see alive in this world. This dichotomy of outcomes causes considerable emotional and spiritual peaks and valleys among PRC staff. The stressors of the ministry can take their toll on job satisfaction and on longevity in ministry roles. Those serving in the ministry often recognize that they are serving on the front lines of a battle between spiritual forces of life and those of death. They may even see it as an ongoing battle between good and evil. While the staff and volunteers do receive training for their roles in the ministry, most have not experienced what I would consider sufficient spiritual formation training in preparation for living and thriving in this spiritual and emotional vortex. Because of deficient Christian faith formation of the staff of Pregnancy Resource Centers, their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction suffer.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the project was to measure changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center through the intervention of an on-site six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation.

### **Research Questions**

The research aims to improve the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction among the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC). In order to measure the

effectiveness of the training, both elements must be measured prior to and after the training. Because the purpose of the training is to improve job satisfaction and spiritual well-being, both will be measured. Research will also determine the correlation, if any, between job satisfaction and spiritual well-being. This research addresses the identified problems of deficient training in Christian spiritual formation and the stress of the job that may lead to low job satisfaction. The specific aims of the research are to answer the questions below.

**Research Question #1**

What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center prior to the training in Christian spiritual formation?

**Research Question #2**

What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center following the training in Christian spiritual formation?

**Research Question #3**

What is the correlation between spiritual well-being and job satisfaction among the Your Choice Resource Center staff?

**Rationale for the Project**

The ministry of PRC's serves to save children and their mothers, fathers and family from the experience of abortion. PRC's are Christian ministries that function at the center of the mission of God's people. Their staff are involved in hands-on ministry that requires significant commitment. A typical staff person at a PRC interacts with pregnant women who may be intent on aborting their babies and some who want to keep their

babies but are experiencing a crisis pregnancy due to circumstances. Interactions that take place with clients of the PRC's sometimes are literally life and death scenarios. The ministry is highly charged emotionally, mentally, spiritually, relationally, politically, and financially for those who serve and clients. Because of the intensity and challenges of the ministry, the staff of PRC's must be spiritually mature and equipped for ministry; otherwise, they are in danger of suffering stress-related burnout and dissatisfaction in their vocations.

This study connects participation in PRC ministry and the stress-related struggles of PRC staff. PRC staff need training in spiritual formation to learn to sustain satisfaction in their ministry and spiritual well-being. This intervention in the spiritual formation of PRC staff contributes to the effectiveness of those engaged in this demanding ministry.

In addition to the stress of the ministry, there is a lack of training in comprehensive spiritual formation for the staff of PRC's. The staff generally has a love for people, believes in Jesus, and participates in church life. They may receive some training in elements of their work; however, specific training in spiritual disciplines for PRC staff is not available for the majority of staff. Staff tend to rely on their church background and personal devotional lives to provide them with the spiritual tools and strength for ministry. I believe that people in ministry are vulnerable to burn out or falling out for various reasons. Well-developed spiritual formation can equip and sustain Christians in the ministry; whereas, the lack of it may be deleterious to long-term ministry.

This project is necessary because the ministry of life is a ministry in the heart of God and is important to the church and world. Those in the ministry of PRC's are

important to God, and their health and well-being are important to the effectiveness of the ministry.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Christian Spiritual Formation / Faith Formation:** Christian spiritual formation or faith formation is defined according to the definition of Dr. Robert Mulholland: “A process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.” Mulholland elaborates, “The image of Christ is that which brings cleansing, healing, restoration, renewal, transformation and wholeness into the unclean, diseased, broken, imprisoned, dead incompleteness of our lives. It brings compassion in place of indifference, forgiveness in place of resentment, kindness in place of coldness, openness in place of protective defensiveness or manipulation, a life lived for God and not self” (ch. 3). Marjorie Thompson adds the descriptor that spiritual formation occurs through the Holy Spirit who indwells Christians (ch. 1).

Spiritual formation occurs through Christian devotional practices that equip the Christian and sustain him or her when involved in ministry. Spiritual formation also enables Christians to experience everyday life in a manner that contributes to their general well-being and that aligns with their Christian beliefs. The practices contributing to Christian faith formation are Biblical and include devotional study of Scripture, prayer, retreat, worship, spiritual gifts, small groups with other believers and listening to God.

**Ministry of Life:** The ministry of life promotes the value of human beings from the moment of conception to their natural death. This project focused on the ministry of life that occurs in Pregnancy Resource Centers. The meaning of the ministry of life is in

the sacredness or sanctity of human life that defines every human life as a gift from God. God creates each person in his image and likeness, and he alone has the power to create and take away innocent life. Those who work in the ministry of life strive to facilitate the birth and flourishing of all babies in and out of the womb.

**Christian Maturity:** This refers to the spiritual competency level that Christians must attain and sustain in order to be fruitful in ongoing ministry and faithful to God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ and Scripture. A mature Christian lives in close relationship with God and practices spiritual disciplines and exercises spiritual gifts and faith for his or her own life and for sake of others in the ministry to which God has called him or her.

**Spiritual Well-Being:** This is a state of perceived peace, health, contentment, and happiness without overwhelming anxiety, fear, or distress. It is a sense of satisfaction with one's relationship to God and purpose and direction in life. Spiritual well-being contributes to healthy relationships with other people and to fruitful work or ministry. For Christians, spiritual well-being and Christian maturity are closely related (Paloutzian et al.).

**Training:** Training includes in-person verbal instruction, facilitated discussion, and hands-on practice related to Christian faith formation. This training educate staff of PRC's on the topics of faith formation related to the ministry of life. It also includes ministry through prayer and pastoral care for the staff.

**Staff:** Staff includes all full-time and part-time employees and ongoing volunteers of PRC's. PRC staff often include administrative staff, medical personnel, counseling professionals, development and public relations officers, and volunteers who perform varieties of services.

**Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC):** Also known as Crisis Pregnancy Centers or Pregnancy Help Centers, PRC's exist primarily to help people choose life over abortion. PRC's fulfill their mission by providing resources to pregnant women, parents, and children. Services might include pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, prenatal care, counseling, parenting education, STD testing, post-abortion ministry, adoption referrals, clothing, and baby supplies. PRC's rarely charge fees for their services. They are sustained through donations, fundraising events, and grants. Many PRC's associate with a national network like Heartbeat International or Care Net to gain benefits of affiliation.

**Job Satisfaction:** Describes the level of fulfillment and contentment in a person's job, including ministry, paid or unpaid.

**Pastoral Care:** This is the type of ministry provided by Christian pastors that includes teaching, preaching, counseling, prayer ministry, facilitating discussions, and listening.

### **Delimitations**

This project targeted the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center, a PRC in Northeastern North Carolina. The Your Choice Resource Center is a single-site center offering services that include counseling, pregnancy testing, parenting classes, supplies for babies, and a medical clinic that performs ultrasounds. It also operates a mobile center with an ultrasound service for the purpose of persuading pregnant women to choose life for their unborn babies. This PRC is considered representative of PRC's in general in the Southeastern region of the United States. The participants work or volunteer in the PRC

on a regular schedule with consistent responsibilities. The YCRC is Christian-based and operates with the philosophy that abortion is never acceptable and that the baby in the womb is a sacred life from conception.

The project did not include interaction between the researcher and clients of the PRC, donors, or supporters of the PRC.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This project reviewed literature related to its several key elements: the Biblical and theological foundations of pro-life and pro-abortion arguments, the theology and practices of Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRC's), advocates and critics of PRC's, Christian spiritual formation, and research germane to measuring spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. Literature reviewed included voices asserting various beliefs concerning life in the womb and abortion. In addition to the subject of Pregnancy Resource Centers, a main thrust of the literature reviewed focuses on the relationship between spiritual formation and job satisfaction in ministry.

Two previously published dissertations on the pregnancy center movement were helpful in my research. Kimberly Kelly completed her Ph.D. dissertation for the University of Georgia in 2009 on the topic of *In the Name of the Mother: Gender and Religion in the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement*. She immersed herself in the PRC context and shared valuable research. Dorothy Wyatt-Youmans published a dissertation on *Pregnancy Resource Centers and the Woman's Choice: A Quantitative Correlational Study* for Capella University in 2015. Both researchers determined that much of literature reviewed on the topic of PRC's either advocates for the ministry of PRC's or is opposed



to their practices and that little research has been published pertaining to PRC's themselves (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Wyatt-Youmans).

Jordan Taffet published an honors master's thesis for the College of William and Mary in 2016 entitled, *Black Genocide, Reproductive Control, and the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement: A Conspiracy Narrative of Racial Hegemonic Order*. Taffet's thesis provided helpful research on general nature of PRC's.

Two main networks for PRC's, Heartbeat International (Heartbeat) and Care Net that include over 2900 PRC's among themselves, provided substantive information about PRC's and training manuals used by their network PRC's for staff and volunteer training (Care Net 2017; Heartbeat Int. 2017). Birthright International is another network of PRC's that includes over 300 chapters in its network and also contributed research information. Former PRC director and current PRC consultant Kirk Walden's book *The Wall* provides a full-length look at the purpose and effectiveness of PRC's from an insider's point of view.

Christian ethicists that were accessed in researching the Biblical ethics behind the pro-life movement include valuable work by David Gushee who wrote *The Sacredness of Human Life*. Christian authors and ethicists also include Randy Alcorn (2004), Michael Gorman (1993; 2004), Stanley Hauerwas (1993), Richard Hays (1996), Francis Beckwith (2000) and Scott Klusendorf (2009). These writers all contributed to establishing the theological foundation for the PRC movement. *Abortion: The Moral Issues* edited by Edward Batchelor offered several helpful chapters from Christian authors including theologians Robert Nelson and Daniel Callahan that provided pro-life theological insights for this review.

Literature reviewed from organizations and writers with a pro-abortion view and an oppositional perspective toward PRC's included writings from The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC). RCRC exists to support a woman's right to have an abortion. Similarly, Planned Parenthood and NARAL are two main advocacy organizations that advocate for the value of abortion and that oppose PRC's agendas. *Sacred Work*, a book by United Church of Christ minister Tom Davis, defends the work to keep abortions safe and legal as a sacred calling for Christians to embrace. George O'Brien's *The Church and Abortion* makes a similar pro-abortion case.

Several of the sources reviewed on spiritual formation, spiritual well-being and ministry effectiveness were books by well-known writers on the subject including Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline and Prayer*, Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines* and *Renovation of the Heart*, Eugene Peterson's *Eat This Book* and *Subversive Spirituality*, Henri Nouwen's *Spiritual Formation* and *The Wounded Healer*, Robert Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey* and Marjorie Thompson's *Soul Feast*. While other books, articles and research studies on spiritual formation for Christian ministers were reviewed, the above authors provide studied summaries of the main spiritual disciplines contributing to mature faith among Christians.

Several research articles that demonstrated and discussed the use of the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) (See Appendix A) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) (See Appendix B) were reviewed. These indicated the reliability of both scales for the purposes of this research project.

The makers of the FMS provided information regarding its intention, reliability and validity that was valuable to informing this research (Benson et al.). Dissertations

studying spiritual maturity either using the FMS or other scales were reviewed and included several that were similar to this research project. Ryan Dale Thompson completed a dissertation using the FMS to measure faith maturity before and after trainings for participants preparing for the Stephen Ministry. This was a training intervention for Christian ministers that used the FMS similarly to the way it was used in this research. Harry Hui and Chang-Ho Ji used the FMS in studies related to the faith maturity of ministers and evangelical Christians. Dissertations by Linda Marie Jones and Alan Jones measured faith maturity following spiritual formation interventions and used other similar quantitative and qualitative measurement tools.

Much research support for the SIMS was found in research published by Leslie Francis, the maker of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) that includes the SIMS. These include studies measuring burnout and job satisfaction among clergy (Francis and Crea; Francis et al). Kelvin Randall wrote a study published in the *Pastoral Psychology* supporting the value of the FBI and SIMS in studying Christian ministers. Diane Chandler wrote two helpful research studies on Christian pastors' levels of burnout and stress and how they are influenced by spiritual disciplines. These studies were complemented by the review of additional studies and articles on faith maturity and clergy job satisfaction in relation to spiritual disciplines.

The research methodology of this project was informed by Tim Sensing's book *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, a book specifically for Doctor of Ministry students working on their dissertation projects. *Research Methods for Post-Graduates 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* edited by Tony Greenfield was also referred to as a resource for input into the methodology of this research project.

Prior to this research project, this researcher had conducted preliminary trainings for two PRC's that provided feedback regarding the development and implementation of the training for this dissertation project. I also continued to receive feedback from Albemarle PRC staff in my role as center Chaplain during the course of the project. This feedback contributed to the development of the training content.

### **Research Methodology**

This section discusses the research methodology used in this project to accumulate information, develop the training, and measure the effectiveness of the training. Items discussed below include descriptions of the interactions between the researcher and staff of the Your Choice Resource Center. These methods include verbal feedback, completed questionnaires, and assessment tools.

The purpose of the project was to develop a training in spiritual formation for staff of PRC's and to measure the effectiveness of the training in improving spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The purpose of the project was also to gain feedback that would be helpful in improving its effectiveness for future engagements. For this reason, spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in ministry were assessed prior to and following the training.

### **Type of Research**

This research project used a mixed-method approach to measuring the impact of the training. A qualitative questionnaire measured the effectiveness of the intervention through participants' written feedback (See Appendix C). The researcher also received verbal feedback during and after the training. Quantitative self-assessment tools were

used to measure faith maturity and job satisfaction before and after the training. This data was then analyzed to answer the research questions.

### **Participants**

The participants in the training itself were the staff and volunteers of Your Choice Resource Center in Rocky Mount, NC.

### **Data Collection**

In order to answer to the above research questions, relevant information was needed in order to develop the training itself. In addition to serving as Chaplain to the APRC, the researcher had previously conducted trainings for Carolina PRC in Greenville, NC, and Albemarle PRC in Elizabeth City NC, that provided feedback and suggestions for developing the training. These training groups' feedback served to inform this project.

The assessment tool used to measure the effectiveness of the training for spiritual well-being was the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) (See Appendix A). The assessment tool used to measure job satisfaction was the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) (See Appendix B) tool taken from the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). These were complemented by a researcher-designed questionnaire and verbal feedback received during and after the intervention. The researcher's observations and participant verbal feedback contributed to the research data and findings.

### **Data Analysis**

Data from the pre- and post-intervention FMS and SIMS instruments were analyzed to determine changes in each instrument's scores from pre- to post-intervention to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. The FMS and SIMS scores were compared to each other to determine whether correlation could be determined between the two scales

to answer Research Question 3. Data from the researcher-designed questionnaire was also considered in providing elaboration to the quantitative instruments in answering the three research questions. Research observation and participant verbal feedback provided additional insight into the analysis of the above data in answering the research questions.

### **Generalizability**

The purpose of the project was to measure changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation. The participants in the project's measured training were limited to this PRC. The outcome of the project was a completed training template and outline that can be used with any PRC (See Appendix E).

### **Trustworthiness of Project:**

- a. **Applicability:** The project was completed in the context of a community PRC. PRC's in various locales follow generally the same mission and resemble each other in organizational structure, staffing, training, and functionality. The training developed for the project is applicable in various PRC's and for staff of PRC's who may gather at regional workshops for training. The training in spiritual formation can be amended and enhanced to apply to particular needs that have been expressed by PRC's. The timing of the sessions can be tailored to fit into differing schedule requirements.
- b. **Dependability:** The project is based on research garnered from several methods such as literature review, prior trainings, ministry to PRC staff and volunteers over several years, ongoing feedback and study. It incorporated findings that apply particularly to people working in PRC's that share similar challenges and

needs. The findings from this research project can be confidently applied to PRC's in general due to the research and shared characteristics of participants in the larger population of PRC staff.

- c. **Credibility:** The Faith Maturity Scale and Satisfaction in Ministry Scale have been researched widely and determined to be credible assessments of their targeted elements (See Chapter 3 "Instrumentation").

### **Significance of Project:**

- a. **Consistency:** The project included developing a basic template and outline for the intervention (See Appendix E). The implementation of the project depended on the ministry and training competence of the researcher and the participation of the staff. Both of these can vary among other trainers or participants. This researcher is an Anglican priest with relevant education and pastoral experience. For this researcher, the project maintains consistency in various settings. However, the ability to duplicate this research would be dependent on the trainer and his or her qualifications. The research project does provide an indication of whether such an intervention can be effective toward its stated purpose.
- b. **Impact:** The research project developed a training in spiritual formation for the staff. The final product of the research was a training format that can impact people who work in PRC's. The indirect impact of the training will be the positive outcome of these ministries that seek to influence mothers to choose life for their unborn babies. This training can be implemented for any PRC by the researcher or by other qualified trainers. The outcome of sustaining or improving spiritual well-

being and job satisfaction among PRC staff has ongoing and unlimited potential to impact lives.

### **Project Overview**

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature and research on several areas concerning Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRC's) including the issue of sanctity of life for babies in the womb, the Biblical theology of PRC's, themes of spiritual formation and faith maturity, and research on measuring spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. Chapter 3 explains the design of the study, its methodology, and data-collection and analysis process. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the research data in correlation to the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses the major findings and the implications derived from the study, offering suggestions for further study and significant indications for ministry settings.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This section of the dissertation provides a review of literature relevant to this project. It includes the following topics: Biblical and theological foundations of the PRC's pro-life ministries, contrary theological views, PRC's context, PRC's purpose and methods, opposition to PRC's, the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of staff of PRC's, Christian spiritual formation, and research methodology and instruments for measuring spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. Literature reviewed revealed that the practices, beliefs, and outcomes of PRC's have generated diverse and often contradictory responses, especially on the value of life in the womb that is at the core of the PRC's mission. This dichotomy of views on life in the womb and issues related to abortion and PRC's is summarized by Christian theologian Miroslav Volf:

If you think that an unborn life is human and therefore sacred, then a faith that puts a mother's choice above respect for unborn life will seem self-centered, oppressive, violent, and even murderous when human life is most vulnerable. In contrast, if you think that an unborn life is not yet a human being, then a faith that seeks to protect that life while sacrificing the well-being of its mother and against her choices will seem disrespectful, oppressive, and sometimes even violent toward the mother. (4)

Volf emphasizes the determining value and influence of how life in the womb is perceived.

While attempting to be objective in reviewing literature related to abortion, sacredness of life and PRC's, this researcher has a personal belief in the sacredness of life, is pro-life / anti-abortion and advocates for the ministry of PRC's. In her dissertation on PRC's in 2009, Kelly discovered the following:

To date, there are no academic or in-depth studies of the [Crisis Pregnancy Center] movement, only glowing anecdotes from pro-life organizations, and sharply critical reports from pro-choice groups. These limited sources reflect the one-dimensional perspectives currently characterizing public portrayals of CPCs.

(1)

This finding remains largely true among literature reviewed for this project. The sections below will reveal the ramifications of the above opposing views on life in the womb and attempt to offer diverse and objective perspectives from the available literature pertaining to PRC's.

PRC's are Christian ministries. They rely on the authority of Scripture and Christian theology for their purpose. They believe that Scripture shows that from the time of conception there is a person in the womb who should be welcomed into the world and loved. Staff training manuals from Heartbeat International and Care Net, the two largest PRC networks, were accessed to gain valuable insight on PRC's training, beliefs, and culture. The literature reviewed describes the tension and stress of the vocation of the PRC staff who minister in the midst of these opposing theological and cultural views. This literature provides indications of the context for the ministry of staff of PRC's in relation to their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction.

This project used the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) to assess the impact of spiritual formation training on spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of staff of a PRC. The literature review shows substantial support for the validity of these instruments. It also reviews literature addressing the relevance of measuring the effectiveness of training in spiritual formation on both spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The literature reviewed below supports the value of the topic and methodology of this research project.

### **Biblical Foundations**

#### **Sanctity of Life in the Womb**

The message of Scripture, especially the gospel of Jesus, “is the foundation of the pregnancy center ministry” (Care Net *Serving* 10, 96). This section of the literature review will highlight prominent Scriptures related to abortion and that provide a basis for the mission and ministry of PRC’s.

Christian theologian David P. Gushee’s book *The Sacredness of Human Life* offers a scholarly and comprehensive justification for basing the pro-life ministry on Biblical foundations. He writes:

Through God’s revelation in Scripture and incarnation in Jesus Christ, God has declared and demonstrated the sacred worth of human beings and will hold us accountable for responding appropriately. A full embrace of sacredness of human life leads to a full-hearted commitment to foster human flourishing. (33)

At the core of the PRC’s pro-life mission is the acceptance of the Biblical statement that God alone is the creator of all people in his image and likeness. This idea is where the Bible and the Christian faith begin:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Gen. 1.26-28, 31)

The first book of the Bible clearly states that God is the creator of people. The Heartbeat and Care Net training manuals emphasize this Scriptural truth as foundational. Heartbeat elaborates that “At the start of everything is a relational God. He created man to be in relationship with himself and with others. He especially created the relationship between man and woman and their offspring” (*The Love Approach* 14).

Throughout the diverse writings of Scripture from dozens of authors and over many centuries, this theme of God as loving creator is emphasized. After humans sinned and after the flood account in the Bible, Scripture still confirms the value of people to God who says the following to Noah, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it” (Gen. 9.6-7). This Scripture shows that even though people are imperfect they are still considered made in God’s image, and God prohibits killing another innocent person. In the commands of the law, Moses records God’s command, “Do not kill the innocent and righteous” (Exod. 23.7). In response to this Biblical claim, Gushee writes the following about the sacredness of all people:

God has consecrated all human beings as sacred by his ascription. Human life is sacred: this means that each and every human being has been set apart for designation as a being of elevated status and dignity. Each human being must therefore be viewed with reverence and treated with due respect and care, with special attention to preventing any desecration or violation of a human being. (*Sacredness* 19, 24)

The staff of PRC's believe that the child in the womb is a person from the moment of conception (*Care Net Serving; Heartbeat The Love Approach*). Several Biblical foundations exist for this view including the following:

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them (Ps. 139.13-16).

This psalm clearly indicates that God forms people in the womb and is intimately involved in life in the womb. Care Net's staff training manual explains the above verse:

David acknowledges that God knit him together in his mother's womb and that, as a result, he is 'fearfully and wonderfully made.' One of the earliest Christian confessions is that 'God is the author of life.' Quite literally God is overseeing the development of every unborn child. (*Serving* 14)

God's call to the prophet Jeremiah shows that he interacts with people even while they are in the womb, as he imagines their lives. The prophet writes, "Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (Jer. 1.4-5). Another Old Testament verse shows the interaction of the twins Esau and Jacob while in the womb of their mother Rebekah. This demonstrates the personhood of babies in the womb and the value of the unborn babies' lives to God who knows them and has plans for them:

And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. (Gen. 25.21-24).

Christians in the pro-life movement argue that these verses show that each person is conceived first in the mind of God before being given life in the womb and then in the world. God is intimately involved in the life of each child in the womb and even knows his plans for them before they are born.

This is emphasized in the prophecy of Isaiah: "The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. He who formed me from the womb to be his servant" (Isa. 49.1, 5). The Psalmist likewise writes, "Your hands have

made and fashioned me” (Ps. 119.73). These Scriptures inspire the pro-life view that life begins at conception and the unborn baby is a person: “Expressions of belief that life begins at conception are synonymous with a pro-life attitude. The unborn fetus is considered a person, and abortion is morally wrong because it ends a person’s life” (Munson 26, 135). Heartbeat refers to the creation story of Genesis 1-3 as showing that not only does God create each person in his image and likeness but also desires to have a relationship with each person whom he loves (*The Love Approach* 14-15). Heartbeat’s *The L.O.V.E. Approach Training Manual* quotes Psalm 127.3–5 to show the value of children in the womb:

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate (147).

The conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary shows that not only does the life of each person begin in the womb at conception but that Jesus the Son of God’s human life began at the moment of conception in the womb. John (the Baptist) leaps in his mother Elizabeth’s womb when Mary who is pregnant with Jesus comes near Elizabeth. The full text of the conception of Jesus and the interaction between Mary and Elizabeth is highlighted because it supports the sacredness of life in the womb:

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy--the Son of God.

And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud



cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!  
 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my  
 womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a  
 fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord” (Luke 1.24-45).

This narrative of the conceptions and pregnancies of Mary and Elizabeth show that their sons are alive and interactive in the womb at six months for John and less than a month for Jesus. For those in PRC ministries, this is an interaction of two persons in the womb and the Holy Spirit who is God their Creator:

Truly, we are all person from the very moment of conception and we have dignity as unborn children of God. After all, it was an unborn baby, later known as John the Baptist, who was the first, after Mary, to recognize the Savior of the world when Jesus was a baby in his mother’s womb. (*Heartbeat The Love Approach* 173)

New Testament scholar Darrell Bock writes that “the text implies the presence of a person in the womb, much as Psalm 139 suggests more explicitly. It is clear that life exists in a person long before birth” (42-43).

Mary’s conceived baby is not only a child in the womb, but it is the Son of God who has become a human person. Gushee confirms the impact that the conception and life of Jesus has on the value of every person from conception to death:

It is hard to imagine a more profound way to communicate the sacred worth of a child [than Jesus did]. The incarnation elevates the status of every human being everywhere on the planet at every time in human history. It elevates the

worth of every human being at every stage of life, because the arc of Jesus' own life included every stage of existence, from conception to death and even resurrection, which is our own destiny in Christ (*Sacredness* 90, 95).

Scriptures involving caring for the weak and vulnerable are also relevant to children in the womb and to the mother. A main Scripture summarizing this view is the parable that Jesus tells of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.29-37). The emphasis in this parable is on compassionate care to the traveler and that showing him mercy is how one fulfills the command to "love your neighbor." It is this form of mercy and compassionate care that inspires ministry to pregnant mothers and their unborn children. New Testament scholar and pro-life author Michael J. Gorman and Christian author Ann Loar Brooks conclude from the above parable the following "In recognizing the unborn child as our neighbor, we become the neighbor God wills for us to be" (54).

This parable supports the action of offering hospitality and welcome to the unborn child and his or her mother as neighbor for whom we are to care. Richard Hays elaborates on the Parable of the Good Samaritan:

The point is that we are called upon to become neighbors... [both] to the mother in a "crisis pregnancy" and to her unborn child.... To define the unborn child as a nonperson is to narrow the scope of moral concern, whereas Jesus calls upon us to widen it by showing mercy and actively intervening on behalf of the helpless. The Samaritan is a paradigm of the love that goes beyond ordinary obligation and thus creates a neighbor relation where none existed before. (451)

Matthew 25.40 also serves as a basis for the PRC ministry: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” The baby in the womb represents the “least” of people who are vulnerable and weak. In light of this verse, Heartbeat describes its PRC ministry as ministering to “Christ in His creation” (*The Love Approach* 22). Additionally, the following Scripture from the Psalms serves as a foundation to save children from abortion:

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy, deliver them from the hand of the wicked (Ps. 82.3-4).

This is consistent through *The L.O.V.E. Approach Training Manual* that highlights ministry to both the pregnant mother and the unborn child as being ministry to those in desperate need of help, especially when abortion is a seriously considered possibility. According to Heartbeat’s teaching, this fulfills the love and justice imperatives of Biblical Theology like the above psalm (183).

Children in the womb are not excluded from Jesus’ command to “Let the little children come to me” (Matt. 19.14). Christian ethicist Stanley Hauerwas asserts the following regarding welcoming children, especially those in the womb and so vulnerable:

Christian hospitality includes the readiness to welcome new life among us, even to the point of challenging the way we live. Church must be always ready to receive children. The people of God know no enemy when it comes to children (qtd. in Brooks and Gorman 52).

Not only does the Bible indicate Jesus’ love and affection for children, it also indicates that he loves and cares for each one of them, especially since his incarnation involved

conception, life in the womb, and becoming a baby and a child. This prompts the Christian theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer to assert the following in his writing on discipleship:

In Christ's incarnation all of humanity regains the dignity of bearing the image of God. Whoever from now on attacks the least of the people attacks Christ, who took on human form and who in himself has restored the image of God for all who bear a human countenance. (285)

The ministry of PRC's is rooted in the Biblical teachings that each person is loved and valued by God. God, therefore, stands with those who are vulnerable and needy: "For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death" (Ps. 109.31).

The creation of each person in God's image and the salvation that God offers through Jesus for each person (John 3.16; Rom. 5.8) resound with an imperative to love and care for all people including babies in the womb.

The apostle John sums up the Biblical mandate to love others in his letter to the churches: "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3.18). This restates the command by Jesus: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13.34). John's gospel confirms that God loves all people in the world: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3.16). Jesus later emphasizes that his willingness to lay down his life as a sacrifice for all people demonstrates the greatest love there is, and it is expressed to all people (John 15.13; Rom. 5.8).

The Apostle Paul encourages Christians to help one another in love: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6.2). PRC staff work to fulfill these Biblical imperatives in their daily work with mothers of unborn children. The core of the Biblical foundations for the PRC ministry is summarized by Care Net:

The goal of pregnancy center ministry is to reach out and offer hurting people the love of Christ. This love is demonstrated by sharing life-affirming alternatives to abortion, ministering healing and reconciliation for those who have experienced abortion, and offering hope for the future in Jesus Christ. (*Serving* 53)

None of the above Scriptures mention abortion directly nor do they expressly prohibit it. They also do not say outright that the fetus is a person from conception. Christian ethicist Scott Rae acknowledges these facts. In addition to asserting that no Scriptural text properly examined can support abortion, he concludes the following from Scripture:

The general tenor of Scripture is resoundingly pro-life. It is undisputable that God is deeply involved in fashioning the unborn in the womb and thus deeply cares about the unborn. From the Bible’s perspective, abortion is thus seen as an unjustified interference in God’s sacred role in the womb. (127)

Rae leaves no room for justifying abortion based on references to Scripture.

### **Opposition to Life is Opposition to God**

The Bible provides a coherent message that the evil spirits and their agents hate life and oppose the birth, nurture, development and health of people. This is illustrated in Biblical narrative accounts and statements. The Bible shows how Herod, the King of Judea at the time, tried to kill Jesus as soon as he learned about him and his birth. An angel warns Jesus’ father Joseph to take him and flee to Egypt to escape (Matt. 2.13-16).

This Scriptural account shows God's protection for his own son Jesus and shows the cruelty of the enemies of God's son trying to kill him and even being willing to kill babies indiscriminately. This narrative resembles the events that occurred when the people of Israel were enslaved in Egypt. The king of Egypt ordered the sons of the Israelites to be murdered immediately upon birth. This is at the time when the prophet Moses was born and protected despite the king's edict. The Biblical account includes the heroic acts by the Israelite midwives who refuse to kill the babies (Exod. 1.15-16). This account illustrates not only the opposition to life that comes from those who oppose God's work and people, but it shows the heroism in saving life and how God rewards those who work to save the life of babies for his sake.

Jesus teaches that the enemy of God comes to take away life. This is in opposition to the work of Jesus who gives life: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10.10). The New Testament warns against the evil work of the devil, the enemy of God's people. The Apostle Peter writes the following about the devil's destructive work: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5.8). The Biblical foundation for the ministries of the PRC's includes the belief that forces of evil in this world work against life and that abortion is a manifestation of their evil. The Heartbeat training for staff includes the following assertion in response to the Biblical idea of good versus evil and spiritual battles:

Pregnancy help centers stand exposed and conspicuous in the middle of a huge battlefield. The enemy of God seeks to destroy life as an attack against God himself. He hurls his threats at us in a direct frontal attack, in an attempt

to intimidate us from stepping out to fulfill the callings God has laid upon our hearts. (*The Love Approach* 26)

The Bible has several accounts of God's repulsion and anger at people for sacrificing their children. This is often identified as the height of wickedness by God's people who follow the pattern of other nations in killing their own children. Scripture explicitly commands against this practice: "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods" (Deut. 12.31). Unfortunately, the people of Israel descend into evil themselves. The Psalmist's indictment toward them for their wickedness climaxes in the final charge of sacrificing their own children: "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood" (Ps. 106.37-38). Here the people confess that they belong to a nation that has participated with demons in sacrificing their children. These Scriptures show that God's repulsion at the harm of children is commensurate to his love for children.

Jesus teaches the following about Satan when indicting the religious leaders for their sinful practices: "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8.44). Bonhoeffer identifies abortion as an act of murder and destruction:

Destruction in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent life. God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life is murder. (Bonhoeffer qtd. in Metaxas 19)

The Biblical foundation of the ministry of PRC's includes the belief that those in the ministry are working against the devil, demons, and forces of evil that inspire and promote abortion that is murder of the child. The spiritual battle between the forces of evil and followers of Christ is revealed in the statement by the Apostle Paul:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Eph. 6.10-13).

In an article for *First Things*, Christian theologian Richard John Neuhaus quotes the above Scripture as describing the context for the spiritual battle over abortion and concludes, "In the biblical view of things, the conflict between the culture of life and the culture of death will continue until the End Time." To stand on the Biblical foundations for the ministry of life is also to stand against the forces that seek to end and destroy life. *The L.O.V.E. Approach Training Manual* of Heartbeat recognizes the spiritual battle and emphasizes that their power for ministry "lies in what Christ has done for us on the cross, and absolutely no one can stand against it. God has not called us to be 'successful' in



changing women's minds and saving babies; He has called us to be faithful. And when we are, He will bring about success through our efforts" (27).

### **Theological Foundations**

In accord with the above Biblical foundations, Christian history asserts the pro-life view as the acceptable approach toward life in the womb. Below are theological assertions that promote the sacredness of life and an anti-abortion argument that is in concord with the PRC's position. Gushee summarizes the early Christian view on life in the womb:

But for Christians, the child's life too was sacred, even in the womb and in infancy, as was the life of the woman carrying the child. For both Jews and Christians, abortion and infanticide were absolutely banned, a fact that remains highly important for those Christians today who oppose abortion as a violation of life's sacredness. (*Sacredness* 125)

One of the earliest Christian documents outside the New Testament, *The Didache* (1<sup>st</sup> – early 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.), explicitly prohibits abortion and infanticide: "Do not kill a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant" (II.2). Other prominent early Christian documents that uniformly prohibit abortion include *The Epistle of Barnabas* (1<sup>st</sup> Century), Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Century), Athenagora's *A Plea for the Christians* (2<sup>nd</sup> Century), Tertullian's *Apology* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries), and Clement of Alexandria's *Prophetic Eclogues* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries) (Cahill; Gorman "Why is the New Testament," "Abortion and the Early Church"; D. Smith).

Alexander F. C. Accessedster, Orthodox priest and Dean and Professor of Moral Theology at Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary in New York, concerningn abortion and

church history, writes, “It is one of only several moral issues on which not one dissenting opinion has ever been expressed by the Church Fathers. Even a cursory reading of the patristic literature reveals a relentless campaign against the inhuman sin of abortion” (qtd. in Lamb 1).

The idea that the early church agreed that abortion is murder is sometimes given as the reason why the New Testament fails to mention abortion in particular. Because it would have been unthinkable for the faithful believers in Jesus to abort a baby in the womb, there was no reason to discuss it (Gorman ”Silent”; Grisez; D. A. Jones; Klusendorf *Case for Life*; Reardon). Richard Hays writes the following regarding the New Testament’s silence on abortion:

Though the New Testament gives no explicit prohibition, its portrayal of God as the author and giver of life creates a general presumption against any decision to terminate life. The church should follow the example of the compassionate Samaritan, of the early Jerusalem church, and of Jesus himself, all of whom acted sacrificially for the sake of others, particularly those who were weak, poor or helpless. (456)

Hays concludes that the cumulative Christian case in regard to life in the womb and abortion becomes heavily weighted against abortion when all is taken into account (456).

Jewish texts from the time of the New Testament writings that would have been influential in the Jewish-Christian thought on abortion unequivocally condemn abortion.

Below are some examples:

-- *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (written between 50 B.C. and A.D. 50) says, "A woman should not destroy the unborn babe in her belly, nor after its birth throw it before the dogs and vultures."

-- *The Sibylline Oracles* (second century B.C. to second century A.D.) includes among the wicked those who "produce abortions and unlawfully cast their offspring away" as well as sorcerers who dispense abortifacients.

-- *I Enoch* (first or second century B.C.) says that an evil angel taught humans how to "smash the embryo in the womb."

-- Philo of Alexandria (Jewish philosopher, 25 B.C. to A.D. 41) rejected the notion that the fetus is merely part of the mother's body.

-- Josephus (first-century Jewish historian) wrote, "The law orders all the offspring be brought up, and forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus." A woman who did so was considered to have committed infanticide because she destroyed a "soul" and hence diminished the race (see citations in Kirby; Klusendorf "Answering").

The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches have maintained this tradition as their doctrinal teaching prohibiting abortion (Benedict; Bernadin; Callahan; Pope Francis; Harakas). In a recent joint statement Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Krill write the following: "We call on all to respect the inalienable right to life. Millions are denied the very right to be born into the world. The blood of the unborn cries out to God (cf. Gen 4.10)" (21). The Orthodox Tradition has followed the early church teachings in "viewing all life, including prenatal life, as the image of God" (Cahill 4). The Roman

Catholic view is summarized by the late Joseph Cardinal Bernadin in his lecture on the “Ethic of Life:”

I am convinced that the pro-life position of the Church must be developed in terms of a comprehensive and consistent ethic of life. The principle is at the heart of Catholic teaching on abortion; it is because the fetus is judged to be both human and not an aggressor that Catholic teaching concludes that direct attack on fetal life is always wrong. (Bernadin 1, 5)

Evangelical Protestant pro-life Christians point to theologians John Calvin, Helmut Thielicke, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as historical Christian voices who strongly opposed abortion and saw it as murder of a person in the womb (Care Net 2009 16; Metaxas). Reformer John Calvin called abortion “an expiable crime” and described the unborn child as being “already a man” (qtd. in Cahill 5). One of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s influential theologians, Karl Barth, writes the following about respect for life:

The unborn child is from the very first a child. It is still developing and has no independent life. But it is a man and not a thing, nor a mere part of the mother’s body . . . He who destroys germinating life kills a man . . . The fact that a definite NO must be the presupposition of further discussion cannot be contested, least of all today, (415-417)

The late evangelical theologian Francis Schaeffer equates a faithful view of Christian Scripture with being pro-life and anti-abortion. He considers the acceptance of abortion by Christians as a key indicator of major problems among Christians in the West. He writes the following in his book *The Great Evangelical Disaster*:

The unborn child is a human being created in the image of God, and to deny this is to deny the authority of the Bible. It is impossible to read Psalm 139 and truly believe what it says without realizing that life in the womb is human life. It is impossible to truly believe in the Incarnation and not realize that the child conceived in Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit was indeed the Son of God from the time of conception. If we truly believe the bible, there is no question when human life begins. And to deny this is to deny the authority of the Bible. (108-109)

Maintaining the value of life in the womb is essential to protecting unborn children from abortion which dehumanizes the child in the womb. Christian theologian Jurgen Moltmann identifies the danger of minimizing the humanity and personhood of unborn babies: “Every devaluation of the fetus, the embryo, and the fertilized ovum compared with life that is already born and adult is the beginning of a rejection and a dehumanization of human beings” (268).

In defense of the baby in the womb and the pregnant mother, Pope John Paul II insists that those in the pro-life movement must also become “courageously pro-woman” (qtd. in Reardon 6). Pope John Paul’s statement is consistent with pro-life theological foundations that continue to promote the value of the mother along with her baby. Gushee provides a summary of this view:

No treatment of abortion is satisfactory that does not fix its gaze on the sacred lives of both woman and child and does not ask what it might mean for both to live and both to flourish. All who care about life’s sacredness must understand the

factors that will motivate thousands of women to seek an abortion today, and these must be addressed systematically. (*Sacredness* 357, 359)

Christian theologian and ethicist J. Robert Nelson summarizes the theological foundations for the pro-life argument:

1. God is indeed the creator of life in general, of human life in particular, and of both the body and soul of the human being.
2. God the Creator is omniscient and personal; God's name is Love.
3. Men and women are procreators with God.
4. All humans can be said to have been made "in the image of God."
5. Each human being is unique and irreplaceable.
6. True humanity is found not in individualization, but in human community.
7. The definition and identity of human life must be given in terms of personhood, and not alone in terms of living tissue.
8. For Christian faith, the definition of life in terms of personhood is determined by the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the true pattern of authentic human personhood and as the divine Lord of life. (56-58)

The above statements are intended to provide uniform theological foundations for all of those in the pro-life movement and to promote the dignity of all people including unborn children (Callahan; Gushee *Sacredness*; Klusendorf "Answering"; Nelson).

### **Pro-choice Religious Views on Abortion**

In the contemporary religious landscape, there are views from within Christian denominations and religious sources that contrast the teachings promoted by PRC's and those cited above. The organization The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

(RCRC) exists to support a woman's right to have an abortion. The RCRC works to provide safe and legal access to abortion services for any woman desiring them. The group's mantra is "Pro Faith. Pro Family. Pro Choice" ("Home"). It describes itself as "a broad-based, national, interfaith movement that brings the moral force of religion to protect and advance reproductive health, choice, rights and justice through education, prophetic witness, pastoral presence and advocacy" ("Home"). A handful of groups from Christian denominations that continue to be affiliated with the RCRC. The Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ are two of them in the USA (RCRC "Home"). In 2016, the United Methodist Church General Conference voted to withdraw from the RCRC by a vote of 61%-39% (Lemperis).

The precursor to the RCRC, the Clergy Consultation Service (CCS), existed to help women secure safe and legal abortion services. Its founder, Rev. Howard Moody, asserts the following regarding life in the womb: "We are certain that it is not a human being, equal in any way to the life of the mother, it is a form of 'potential life'" (Brooks and Gorman 20). At one time, the CCS accumulated 1400 clergy in its network to help women procure safe abortion services. For Moody and the other clergy, they saw a pastoral obligation in referring and even escorting women with "problem pregnancies" to abortion providers. Prior to abortion becoming legal, Moody along with a group of other "liberal" clergy authored the founding document of the CCS titled "Clergy Statement on Abortion Law Reform and Consultation Service On Abortion" in which they conclude the following:

We affirm that there is a period during gestation when, although there may be embryo life in the fetus, there is no living child upon whom the crime of murder

can be committed. Therefore we pledge ourselves as clergymen to a continuing effort to educate and inform the public to the end that a more liberal abortion law in this state and throughout the nation be enacted. Therefore believing as clergymen that there are higher laws and moral obligations transcending legal codes, we believe that it is our pastoral responsibility and religious duty to give aid and assistance to all women with problem pregnancies. To that end we are establishing a Clergymen's Consultation Service on Abortion which will include referral to the best available medical advice and aid to women in need. (Carmen and Moody 30-31)

In his 1973 book *Abortion Counseling and Social Change*, Moody demonstrates his perceived pastoral mission to make abortion safe and legal. He writes of the initial clergy involved that “Most of us were to see theological “principles” and ethical norms shattered by the existential burden of a decision that cried not for sermons and exhortations but for supportive affirmation and concrete assistance for the person” (22). The supportive affirmation and assistance often were expressed in procuring abortions for women with unwanted pregnancies and advocating for legal abortions.

In his book *Sacred Work*, United Church of Christ minister Tom Davis defends the work to keep abortions safe and legal as a sacred calling for Christians to embrace. Representing other pro-choice Christians, he describes abortion services as providing a great social justice ministry. He writes, “Defense of Planned Parenthood and the women it serves should be made on the basis of justice...Justice is a biblical term and religious people understand it” (103). The Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, a former President and CEO of the RCRC, writes the following in support of abortion and abortion providers:



The work for abortion rights is one of the great social justice movements of our time. Abortion services is “sacred work,” not opposed to biblical views of justice but fully consistent with the commandments to love God and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Thousands of clergy have served with Planned Parenthood affiliates throughout the country. (ix-xi)

Clergy who support abortion and defend abortion providers emphasize justice for the mother who has a right to choose abortion (Davis; O’Brien; Sollinger; Wilder).

Pro-choice or pro-abortion clergy often believe at least during the initial phases of the pregnancy that there is no person in the womb, so the biblical prohibition against murder is irrelevant. For example, O’Brien argues, “The common, most effective and most controversial pro-choice rejoinder to the pro-life claim about the unborn child is to deny that the ‘fetus’ has any right to life because it is not a person” (66). If the fetus is not a person then the mother is merely acting on and for herself, which is her right and in her best interest. Abortion rights advocates argue along these lines: “Abortion rights bolster the claim of all women to lives imbued with justice, safety and dignity” (Sollinger 9). Women’s health advocate Laura Kaplan describes abortion “as a potential catalyst for personal growth, an opportunity for a woman to take stock of her life” (33). Former women’s health doctor and abortion provider Elizabeth Karlin suggests a positive motivation for abortion: “I know that women have abortions because they have a sense of what it is to be a good mother” (273).

Pro-abortion Christians may esteem ethical, legal or political considerations over the pro-life Biblical perspective. Newton asserts, “The justifiability of abortion is in no way a religious issue, but an ethical, legal and a political issue (3). One study by the

Guttmacher Institute reports that nearly two-thirds of women who have abortions identify themselves as Christians (47).

Denying the status of personhood to the fetus is what can lead people, including Christians, from various backgrounds to the pro-choice position. Jaggar claims that “denying the moral status of full personhood to the fetus is a standard move in the philosophical literature on abortion that leads to the pro-choice position and even to support of infanticide” (340). Writing in the *Christian Century*, Eller explains the severity of the matter of personhood of the fetus:

Almost all proabortion arguments start from the premise that the fetus which is acted upon is not a person, not a human being. The action itself, then, can be understood as private and personal — the woman acting upon herself, as it were, rather than acting upon another individual, since there is only one person involved, not two (16).

The denial of the personhood of the child in the womb undermines the Christian pro-life argument against abortion: “The pro-life position has in effect only one argument, based on the notion that the unborn is a person” (Rae 131). From the beginning of the pro-abortion movement, undermining the personhood of the child in the womb has been a foundation of abortion advocacy.

### **Pregnancy Resource Centers as a Ministry of Life**

Over 2000 PRC’s exist today in North America. Estimates suggest the number may be as high as 4000 (Dias; Hara; Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Walden; Wyatt-Youmans). Among these PRC’s, about 2 million women are served annually by thousands of staff and volunteers (Hartshorn *Foot Soldiers*; Wyatt-Youmans). Two main

networks for PRC's, Heartbeat International (Heartbeat) and Care Net, claim over 2900 PRC's among their networks (Care Net *Serving*, "About"; Heartbeat "Our Story"). Birthright International is another network of PRC's that has over 300 centers in its network (Birthright "Contact"). While the PRC movement has been the main pro-life initiative to reduce abortions, it remains the least studied of anti-abortion movements (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Munson; Wyatt-Youmans).

PRC's exist in the larger context of ministries for life, and they have the aim to reduce abortions by direct interaction with pregnant women—some of whom may be considering abortion. PRC's generally do not charge their clients for any of the services they offer. PRC's are Christian ministries offered as a service of faith to God (Care Net *Seven Keys*; Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Taffet; Walden; Wyatt-Youmans).

A 2013 New Times article reporting of the growing influence of PRC's describes them with the following:

With largely volunteer staffs and donations from mostly Christian sources, centers usually offer free tests and ultrasounds, services that clinics like Planned Parenthood charge for. They offer advice about baby-rearing or adoption, ask if women are being pressured to abort, and give technical descriptions of abortion and fetal development. Many offer prayer and Bible study. (Belluck)

Those who labor in the ministry of life believe the abortion issue is a Christian issue to address. They do not to leave it to abortion providers to provide the much needed counsel and guidance to mothers with crisis or unwanted pregnancies (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; "In the Name of the Mother"). Pro-life activists, including PRC's, consider all abortion as morally objectionable and always the wrong choice, even if it may be the

most difficult decision a mother ever has to make (Munson; O'Brien; Williams et al; Wyatt-Youmans).

PRC's exist in a culture where many unintended or crisis pregnancies occur. PRC's were initially known as "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" (Care Net *Seven Keys*). Half of pregnancies in the United States are unintended; although, unintended pregnancy is not necessarily an unwanted pregnancies. Nearly half of these unintended pregnancies result in abortion. 30% of U.S. women will have an abortion by the age of 45. The majority, possibly 90%, of abortions terminate unintended pregnancies (Levi & Dau; Steinberg & Rubin; Thomas; Wyatt-Youmans). Gushee indicates the situations for many of the women seeking abortion:

A disproportionate number of poor women and women of color choose abortions. Black women account for 30% of abortions and Hispanic women for 25% other non-white women 9%. 42% with incomes below the poverty level. Surprisingly high number occur with married women often for financial or relationship issues. An Abortion often represents a crisis in a woman's life and a desperate act. (*Sacredness* 359)

### **The Purpose of Pregnancy Resource Centers**

The goal of PRC's is to inspire pregnant mothers considering abortion to carry their baby to term and to receive the support necessary to make decisions for life and health. Most PRC's convey a Christian message to the mother and those with her (Munson). PRC's promote the value of motherhood as well as the value of the unborn life (Care Net *Serving*; *Seven Keys*; *Heartbeat The Love Approach*; Maxwell). In her dissertation involving research on the efficacy of PRC's, Wyatt-Youmans describes

PRC's. She writes, "PRCs universally maintained that their goals were to reach out to women by ministering healing, offer sharing life-affirming alternatives other than abortion, rendering reconciliation in complex situations, and offering hope for one's future" (3).

Many women who may see abortion as a solution to the crisis of an unwanted pregnancy also see the pregnancy as the main stressor (Gold-Steinberg and Stewart; Wyatt-Youmans). PRC's try to relieve the stress involved in the pregnancy and reframe the view of the unborn child from a crisis to a valued life. Most PRC staff are evangelical, Christian women who value the woman's role of motherhood and protecting and nurturing children. PRC's serve to empower women to make a reasoned and careful decision for their pregnancy (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Willke and Willke; Wyatt-Youmans).

A 2006 Congressional report drafted at the request of Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D) describes PRC's:

Pregnancy resource centers" are virtually always pro-life organizations whose goal is to persuade teenagers and women with unplanned pregnancies to choose motherhood or adoption. They do not offer abortions or referrals to abortion providers. In addition to initial counseling for pregnant teens and women, some centers may provide support services or referrals to prenatal care. (Committee on Government Reform 2006)

PRC's are a major part the pro-life effort to reduce abortion by "creating subcultures of resistance to a culture dependent on abortion" (Gushee *Letter 74*). PRC's strive to create

a healthier and life-affirming culture of hope in which a pregnant mother can confidently choose to have her baby (Hussey; Wyatt-Youmans).

PRC's believe that most women who have an abortion will come to regret their decision. Abortions occur because the pregnant woman sees no other appealing option. PRC's strive to become the other option that offers women a way out of having an abortion (Care Net *Seven Keys*; Walden; Wyatt-Youmans) One PRC in a southern town was so influential that in the 12 years after it opened the county's abortion rate decreased by 55%. PRC's work to see abortion providers close their doors and go out of business for lack of clients (Walden 9).

Wyatt-Youmans constructed a research study to determine whether PRC's services make a significant difference in a pregnant woman's decision to carry a baby to term. She concluded that "a statistically significant difference did occur in the decision to carry a pregnancy to term once a participant received an ultrasound or counseling services. Based on the results of the study, these services appeared important in the decision-making associated with the woman's intent to carry" (88). PRC's have made an impact in public opinion toward abortion and in the outcomes of unintended pregnancies (Burke; Hussey; Wyatt-Youmans).

### **The Methods of Pregnancy Resource Centers**

Care Net teaches a Christ-centered approach to client interactions based on Jesus' description of the "gate" being the way to life (Matt. 7.13-14). Care Net makes an acronym of "G.A.T.E." to describe how to approach clients: "Genuine, Accepting, True Humility, and Empathy." Through these expressions, the goal is to create a safe and hospitable context for the client to engage in the service of the center in hopes that she

would choose life for her child. This is also described as a way to be loving toward the client. (Care Net 2009 47).

Both Care Net and Heartbeat promote ministry for PRC's that is patterned after the ministry of Jesus Christ. Care Net affirms that "Life-affirming pregnancy centers become highly effective ministries when they are strengthened for their work by faith in Jesus Christ, motivated by his example of active compassion, and confident that the gospel empowers positive life decisions" (Care Net *Seven Keys* 5). Likewise, Heartbeat's training manual is entitled *The L.O.V.E. Approach Training Manual*. "L.O.V.E." is an acronym indicating the following method, behavior and practical approach of the ministry: "Listen and Learn, Open Options, Vision and Values and Extend and Empower" (37). At the core of their approach to training is Christ-centered ministry that intends to express unconditional love and care. They write that "It is by sacrificial service, modeled on Christ as the Servant of His Father and Our Savior who died for us, that we save lives and change lives. That is why it is appropriate that we describe Heartbeat International as an association of Christ-centered, life-affirming affiliates" (Heartbeat *The Love Approach* 4).

In a *Defending Life 2013* article on PRC's, Burke reports the following data from a study on PRC clients that shows the positive impact of PRC's on their clients:

According to a survey of 630 women conducted by the Wirthlin Group, women who have used the services of a [PRC] reported a 98 percent positive effect, including 71 percent who had a very positive effect. Of those women who were aware of [PRC's], 87 percent believed they have a positive impact on the women

they serve, including a majority of those who identified themselves as “pro-choice”. (153)

Raymond Jones’ 2008 dissertation included a qualitative study of PRC’s that revealed the following ten common themes in their mission strategies:

First, centers offer holistic Christian ministry to clients. Second, centers provide professional health services. Third, a quest for uncertainty reduction and information brings clients to the centers. Fourth, centers maintain safe supportive environments. Fifth, personnel are trained to demonstrate sensitivity in sharing information. Sixth, staff exercise care in their deliberate choice of terms. Seventh, members recognize the importance of interpersonal communication in building relationships with and mentoring clients. Eighth, centers use persuasive arguments and artifacts. Ninth, ultrasound serves to reify the pregnancy for clients. Tenth, empowering clients to make their own decisions is a center goal.

(ii-iii)

Providing ultrasounds to pregnant women has become one of the most effective means of persuading women to choose life. Studies reveal that 70-90% of abortion-minded women who see their ultrasound choose life. Ultrasounds, education, counseling and providing a support system are PRC’s’ primary tools to influence pregnant women to choose life (Hussey; R. Jones; Taffet; Walden; Wyatt-Youmans).

Many PRC’s have adopted a medical model that promotes universal medical ethics and client-centered philosophies. Women are more likely to approach a center and embrace their message if it seems to uphold universally accepted and professional ethics (Care Net *Seven Keys*; Chen; Hussey; Postma; Taffet; Wyatt-Youmans).



### **Pro-Choice Views on Abortion and PRC's**

Strong opposition exists against PRC's from both religious and secular sources. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) asserts that abortion can be a moral, ethical, and religiously responsible decision for pregnant mothers. Planned Parenthood, the largest U.S. provider of abortions, has a Clergy Advocacy Board that consists of approximately 2,000 clergy (Davis; Rovner).

In addition to supporting abortion services, Planned Parenthood's Clergy Advocacy Board opposes PRC's and explains the reasons:

#### ***Clergy statements on so-called "crisis pregnancy centers"***

*The Planned Parenthood Federation of America Clergy Advocacy Board (CAB) believes that a crucial role of religion is to provide nonjudgmental guidance to people making complex decisions. We value honest, authentic and compassionate care and recognize that communication needs to be at the heart of any counseling and medical interaction.*

*We therefore strongly oppose so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" (CPCs) because of the biased and often inaccurate and misleading information they provide to women seeking honest information about birth control and abortion. CPCs disrespect liberty of conscience and a woman's right to follow her faith's teachings.*

*We stand in opposition to CPCs' deceptive practices, which include, but are not limited to, the following:*

*They disguise the reality that they are affiliated with religious organizations that are driven by a political agenda to make all abortion illegal and unavailable to women.*

*They claim to provide “all options” counseling yet withhold critical information and refuse to refer a woman to a health care provider when she requests information about birth control, including emergency contraception, and safe and legal abortion.*

*They use scare tactics, visuals, and unsolicited ultrasound exams to intimidate and shame women seeking safe and legal abortion.*

*These practices endanger the physical and emotional well-being of women seeking honest and nonjudgmental information.*

*As clergy that counsel women around all of their pregnancy options, we know that interfering with a woman’s decision about whether to continue a pregnancy denies her right to self-determination and undervalues her moral agency (Planned Parenthood).*

Advocates of abortion and Planned Parenthood claim that Christian women, even reportedly pro-life women, come to receive abortions at Planned Parenthood: “Women whose churches denounce Planned Parenthood use its services in great numbers. And every year a number of women who passionately protest its policies come to it when they themselves are in need of an abortion” (Davis 20).

Since abortion was legalized, clergy have been involved in promoting legal abortion and even arranged the opening of the first legal abortion clinic in America. Davis writes, “The clergy knew that there was a spiritual aspect to abortion. Women had

powerful feelings about what they were going through. They needed not only information and a quick, safe procedure, but also decent human support” (134).

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) affirms the value and right to unimpeded abortion services as a mental health imperative. They officially oppose all efforts to curtail abortion services to any segment of the population. The APA further suggests that persuading an abortion-minded woman to have and raise her child may actually cause mental health problems (Dresner and Kurzman; Major et al). Pro-abortion advocates describe PRC’s as lacking compassion by trying to persuade pregnant women in unwanted pregnancies to keep their babies. Such a decision is perceived as deceptive and manipulative. They inspire fear and potentially cause mental and emotional distress to the mother, which may have possible long-term consequences (Bryant and Levi; Davis; Epstein; Fried; Hara; Hussey; Karlin; Stallworth; Taffet).

Some abortion advocates consider pro-life people to represent a “circle of terror” consisting of “extremists having contempt for women and seeking to control them portraying them as selfish, irresponsible, unfeeling and morally blind” (Fried 217). This is consistent with the belief expressed by Davis in *Sacred Work* that behind pro-life values is the “fear of a world in which women can control their own reproductive lives” based on the “strictures of religious sexism” (201).

At the behest of Rep. Henry Waxman (D), The Committee on Government Reform sought to prove that PRC’s provided false and misleading information to women seeking their services. The committee investigated through the following method: “For this report, female investigators telephoned the 25 pregnancy resource centers that have received grants from the Compassion Capital Fund, posing as a 17-year-old trying to

decide whether to have an abortion, and requesting information and advice” (Committee i). The conclusion of the investigation asserted that PRC’s often provide misleading information and exaggerate the dangers of abortion to persuade women to have their babies (Committee). This report has fueled media articles that aim to undermine PRC’s (Guzman-Fix).

A movement exists to recruit advocates who will visit and call PRC’s and pretend to be pregnant women interested in their services or in an abortion. One such organization called “Expose Fake Clinics” boasts 40 partner organizations that support its work to reveal and publish evidence that PRC’s are fake medical clinics that deceive and pressure women in order for them not to have abortions. Expose Fake Clinics sponsors an annual “Call-a-Thon” week during which it encourages participants to call PRC’s to expose their deceptions and publish them in online reviews (Expose 2017). One such undercover investigator wrote, “Through the strategic manipulation of the language surrounding abortion, crisis pregnancy counselors effectively turn a pregnant woman into a ‘mother,; turn a fetus and its potential for life into her ‘child,’ and turn a low-risk surgical procedure into a brutal ‘murder’” (Hara 2).

NARAL Pro-Choice America launched a “Crisis Pregnancy Center Campaign” dedicated to opposing and undermining PRC’s nationwide and has produced the ‘Choice Action Kit: A Step-by-Step Guide to Unmasking Fake Clinics’” (Burke; Hartshorn “Putting” 109, 111). According to Kelly’s research, “NARAL continues to periodically send pro-choice plants into centers with the goal of collecting data that can be used in future reports or as the grounds for legislation or lawsuits against CPCs” (*In the Name of the Mother* 192). Hartshorn also reports that “Planned Parenthood has a history of

sending undercover reporters posing as potential clients with hidden cameras and tape recorders into PRC's" ("Putting" 111).

For the article "Abortion Misinformation from Crisis Pregnancy Centers in North Carolina" published in *Contraception*, researchers posed as "secret shoppers" in need of service to 19 different PRC's. The article concluded that PRC's were potentially harmful to pregnant women. It argues that "Women choosing abortion should be allowed to make a truly informed decision based on the most medically accurate evidence available. Unregulated, ideologically driven CPCs should not be allowed to mislead women with inaccurate medical information" (Bryant and Levi 753, 755).

### **The Context for PRC Staff in the Tension between Life and Abortion**

In addition to working in a climate with detractors and significant opposition, PRC staff minister to women who may be experiencing a time of severe crisis. Reasons often cited for women seeking abortions include financial dilemmas, personal ambitions, timing, partner related reasons, and other children. Most women cite several negative reasons like the above for seeking an abortion (Biggs et al; Hussey; Major et al; Postma; Wyatt-Youmans).

Weisheit suggests that these types of stressors and situations can cause a woman who believes that abortion destroys a human life to still get an abortion (17). In addition to the crisis that prompts consideration of having an abortion, Ney reports the following consequences for women from having an abortion:

Post-abortion women are 200-600 times more likely to commit suicide. . . . In an analysis of government-collected data from a large sample, women who abort are more likely to die from suicides, homicides, accidents, heart attacks, strokes, and

AIDS when compared to those who deliver. . . . Data confirm that children are painfully afflicted when their siblings die, especially when they die by abortion. (84, 88, 90)

The stakes are high for all those involved in abortions. Dr. Julius Fogel, psychiatrist and obstetrician who performed over 20,000 abortions, admits that “Every woman has a trauma at destroying a pregnancy” (qtd. in Reardon 5).

Ministry in PRC’s, like Christian ministry in general, does not occur without staff becoming involved in the particular situation and taking the risk of being hurt or disappointed in the outcomes. In *The Wounded Healer*, Nouwen describes the following challenges of those in ministry: “No one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his whole person into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded or even destroyed in the process” (72). This involvement of PRC staff with their clients has become a part of their ministry. In addition to the above characteristics of PRC clients, Margaret H. Hartshorn, currently Chairman of the Board of Heartbeat International, writes the following of PRC’s experience with their clients:

We have come to realize that almost all clients have broken sexual integrity. They are wounded by casual sex and broken trust, sexual abuse, incest, date rape and /or abortion. Many have grown up in a post-Christian era during which abortion has always been legal. Providing healing, ongoing support, and education is becoming a priority in our movement. (“Putting” 113)

Those who come alongside pregnant women non-judgmentally and compassionately serve an essential role in their decision process. This is the role of the PRC staff (Dresner and Kurzman; Hussey; Kelly).

In the midst of ministering to women in desperate situations, PRC staff must also be aware of the fact that often undercover investigators posing as pregnant women in need may be calling and coming in hopes of recording or documenting damaging information for publication (Bancroft; Bryant and Levi; Expose; Hara; Hagen; Hartshorn “Putting”; Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Muller).

For most pro-life activists, including PRC staff, they experienced a divine unction or calling that led to their commitment to advocate for life. This may be the primary inspiration and reason for the development of PRC’s and for their staff’s involvement (Hussey; Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Maxwell). Kelly reports that personal experiences involving abortion may have inspired their involvement with PRC’s: “Many women activists have firsthand experience with crisis pregnancy or abortion and connect the problems they faced and their eventual redemption from these sins to their decision to work in the CPC movement” (*In the Name of the Mother* 87).

Christian ministers in general, like other human services professionals, are known sometimes to suffer negative consequences from the stress of ministry. Reuter lists common stressors among Christian ministers including “anxiety, guilt, insecurity, fear of rejection, fear of disappointing people, being vulnerable, feeling powerless, fear of confrontation, feelings of inadequacy, fear of being hurt, the problem of aging and fear of death” (223). The symptoms of such stress include physical, mental and emotional health problems as well as feelings of inadequacy, decreased self-esteem and low job satisfaction (Berry; McBride; Miner; Reuter; Sterland).

PRC staff may experience senses of embattlement and urgency that make them internally driven to keep going in the face of challenges that can lead to increased stress.

Kelly writes that “Most pro-life activists are evangelical Christian women. Evangelicals perceive the secular world to be hostile to their values and believe themselves to be in conflict with modern society” (*In the Name of the Mother* 5, 26). Due to the tensions of their work, PRC staff are susceptible to feelings of stress and anxiety and their concomitant consequences. Staying in the “battle” under pressures can be associated with faithfulness to God and prevent proper self-care (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Maxwell; Miner; Polonyi).

Studies have shown that two main reasons that workers leave Christian ministry are feelings of personal and professional inadequacy and job-related stress (McBride). Evangelical women seem to be more susceptible to both of these indicators of feelings of professional inadequacy and vocational stress when serving in ministries. Research has shown that “any tension experienced by the evangelical woman may be caused by internal or external demands facilitating feelings of guilt, anxiety, and depression and decreasing overall life satisfaction” (Polonyi 24).

### **Christian Formation for PRC Staff**

Those in the pro-life movement may have a strong passion for the ministry of life but may not have mature spiritual formation and consistent spiritual disciplines. In fact, Munson reports in his book *The Making of Pro-life Activists* that “Some activists have found their religious faith after becoming involved in the movement” (156). Their beliefs may be underdeveloped, inconsistent or even incoherent and may not match the strength of their passion for the cause. Munson suggests the following contributing factor to the above when he writes, “Churches, even conservative churches, frequently shy away from the issue [of abortion] because they see it as controversial and divisive. Churches provide



surprisingly little overt support for the movement; leadership in the movement is not drawn from religious leadership pools” (162).

In her book *Pro-life Activists in America*, author and anthropologist Carol J. C. Maxwell writes that pro-life activists cite several reasons for becoming involved in the pro-life ministry including the following: Spiritual warfare, religious obligation, Godly duty, focus on saving babies, expressions of gratitude to God, love for God, commitment to God, serving God, pleasing God or upholding God’s righteousness (183, 207, 217). Maxwell writes that women emphasized affective and personal experiences as explaining their involvement and the role of abortion in their own lives and relationships. Men tended to emphasize the reasoning behind their involvement (238-239). These reasons for involvement in the pro-life movement indicate a connection and devotion to God but do not necessarily correlate to spiritual maturity or preparation for ministry.

Maxwell also warns that “those involved in pro-life ministries may develop resentment for Christians who do not engage in the ministry. Likewise, anger or rage may be directed toward the women seeking abortion” (136). These are all factors that cannot be overlooked in discussions of spiritual formation for PRC staff. They are addressed only minimally in Network training manuals (*Care Net Serving*; *Heartbeat The Love Approach*).

Hussey’s research determined that over 80% of centers surveyed used either Care Net’s or Heartbeat’s training manuals. Care Net and Heartbeat describe the purpose of the PRC’s in terms of providing Christian holistic ministry to women in crisis. The Care Net training resource for staff and volunteers uses the following key words to describe the roles of staff and volunteers: ministering, leading, healing, inspiring, presenting the

presence of God, and giving spiritual quenching to the spiritually thirsty (2013 preface).

The commitments required of PRC staff and volunteers according to Care Net are the following: commitment to the sanctity of human life in all circumstances, commitment to sexual purity and commitment to promoting biblical values that contrast the values of the popular culture (*The Love Approach* 56-57;).

Heartbeat considers the staff's or volunteers' relationship with Jesus as of primary importance to their service in the PRC. The *L.O.V.E. Approach Training Manual* makes the following statement:

Remember that we are instruments of the Lord and He will use us, imperfect as we are. If you are faithful to do your part – “planting the seed,” the Lord will do His part. Just as we cannot take credit for the successes, we must not berate ourselves for the failures. If we have been allowing Love, or God who is Love itself, to work through us, we have to be content with the results. We have done our best; the rest is up to the client and the Lord. (24)

This demonstrates that spiritual formation is considered important to both networks; however, it is one of myriad topics of their training resources and not developed in depth.

### **Spiritual Formation Training for PRC Staff's Spiritual Well-being and Job**

#### **Satisfaction**

Regarding spiritual maturity for those in ministry, Snelling writes, “the first priority in Christian ministry is that of spiritual formation, which is the cultivation and acquisition of the values and perceptions of reality that are consistent with the will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ” (66). Because those in the pro-life ministries are often responding to a sense of divine call and purpose, they are most likely open to receiving

spiritual formation training that can be a valuable resource for supporting them (Kelly *In the Name of the Mother*; Hinson; Hussey; Miner; Munson).

For those in Christian ministry like a PRC, spiritual formation should be a first priority and necessity in terms of ministry effectiveness, because it develops Christian maturity and invites the power of the Holy Spirit into a person's life and ministry (A. Jones; L. M. Jones; Mulholland; Scazzero; Snelling; Vos). Gerald May describes spiritual formation as the following:

Spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes educational endeavors as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction. (112)

In his book, *Invitation To A Journey*, Robert Mulholland defines spiritual formation as the following:

A process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. The image of Christ is that which brings cleansing, healing, restoration, renewal, transformation and wholeness into the unclean, diseased, broken, imprisoned, dead incompleteness of our lives. It brings compassion in place of indifference, forgiveness in place of resentment, kindness in place of coldness, openness in place of protective defensiveness or manipulation, a life lived for God and not self. (ch. 3)

Spiritual formation is holistic care for their body, soul and spirit. Spiritual director Ruth Haley Barton writes that it is “intimacy with God that results in the satisfaction of the soul's deepest longings” (139). An increased emphasis on spiritual formation for PRC

staff can lead to their work taking on increased meaning as serving God's purposes. In a study of spiritual formation's influence on vocational well-being and satisfaction among Christian ministers, Bickerton et al. offered the following findings and suggestions:

Spiritual resources represent a salient and somewhat unique category of personal resources that increase work engagement, which in turn reduces intentions to leave ministry work. As such, spiritual resources should be included in future research concerning occupational health of clergy, and organizational interventions to aid their well-being at work. (130)

Increased personal spiritual resources developed through spiritual formation training serve to motivate, help fulfill goals, protect from stressful job demands, and stimulate personal growth and vocational development, engagement and tenure (Bickerton et al; Hernandez and Mahoney; Paloutzian et al; Park; Schaufeli and Taris).

One's personal faith, devotional practices and spiritual experiences have been shown to have strong associations with health and wellness and psychological well-being, particularly among leaders in religious organizations. Positive spiritual well-being results in greater hope, hardiness and peace among people facing diseases. It also leads to higher marital adjustment and intimacy (Bickerton et al.; Ellison and Fan; Gemignani; Ingersoll; Paloutzian et al.; Pargament et al.; Zellars and Perrewe).

In a research study of Christian ministers and clergy burnout and job satisfaction, Miner reports the following:

Ministers who find their spirituality to be an inner source of authority and coping are able to withstand pressures that might otherwise lead to emotional overload and withdrawal. Moreover, since ministers are called to spiritual 'work' it is not

surprising that satisfaction with one's spiritual relatedness would enhance a sense of effectiveness. (183)

Miner suggests "more training in personal spiritual formation, with ongoing spiritual direction" as the response to burnout and low job satisfaction (185). In a similar study on the correlation of spiritual formation and clergy burnout, Chandler concludes that "Spiritual renewal or communion with God has been identified as a cornerstone of pastoral effectiveness to prevent burnout" ("Burnout" 275).

Without the spiritual renewal and well-being that occurs within the venues of spiritual formation practices, those in ministry face conditions conducive to spiritual, mental, physical and social stress, fatigue, depression and ineffectiveness (Barton; Chandler "Pastoral Burnout," "The Impact"; Paloutzian et al.). Koenig argues that adverse effects can occur when Christians lack spiritual maturity and formation. Koenig writes, "Religious people often strive to better themselves in accordance with their faith beliefs and through the practicing of activities endorsed by their religious community; however, failure to live up to values espoused and strived toward may contribute to feelings of stress and anxiety" (80).

Only a minority of Christians in western churches are participating in intentional spiritual formation. A. Jones reports that intentional spiritual formation has become the exception rather than the rule in churches today. He concludes that, "Much of the North American church falls short in the responsibility to assist in individual believers' spiritual formation. Further, the church is to be a communal image of Christlike character. Again, it often falls short" (77). For PRC staff, training in the practices of spiritual formation might be necessary even for mature Christians who are not receiving it at their churches.

Guidance in the process of spiritual formation serves to facilitate God's transformation of the participants for Christian ministry effectiveness (Foster *Celebration*; Kurth; L. M. Jones; M. Thompson; Willard "Spiritual"). Research in spiritual formation has shown that training in spiritual formation with even limited interaction and engagement can produce spiritual growth that benefits the engagement in ministry to others (Bickerton; A. Jones 134; L. M. Jones 89; Pargament).

Spiritual formation training addresses the work of ministry and how ministry success is measured by faithfulness rather than outcomes alone (Berry; Care Net *Seven Keys*; McBride; Merton; Reuter; Miner; M. Thompson). This confirms the attitude of PRC staff reported by Kelly that "For CPC activists, taking action on behalf of one's beliefs is more critical to authentic religious identity than the outcomes of those actions" (*In the Name of the Mother* 169). Hinson promotes spiritual formation to support faithfulness as success when writing that "too many ministers confuse God's call to be faithful with a call to be successful" (590).

Those in ministry cannot ask their clients to experience spiritual transformation without pursuing transformation themselves. They cannot be so busy doing the "work" of ministry that they do not take the time to practice the disciplines that lead to their own refueling and empowerment. Spiritual formation describes a vibrant, intimate relationship with God that facilitates healthy life balance and stress management while possessing the energy to help others (Barton; Chandler "Pastoral Burnout"; Melton; Quinn; Sider et al.).

Busyness is the most significant factor that prevents spiritual formation from occurring. Training in spiritual formation confronts this issue head-on by scheduling time for formation individually and corporately (Barton; Chandler "The Impact"; A. Jones;

Jensen). A. Jones concludes, “Making intentional spiritual formation a priority is a first step in addressing the barrier erected by busyness” (150).

This process of spiritual formation connects the practices of spiritual disciplines and educational endeavors with intentional actions in ministry (Bickerton; Hinson; May; Reuter). Training in spiritual formation can be equally rewarding and effective for Christians from various backgrounds because it is geared toward developing a Christ-like character that is at the center of the Christian faith and is characterized by joy for those who participate (Foster *Streams*; Mulholland; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; Willard *Renovation*).

### **Elements of Christian Spiritual Formation Training**

The process of spiritual formation involves God working in a person to bring about conformity to Christ. Toward this end, God gives resources and guidance that individuals can access with others and on their own in cooperation with God’s work in them. The process of spiritual formation occurs with and through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Foster *Celebration*; A. Jones; L. M. Jones; Mulholland; M. Thompson; Van Hoozer).

Spiritual formation occurs for the sake of others that will receive the ministry from those experiencing spiritual formation (A. Jones; Melton; Mulholland). Michael Burer concludes the following about spiritual formation and service:

[Spiritual formation] is the process by which God forms Christ’s character in believers by the ministry of the Spirit, in the context of community, and in accordance with biblical standards. The process involves the transformation of the

whole person in thoughts, behaviors, and styles of relating with God and others. It results in a life of service to others and witness for Christ.

Spiritual formation inspires and sustains ministry to others.

Mulholland identifies the following stages of the process of spiritual formation from classical Christianity:

These stages are generally called awakening, purgation, illumination and union.

These are the stages that move us from our separation and alienation from God, our unlikeness to the image of Christ, to transforming relationship with God and wholeness in Christ. *Awakening* occurs whenever we encounter and respond to God at some point of our unlikeness to Christ. *Purgation* is the process that deals with our areas of unlikeness to Christ. *Illumination* is the emergence of a new being that begins to manifest something of the image of Christ in the world.

*Union* is the experience of wholeness in union with God. (Part III)

The elements facilitating spiritual formation include Scripture, prayer, community, worship, solitude, fasting, healing, and spiritual giftedness. These are the most often cited disciplines that lead to spiritual formation and renewal in people. With the exception of solitude, these spiritual disciplines can be practiced privately or in community (Bickerton; Branson and Martinez; Chandler “Pastoral Burnout”; Foster *Celebration*; Hinson; L.M. Jones; Melton; Mulholland; Peterson *Eat*; Snelling; M. Thompson; Vanhoozer; Vos; Willard *Renovation*).

Training in spiritual formation must avoid limiting the array of prescribed spiritual disciplines according to the leader’s preferences. Differences in personality and temperament styles among participants must be considered. Spiritual formation applies to



those with active, engaged and outgoing personalities as well as to those who prefer quiet solitude. This also means that Christians may have to learn and practice disciplines that are less comfortable and appealing but still rewarding and necessary (A. Jones; Kurth; Mulholland; B. Smith).

### 1. Scripture

Scripture provides a foundation for spiritual formation, and any training in spiritual formation should be based on reading, studying, and reflecting on Scripture. This also includes teaching participants how to meditate on and learn from Scripture on their own and in groups. Mulholland writes, “In order for spiritual growth to occur, one must be taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained in God’s Word. Then that person will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. This is the essence of spiritual growth” (173).

A way to integrate Scripture into spiritual formation training is the practice of *lectio divina* (divine reading). Such reading opens participants to the reality of God, his heart, and his work in the world. This spiritual reading sets participants in communion with Christ and other believers. *Lectio divina* works as a divine prescription against the stressful world. It is a formational rather than informational process (Collins; Ford; Hinson; Mulholland; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; Peterson *Eat*; M. Thompson).

The classical form of *lectio divina* has four components: *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio* and *contemplation*:

*Lectio*, the first step in the classical discipline of spiritual reading, is simply the process of reading the text. *Meditatio* is the activity of processing what we have received in *lectio*, and flows naturally from our reading. If *lectio* is viewed as receiving food, *meditatio* is the process of “chewing” it. *Oratio* is our response

to God on the basis of what we have read and encountered, and flows naturally from *meditatio*. At this point we enter into personal dialogue with God. At the close of *oratio*, *contemplatio* moves us into a posture of released waiting on God for whatever God wants to do in us, with us, through us. To these four steps of *lectio divina*, we must add a concluding step, *incarnatio*. The whole focus of spiritual reading is to encounter God in ways that enable God to transform our being and doing in the world. *Lectio divina* may be preceded and followed by times of silence in which we allow the Holy Spirit to center us in his presence and for his word to take root in our hearts. (Mulholland ch. 9)

This practice is enhanced when the participant makes the mental connection between the Scripture and the context of his or her ministry and life. This meditational reading of Scripture should be complemented by analytical and exegetical study of Scripture and other devotional writings that inspire, educate and edify (Collins; Foster *Celebration*; Peterson *Eat*; M. Thompson). Scripture offers the word of truth into a world chaotic with false messages, and it clarifies the facets of God and one's own experiences and purpose. It provides a corrective to the culture's distorted views (Powlison; Sider, et al.).

## 2. Prayer

In terms of spiritual formation, "Prayer obviously stands at the head of the list. Not prayer as telling or informing God but prayer as response to God's love beaming toward us or pouring over us" (Hinson 592). In the sense of classical spiritual formation, prayer involves submitting one's will and self to God to be conformed to his will. Prayer seeks the fulfillment of God's desires for our lives and for the community and world. Prayer is the means by which we become involved in God's presence and work among

the needy and broken of the world (Hinson; Mulholland; Foster *Celebration*). Foster promotes prayer above all spiritual disciplines, writing “Of all the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father. The Discipline of prayer that brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit. Real prayer is life creating and life changing” (*Celebration* 51). Prayer represents a faithful act of taking God’s commands and work in the world seriously. Our prayers contribute to a devotional life of prayer that is essential to being conformed to Christ; prayer is the ultimate means by which God transforms us and is central to spiritual formation (Foster *Prayer, Celebration*; Melton; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; Packer; Tickle).

The person who ministers among people in desperate need and intense situations must be a person of prayer. Nouwen asserts the following about Christians leading ministries: “The Christian leader must be in the future what he has always had to be in the past: a man of prayer, a man who has to pray, and who has to pray always” (Nouwen *Wounded* 46-47). For those in ministry, “Prayer is the key to unlock relationships. Prayer is what will draw, change, and cause people to be committed in their relationship with the Lord” (Sider et al. 78). Research has found that for those in ministry, “a positive attitude toward prayer and good work-related psychological health go hand in hand. Prayer may well stand not only theologically but also psychologically at the very heart of Christian ministry” (Turton and Francis 70-71).

Earnest and devotional prayer involves not only speaking to God but intentionally listening to God. Therefore, prayer requires some times of silence to hear God’s voice. In

“The Spiritual Formation of the Minister,” Hinson elaborates on the value and need of silence:

Responsive prayer requires silence. One of the major barriers to communion with God is distractedness. If we are too busy, too full of ourselves and our activities, we will scarcely tune in to the “still, small voice.” Silence calls for solitude. In the noisy, hyperactive culture in which we live silence is likely to be obtained only if we make an effort to be alone. (593)

Guidance in spiritual formation has historically emphasized silence, solitude and contemplation as part of the practice of prayer. Devotional silence prepares the Christian for living according to the kingdom of heaven that is in contrast with the norms and activities of the noisy, busy, worldly culture. Listening to God not only develops intimacy with God but also equips leaders to meet the needs of those to whom they minister (Barton; Branson and Martinez; Ford; Foster *Celebration*; Jensen; Melton; Mulholland; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; Seamands; Snelling; M. Thompson; Vos; Willard “Spiritual”).

Earnest intercessory prayer and reflection on Scripture may also lead to the discipline of fasting for God’s will to be done in the area of ministry such as saving babies from abortion. Fasting helps restore a person’s focus on God. Fasting also moves against the grain of a worldly culture that is often opposed to God’s purposes (Foster *Celebration*; Piper; M. Thompson; Vos).

In his book, *Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer*, John Piper strongly encourages all Christians to fast specifically against abortion and for the restoration of the sacredness of life to our communities. In the chapter “Fasting for the

Little Ones,” he writes of the universal danger of abortion that must be overcome through prayer and fasting:

The abortion license eats away at one precious thing after another. The children are the first to go. The women next, with the guilt and the heartbreak and the physical harm and the manifold effects of post-abortion syndrome. Then come the fathers with some remorse and anger and huge amounts of “irresponsibility and predatory male sexual behavior” encouraged by the assumption that there is a simple solution to any unwanted pregnancy. Then comes the erosion of the moral landscape that depends so much on virtues and values and commitments that go beyond mere autonomous individual liberties. (ch. 7)

In her book *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, M.

Thompson provides a concise and coherent summary of elements of intercessory prayer:

1. By our petitions, reasoning, or arguing, we are changing God's attitude and intended action in the world. (See Gen. 18.22-26ff.; Exod. 32.11-14.)
2. By engaging in the struggle of prayer, we find ourselves changed, marked by our encounter with the living God. (See Gen. 32.24-30.)
3. In prayer we voice our desires, hopes, needs, and frustrations, but cannot assume that these influence God. We are completely dependent on God's sovereign will and action in response. (See Job 7.11-20; 13.3, 19.7; 42.1-6.)
4. In prayer we share our positive life-energies with another person who is mystically connected with us and all other living things, and who can therefore be directly influenced. (No direct corollary in Scripture, but a common belief in our time.)

5. In prayer we join our hearts in love with the love of Christ, the great Intercessor, through the unity of the Spirit given in Baptism and sustained by the Eucharist. We give our will to the will of Christ and leave the results to him. (See John 15.1-11; 17; Rom. 8.26-27; Heb. 4.14-16.)
6. In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and of the Holy Spirit already praying in us, so we do not bring specific prayers, but try to attune and entrust ourselves to that presence and inward prayer. (See Ps. 139; Rom. 8.26-27.)
7. When we pray, we simply trust completely that God will respond with a good and appropriate gift in God's own time and way. (See Matt. 7.7, 9-11.)
8. When we pray, we are cooperating with God in willing life and goodness for others, yet we remain vulnerable with God to the limits imposed by evil-limits accepted in the freedom that love creates. (See Mark 14.32-36 and parallels.)  
(ch. 2)

For some Christians, the practice of journaling can be an integral element in spiritual formation and in one's prayer life. Several authors encourage Christians to keep a regular journal of their spiritual practices and progress, especially during times of stress or grief (Chandler "Pastoral Burnout," "The Impact"; L.M. Jones; Moffic; M. Thompson; Whitney).

### **3. Group Interaction**

Teachers of spiritual formation emphasize the value of the community of faith in the spiritual formation of individuals and in contributing to the effectiveness of their ministries. Small groups of believers committed to being encouraging, transparent,

confessional and honest with each other contribute to the participants' life satisfaction, spiritual formation and well-being and to reduced negative effects of stress and busyness (Chandler "Pastoral Burnout"; Dodson; Foster *Celebration*; Jensen; A. Jones; Lee et al.; Mulholland).

Hinson promotes small groups as a means of grace and Christian maturity:

At a minimum, all need someone with whom they can talk about the journey if for no other reason than to keep them from turning in too much on themselves and becoming overly harsh with themselves. Spiritual friends can remind us that spiritual growth has to do with the working of grace in our lives. (594)

When a mature Christian leader facilitates such a devotional group, additional spiritual direction and pastoral care can occur.

Chandler's research on spiritual disciplines and clergy burnout discovered that "Without commensurate renewal, the complex, competing, and stressful tasks of ministry often create conditions of spiritual, mental, physical, and social depletion and fatigue" ("Pastoral Burnout" 276). Her research further highlighted "the importance of social support systems in mitigating burnout" ("Pastoral Burnout" 276). Spiritual formation thrives in healthy, communal relationships with others. Sometimes this will entail suffering with each other. Other times it includes being vessels of God's grace, compassion and comfort in expressing love and hospitality to others. Participating in religious groups wards off loneliness and depression by inspiring spiritual well-being and relationships (Foster *Celebration*; Lee et al; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; M. Thompson).

In the group setting, individuals not only participate with God through the disciplines but also with each other. Nouwen expresses spiritual formation as happening only along with a small group or what he calls “community:”

Spiritual formation is formation in community. One’s personal prayer life can never be understood if it is separated from community life. Prayer in the spiritual life leads to community, and community to prayer. In community we learn what it means to confess our weakness and to forgive each other. In community we discover our own woundedness, but also a place of healing. In community we learn true humility. Without community, we become individualistic and egocentric. Therefore, spiritual formation always includes formation to life in community. (*Spiritual Formation* Introduction)

The small group interaction facilitates a conversation with others and with God all at once. It is an activity of reaching upward, inward, and outward to be formed in the image of Christ. A close-knit devotional group helps people in ministry respond together to the burdens of the hurting people to whom Christians minister. Without a vibrant group with whom to share and pray with, sustaining one’s ministry vocation is difficult (Breen; Hunter; Nouwen *Spiritual Formation*; Peterson *Eat*; Seamands).

L. M. Jones’s research into contributing factors for spiritual formation found that the participative group activities of *lectio divina*, prayer, discussion, and worship that includes Holy Communion have been found to develop self-perceived spiritual growth and the strengthening of one’s relationship with God (83-89).

Sharing the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion) in the small group or church worship setting reminds the participants that they share communion with one another and



Christ. This is a means of grace that helps participants experience the reality and value of their relationships with each other. The Lord's Supper, introduced by Scripture reflection and prayer, brings together several of the elements of spiritual formation (Dawn; L.M. Jones, Nouwen *Letters*). Marva Dawn writes of the Lord's Supper, "This communion with God and His people offers us tastes of our union with the whole Trinity; the Holy Spirit incorporates into us, and us into, Christ's very Body and Blood to the glory of the Father" (ch. 9).

#### **4. Nurturing of Spiritual Fruits and Gifts as Spiritual Formation**

Because the Holy Spirit is the power behind spiritual formation, the gifts that he gives to believers are part and parcel of spiritual formation. The gifts themselves equip believers for their ministry to help others more effectively (Hunter; A. Jones; L. M. Jones; Melton; Sider et al.). The fruit of the Spirit includes the elements of the image of Christ to which God is transforming believers (Gala. 5.22). Having the fruit of the Spirit leads to applications in relationships to others through which the fruit are manifested. Melton observed that love for God and others was the common thread through "almost all of the books" on spiritual formation and that "it precipitates a desire to serve and save" (106, 111).

In his book *Your Spiritual Gifts*, C. Peter Wagner emphasizes that each Christian receives spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit for the purpose of participating in ministry. He encourages Christians to develop and use their gifts:

One of the primary spiritual exercises for any Christian person is to discover, develop and use his or her spiritual gift. Other spiritual exercises may be equally as important: worship, prayer, reading God's word, feeding the hungry, the

sacraments or what have you. But I do not know of anything more important than discovering, developing and using spiritual gifts. (36)

Spiritual giftedness is a key to the development of spiritual formation in community and ministry. Through it participants discover how God has blessed them to bless others. Training in spiritual gifts also helps participants learn to appreciate the diversity in the unity of the people in ministry with them. The Holy Spirit's work involves gifting Christians with spiritual gifts for ministry (Rom. 12.3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14).

In her research on spiritual growth and formation L. M. Jones writes the following regarding the Holy Spirit's gifts in Christians' lives that empower them for ministry:

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit fills the Christian's natural abilities, skills, and experiences with God's power and endows the believer with a spiritual gift to be used for the building up of the body Christ. There is an amazing paradox; as a Christian takes the form of a servant, they are filled more and more with the Holy Spirit, enabling the believer to incarnate the life of Christ. This fullness of the Spirit allows more wisdom and power to be used for God's glory. As Christians are filled with the Spirit of God, they discover a passion for living a lifestyle of love in the world, both inside the church walls and outside the church walls, exhibiting identity in God's image. (47-48)

Growth in spiritual formation and in ministry depend on the Christian's relationship to the Holy Spirit and participation with the gifts that he provides. In his book *Christianity Beyond Belief*, Anglican Bishop Todd Hunter encourages Christians to "become cooperative friends of God, creatively doing good for others through the power, character and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (147).

## 5. Worship

Worship is characteristic of someone being conformed to the image of Christ. Spiritual formation leads to loving obedience to God. This obedience becomes a form of worship and is the proper response to the gracious initiatives of God. Mulholland describes the value and importance of worship in living a Christian life in the midst of the stressors we encounter:

Worship, whether corporate or individual (and there needs to be both in our liturgical discipline) is the practice of regularly seeking to bring the complete focus of our being upon God. It is the discipline of returning to the true center of our individual and corporate existence as God's people. The pressures of life and the assaults of the fallen world constantly blur our focus and tend to shift us away from our center in God. Worship is the means by which we recover our focus and return to our center. The quality and consistency of our worship will determine how well we are able to live Christ-centered lives in the world. (ch. 9)

Immersion in a life of worship prevents those in ministry from being demoralized and overwhelmed by a sense of crisis and leaving ministry (Peterson *Subversive Spirituality*).

Worship of God helps ministers to keep their priorities in order and to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the call of God rather than filled with God. Foster devotes a chapter to worship in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. He writes the following exhortation:

If the Lord is to be Lord, worship must have priority in our lives. The first commandment of Jesus is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12.30).

The divine priority is worship first, service second. Our lives are to be punctuated with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. Service flows out of worship. Service as a substitute for worship is idolatry. (160-161)

Worship deserves our frequent and full attention. Christians offer themselves to God freely as a “living sacrifice” (Rom. 12.1-2). Foster reminds Christians of the holistic nature of true worship. He writes, “God calls for worship that involves our whole being. The body, mind, spirit, and emotions should all be laid on the altar of worship. Often we forget that worship should include the body as well as the mind and the spirit” (169).

Worship may include singing and praises or quiet reverence and awe, dancing or kneeling. Worship can be a form of the celebration of the goodness of God and the work that Jesus has accomplished for people. Christian worship can occur in private or public, individually or in small or large gatherings. The Lord desires that worship is shaped by the Spirit and truth (John 4.23-24). Worship is rooted in God and in his purposes for creation. It gives him honor and blessings, and in return, the worshippers are blessed in his presence (Foster *Celebration*; Sundberg; M. Thompson).

Worship honors God and also blesses the worshipper who enjoys the fruit of worship. Foster emphasizes the outcome of worship for the Christian:

In worship an increased power steals its way into the heart sanctuary, an increased compassion grows in the soul. To worship is to change. Worship enables us to hear the call to service clearly so that we respond, “Here am I! Send me” (Isa. 6. 8). Authentic worship will impel us to join in the Lamb’s war against demonic powers everywhere— on the personal level, on the social level, on the institutional level. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is our Commander-in-Chief. We

receive his orders for service and go "... conquering and to conquer ... with the word of truth ... returning love for hatred, wrestling with God against the enmity, with prayers and tears night and day, with fasting, mourning and lamentation, in patience, in faithfulness, in truth, in love unfeigned, in long suffering, and in all the fruits of the spirit, that if by any means [we] may overcome evil with good." (*Celebration* 173)

Foster shows how worship fuels all of the above elements of spiritual formation and also the ministry for which ministers are seeking to be formed and for which to be equipped.

### **Spiritual Formation Measurement and Research Design**

Research using formal and informal and qualitative and quantitative assessment tools is a reliable measurement of the qualities of spiritual formation, spiritual maturity, spiritual well-being and spiritual growth. Likewise, these subjects of studies can be correlated to other factors like stress, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction and happiness (Chandler "Pastoral Burnout," "The Impact"; Dodson; Francis et al.; Ji; A. Jones; L.M. Jones; Lee et al.; Melton; Paloutzian et al.; Polonyi; Randall; Sharp; Snelling; R. Thompson; Tisdale).

The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) is reliable to indicate levels of spiritual formation and Christian maturity across a wide spectrum of participants. The FMS assesses the level of a person's faith maturity based on his or her answers to 38 seven-point Likert-scale assessments. It classifies participants as having either an undeveloped faith, a horizontal faith, a vertical faith or an integrated faith (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson; Hui; Ji; Sharp; R. Thompson). The FMS is considered to have excellent "convergent, discriminant and predictive validity, as well as internal and test-retest reliabilities" based

on a “commitment that directs one’s life, a deep understanding of religious issues, the ability to doubt, and tolerance” (Hill and Maltby 40). The measured element of faith has been described as the intersection of religious attitudes and behavior (Benson et al.; R. Thompson). The FMS has been reported to be valid for use across religious denominations (Hill and Maltby; Hui).

The FMS has significant success in predicting psychological adjustment and correlations with emotional maturity, personal meaning, prosocial behavior, and general religiousness. The vertical measurement assesses elements of personal beliefs, prayer life, fasting, Scripture study and other spiritual disciplines related to connection with God. The horizontal faith measurement targets a person’s concern and care for the world around him or her in terms of things like justice, charity and service to others. It has also been useful in indicating missional activity (Benson et al.; Hui; Ji; R. Thompson; Tisdale).

The Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) is a component of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). The SIMS is designed to measure the positive experience of those in ministry. It is an eleven-question five-point Likert-scale assessment. It was developed initially for use among clergy and has been subsequently adapted for use among other helping professionals. The FBI has been employed in numerous studies and reviewed positively (Francis et al.; Randall).

Prior studies have shown that satisfaction in ministry mitigates the experience of stress and the burdens of being in ministry. Spiritual practices that include prayer, worship, devotional Scripture reading/study, meditation, journaling, fasting, retreats, and rest contribute to satisfaction in ministry and a reduction of burnout among Christian

ministers. Spiritual renewal through spiritual formation is a contributor to satisfaction in ministry (Chandler “Pastoral Burnout,” “The Impact”; Francis et al.).

Research regarding spiritual maturity and growth has also used interviews, informal surveys, and questionnaires to gain feedback regarding the effectiveness of projects geared toward producing spiritual growth in participants. L. M. Jones’ research concluded that spiritual formation was difficult to measure apart from the qualitative feedback obtained from interviews and journals submitted by those who participated in a five-week research project measuring ministry leaders’ spiritual growth. The post-intervention quantitative data failed to show that the intervention had an impact on spiritual maturity. However, Jones found indications of positive change in spiritual growth based on qualitative feedback and from observable improvements in spiritual maturity (89-94). In a separate research study, Alan Jones found that participating in even one intervention designed to further the participants’ spiritual formation showed effectiveness in comparison to pre- and post-intervention customized questionnaires (134).

The mixed methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative measurements has been supported as an acceptable and effective form of research (Fetter et al.; Klassen et al.; Ograjensek; Patton; Sensing). Patton asserts the following in support of mixed methods: “The classic qualitative-quantitative debate has been largely resolved with recognition that a variety of methodological approaches are needed and credible, that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenge is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than adhering to some narrow methodological orthodoxy” (xxii). Mixed methodology is appropriate for action research that occurs in

the participants' context and is often led by a minister that intends to stimulate transformation among the participants by conducting an intervention that empowers, educates and enlightens the participants (Cresswell; Sensing).

The qualitative method provides supportive data that can help in better understanding the context and significance of the quantitative data analyzed for a research project. It might provide further insight to the participants' perceptions and communications (Ograjensek). However, because qualitative research can be difficult to measure, analyze, and interpret, the use of quantitative instruments can provide data to prevent conclusions from relying on subjective judgement or inadvertent misinterpretation by an invested or biased researcher (Greenfield; Sensing). As a quantitative tool for research, Likert-scale surveys can be used for conducting descriptive research that measures the way things are and that describes changes that occur over time (De Vaus).

### **Literature Review Summary**

The literature review focused on issues related to this project that measures the impact of a training on spiritual formation on the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of staff of a pregnancy resource center. It revealed that pregnancy resource centers are Christian ministries that have the goal of ministering to pregnant women for the purpose of persuading them to choose life for their unborn babies. PRC's exists for the sake of the mother and her unborn child.

The literature review highlighted Scriptures that provide the foundation for the beliefs of the PRC's in terms of the personhood and value of unborn babies and the loving and compassionate ministry to women and their families. The Biblical foundations



of the literature can be summarized by Francis J. Beckwith who concludes that “the Bible clearly teaches the full humanity of the unborn” (103).

The review of Theological literature demonstrated a pro-life view from the earliest writings of Christianity and the Jewish writings that preceded them. Through history and across denominations, there has been agreement on the sacredness of life in the womb and the prohibition against abortion among Christians. Gushee summarizes the pro-life theological foundation of the PRC’s by stating, “The sacredness of human life flows into concrete moral obligations to treat humans with dignity, to protect and preserve human life, to recognize a right to life and to reject any right to destroy an innocent human being” (*Sacredness* 32).

The literature demonstrated that in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contrary theological voices began to develop a pro-abortion movement among clergy that viewed safe and legal abortion as an important right and practice for women to access. While not having a clearly stated Biblical foundation, this theological approach to abortion argues against personhood of the unborn baby and for the mother’s right to choose an abortion.

PRC’s have developed as pro-life ministries that now number between 2500 and 4000 in the United States. These ministries can be effective in persuading women to choose life rather than abortion. The literature also shows significant opposition and negativity toward PRC’s by those who support abortion rights. Much of this literature contains bias based on the author’s or publisher’s view of PRC’s. The literature also reveals that PRC staff work in a tense and passionate ministry arena.

Previous research studies and Christians writings on spiritual formation indicate that the stress encountered in ministry can lead to burnout and can harm general well-

being and hinder the ability to effectively minister. The literature showed that practicing spiritual disciplines individually and corporately can be effective in sustaining ministry by improving well-being and mitigating negative consequences of stress and pressures. There is agreement on several elements of spiritual formation that should be practiced by Christians, especially those in ministry. The primary elements of prayer, Scripture, worship, spiritual fruit and spiritual gifts and group interaction were addressed in the literature review.

The literature review concluded by showing the value and effectiveness of using mixed-method measurement tools for research on the themes of this research project that include measuring spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. Literature in support of the FMS and SIMS was reviewed to show that these tools are reliable and valid for using in this research project.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter explains the research methodology carried out in this project that included mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research. The chapter also includes further descriptions of the nature, purpose, rationale, intervention, and evaluation of the project. The research questions related to the purpose are stated and connected to the research methods that answered each research question. The project followed Patton's assertion that "The classic qualitative-quantitative debate has been largely resolved with recognition that a variety of methodological approaches are needed and credible, that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenge is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than adhering to some narrow methodological orthodoxy" (xxii). Sensing describes methodology like that employed in this research project as being "a form of action research that employs a multi-methods approach within community located in a specific setting and is intended to bring transformation" (ch. 3) The researcher chose the mixed methods used in this research project in recognition of the limitations of either the qualitative or quantitative methods alone compared to the added value to using both methods (Fetter et al.; Klassen et al.; Patton; Sensing).

The quantitative tools that were used to answer the research questions are described below to show how the project was completed and the data gathered. This chapter shows the reliability and validity of these particular instruments. The qualitative method that provided supportive data used to answer the research questions is also

described in this chapter. The qualitative data enabled more accurate interpretation of the quantitative data. It provided further insight to the participants' perceptions and communications (Ograjensek). However, because qualitative research can be difficult to measure, analyze and interpret, special care was taken to select the relevant quantitative instruments to avoid subjective judgment leading to inadvertent misinterpretation (Greenfield).

The explanation of research methodology gives a picture of the context of the research project and the demographics of the people involved in the project. The research project produced data that was analyzed to show whether the project produced any significant impact. The context and demographics and the method for analyzing data are described below.

### **Nature and Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the project was to measure changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation. This project included the development of a training workshop for staff of the pregnancy resource center (PRC) in order to equip them better for their ministry. The ministry that occurs in the pregnancy resource center is Christian in nature and depends on the faith, maturity, and spiritual well-being of the staff in order to be fruitful and effective. The goal of PRC's is to minister to pregnant women in order to help them decide to choose life for their unborn baby and to provide services for the well-being of both.

This project was inspired by the perceived need for the staff of PRC's to receive training in their faith formation. Such training is lacking among PRC's. The lack of

training in faith or spiritual formation is a shortcoming and potential hazard for the spiritual well-being of the staff and potentially detrimental to the mission of the ministry itself. This project was developed to address the need for training in Christian faith formation for staff in PRC's. The time and location of the training limited it to one site. The conclusions of this study are relevant for future trainings.

### **Research Questions**

The three research questions listed below indicate the aim of this project. The research methodology employed in the project was adapted to answer these questions in order to fulfill the project's purpose. In answering these questions, the impact of the training in Christian formation was measured, analyzed and interpreted. The method for answering each research question is listed below the questions.

#### **RQ #1: What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center prior to the training in Christian spiritual formation?**

Two Likert-scale self-assessments were used to answer this research question. The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) section of the Francis Burnout Inventory were administered to the participants prior to the beginning of the intervention. The participants' assessments were marked with the last four digits of their social security numbers or the last four digits of their phone numbers to give them a unique identifier.

The FMS assesses the level of a person's faith maturity based on their answers to 38 seven-point Likert-scale assessments. The entire FMS was used to measure the participants' faith maturity to indicate spiritual well-being. The training workshop aimed to improve spiritual well-being as measured by the FMS.

The SIMS is designed to measure the positive experience of those in ministry. It is an eleven-question five-point Likert-scale assessment. It was used in its entirety to measure the job satisfaction of the participants by administering the self-assessment to them prior to the intervention.

The pre-intervention assessments provided a basis of the participants' spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in their ministry situation.

**RQ #2: What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center following the training in Christian spiritual formation?**

The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) section of the Francis Burnout Inventory were administered to the participants following the end of the workshop to measure the participants' spiritual well-being and job satisfaction after the intervention of the training in Christian faith formation. The assessments were again marked with the participants' last four numbers of their social security numbers or last four digits of their phone numbers to match them with the participant's pre-intervention assessment.

The post-intervention assessments provided a measurement of the participants' self-assessed spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in their ministry situation following the intervention in order to determine if the intervention influenced their level of self-assessed spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The FMS was used to measure spiritual well-being and the SIMS was used to measure job satisfaction in the ministry of the PRC.

**RQ #3: What is the correlation between spiritual well-being and job satisfaction among the Your Choice Resource Center staff?**

The FMS and SIMS were administered pre-intervention and post-intervention. To answer research question 3, the results of these assessments were analyzed to determine whether spiritual well-being is correlated to job satisfaction in the PRC ministry. Participants' pre- and post-intervention assessments were matched using the last four-digits their social security numbers or phone numbers. The pre- and post-intervention FMS results were analyzed to determine if there were areas of change in any of the 38 questions and in the summation of the answers. Likewise, the pre- and post-intervention SIMS data were analyzed to determine changes in results following the intervention. The analyzed results were then compared for the sum of the participants' scores to determine any significant correlation between the scales based on changes to one or both scales following the intervention.

In addition to the FMS and SIMS assessments being administered and analyzed, immediately following the intervention a questionnaire was given to each of the participants to complete and return to the researcher. This one-page questionnaire consisted of ten open-ended questions designed to gain additional feedback regarding the perceived impact of the intervention. This questionnaire was researcher-designed to solicit additional information. The questionnaire was filled out and returned by the participants with only their last four digits of their social security numbers or last four digits of their phone numbers as identifiers. Answers to the questions were collected and considered feedback that helped to answer the question of whether the intervention

improved spiritual well-being and job satisfaction for the participants and whether these were considered correlated by the participants themselves.

### **Ministry Context**

The context for the research was the Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) in Rocky Mount, NC. Rocky Mount is a rural town in northeastern NC of almost 60,000 people based on 2015 data. The population is about 63% black and 31% white and 3-5% Hispanic. Data shows that 66% of babies born in Rocky Mount are born to unwed mothers. 41% of babies born in Rocky Mount are born to women 20-24 years old and 8% born to teenagers. The median household income in Rocky Mount is \$36,000 per year, which is below the national and North Carolina median incomes. 15% of the people in Rocky Mount have no healthcare, and 45% of the population have public health insurance. 83% of the population in Rocky Mount have a high school education, and 20% have attained at least a bachelor's degree from college. Of the registered voters in Rocky Mount, 69% are registered Democrat, 17% Republican and 13% Non-Partisan (Rocky Mount Census).

In the state of NC, almost half of the residents declare themselves to be adherents to the Christian faith. The Baptist denomination accounts for one-third of their affiliation. The next highest is the United Methodist Church with about 15% of the affiliation, and there is an almost equal number of non-denominational church-goers statewide. Roman Catholics account for about 8% of Christians in the state. The AME Zion and Presbyterian Churches are the only others to account for more than 2% of the affiliation in the state (Tippett). There is no reason to think that Rocky Mount does not parallel this pattern of the entire state.

The YCRC serves the Rocky Mount area by providing services typical of a PRC: pregnancy testing, limited ultrasounds, STD/HIV testing, counseling, education and



support classes, baby/maternity resources, and mentorship for parents. In addition to a stand-alone building, the YCRC also provides services from a mobile unit that they take to various locations in the counties surrounding Rocky Mount. All of the services provided by the YCRC are free and confidential (Your Choice).

### **Participants**

For the project, the participants were staff and volunteers at the Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) in Rocky Mount, NC. The YCRC is a PRC reflecting the general characteristics of PRC's in northeastern NC. The center employs 8 paid staff and over 20 volunteers. The staff and volunteers are mostly female, with only one male, and range in age from 25 to 60 years old. They profess to be Christian in their faith and pro-life in their beliefs and practices. As staff and employees of the center, they are advocates for the sanctity of life for unborn babies. The center was chosen for its location that was in proximity to the researcher and because it serves as a sample PRC to measure the impact of this research project. The researcher had not visited the YCRC prior to the research project.

### **Criteria for Selection**

All of the staff and volunteers of the YCRC were invited to participate in the training. The Director of the YCRC made the invitation known to volunteers who were given the option to attend. The project was relevant to anyone who participates in the ministry of the PRC, even if they are not paid. Volunteers play an integral role in PRC's and often volunteers may become paid staff and take on more responsibilities over time.

The participants were advocates for the ministry of life and Christians across several denominations who shared an interest in developing their spiritual well-being and satisfaction in ministry. They also shared the interest in the value of this research project;

therefore, they had a willingness to participate and were stakeholders in the positive outcome of the intervention. The Director of the YCRC was willing to create the uninterrupted time and space for the research project to occur.

Because the researcher did not have existing relationships with the participants, this should have lessened the bias related to participants championing the success of the project due to their relationship with the researcher. However, the motivation for the researcher was in line with the purpose of YCRC (Sensing).

### **Description of Participants**

The participants of the research project were eight Christian females and one Christian male from various denominations who have a commitment to the ministry of life that occurs at the PRC. They work (7) or volunteer (2) at the YCRC and possess various degrees of education, Christian maturity and ages.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This project sought to meet the ethical parameters suggested by Sensing in regard to approaching participants in a research project. These include the following characteristics:

- **Respect for Persons:** participants are treated with dignity and value.
- **Beneficence:** assures good will toward participants and seeks a positive experience in terms of safety, well-being.
- **Justice:** the research should be fair, and the risks minimized while also seeking to share benefits of the research with the participants.
- **Respect for Communities:** the researcher upholds the values and interests of the community. (ch. 2)

Additionally, the researcher respected the values and interests of the participants and intends to share any benefit from the research project with the participants. The purpose of this project was to measure the benefit of the project on the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the participants. The research aimed to develop both through the intervention; the outcome of the research project entailed positive benefits for the participants.

The participants were informed of the project and given the opportunity to give informed consent to the researcher prior to participating (See Appendix D). None of the participants were forced to participate in the workshop. The Director of the YCRC gave them the option to participate.

The data collected from the research maintained anonymity and confidentiality for all participants (See Appendix D). The forms used were identified by the last four numbers of the participants' social security numbers or phone numbers and were not associated with names or other personal indicators. The numbers were used only to match the pre- and post-intervention assessments for each person. The participants were given written assurance of confidentiality and that the data collected would be used only for measuring the impact of the research project and to inform future similar interventions.

### **Instrumentation**

This research project used three instruments for data collection. For the pre- and post-intervention assessments, the project used the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS), a component of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). These are expert-designed, existing standardized Likert-scale self-assessments used by researchers to measure spiritual well-being (FMS) and job satisfaction of those in

ministry (SIMS). This project used them before and after the intervention. In addition to these two assessment tools, the researcher included a post-intervention questionnaire to gain additional feedback from participants. This questionnaire consisted of ten open-ended questions for participants to answer as desired.

The FMS was chosen because it measures faith maturity based on the following definition: “the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life-transforming faith, as these have been understood in mainline Protestant traditions” (Benson et al. 3).

The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) is a reliable instrument to indicate levels of spiritual formation / Christian maturity among a wide spectrum of participants. The FMS assesses the level of a person’s faith maturity based on his or her answers to 38 seven-point Likert-scale assessments (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson; Hui; Ji; Sharp; R. Thompson). The FMS is used in this project because of its targeted measurements and because researchers have been in agreement about its reliability and validity in measuring spiritual health and maturity across denominations (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson; Ji; Salsman & Carlson; Sanders; R. Thompson; Tisdale). The reliability of the FMS measuring faith maturity was considered based on faith maturity being defined as a “commitment that directs one’s life, a deep understanding of religious issues, the ability to doubt, and tolerance” (Hill and Maltby 40). The measured element of faith maturity has been described as valid across denominational lines and as the intersection of religious attitudes and behavior (Benson et al.; Hill and Maltby; Hui; R. Thompson).

The FMS is significantly correlated to other assessments related to psychological adjustment, emotional maturity, personal meaning, prosocial behavior, and general

religiousness. The vertical (relationship to God) and horizontal (relationship to others) measurements align with connection to the transcendent God and engagement with other people in ministry. The vertical measurement assesses elements of personal beliefs, prayer life, fasting, Scripture study, and other spiritual disciplines related to connection with God. The horizontal faith measurement targets a person's concern and care for the world around him or her in terms like justice, charity and service to others. It has also been useful in indicating missional activity (Benson et al; Hui; Ji; Piedmont; R. Thompson; Tisdale).

The SIMS was selected for this research project because of its targeted assessment of job satisfaction for those in ministry-related work and because of its tested reliability and validity among use for research in Christian ministers. The SIMS is a component of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). The FBI has two components: one measures burnout and exhaustion, and the other, the SIMS, is designed to measure the positive experience of those in ministry. It is an eleven-question five-point Likert-scale assessment. The SIMS' internal reliability consistently has internal reliability alpha coefficients consistently near or above .80 (Francis and Crea; Francis et al.; Randall).

Satisfaction in ministry is correlated to the training in and practice of spiritual disciplines that include prayer, worship, devotional Scripture reading/study, meditation, journaling, fasting, retreats and rest. These contribute to satisfaction in ministry. Spiritual renewal through spiritual formation seems to be the cornerstone of satisfaction in ministry (Chandler "Pastoral Burnout," "The Impact"; Francis et al.). The SIMS has been used in studies among clergy and those in ministry to assess their positive experience of ministry (Francis and Crea; Francis et al.). For this reason, the SIMS is as an appropriate

tool to measure whether this project's intervention of a workshop on Christian spiritual formation influenced the participants' job satisfaction.

The researcher designed a qualitative questionnaire with ten questions to elicit additional information related to the participants in the workshop (See Appendix C). The purpose of these questions was to gain further insight into what was helpful, what could have been improved, what was not helpful for the participants, and to gain information regarding their experience with other similar workshops. This questionnaire was also provided the researcher with ways to improve elements of the workshop such as topics, time-frame, delivery and participants' involvement. The questionnaire followed the research protocol that has indicated that anecdotal answers to questions can elaborate on and clarify the influence of interventions as revealed by quantitative research instruments (Bernard; A. Jones; L. M. Jones; Ograjensek).

Additionally, the researcher served as a qualitative instrument to observe and note verbal and non-verbal feedback during the intervention that contributed to the measurement of the influence of the intervention on the participants. The researcher made notes during and after the sessions to record feedback and observations. In qualitative research, the researcher is the "primary instrument" whose role cannot be minimized in providing insights, observations and interpretations for the research project (Cresswell; Ograjensek; Sensing ch. 8). The researcher's feedback from his participation in the intervention was included in the data analysis for this project.

### **Reliability & Validity of Project Design**

Likert-Scale assessments and qualitative questionnaires have been used in diverse venues to measure faith maturity, spiritual well-being, and job satisfaction for Christian

ministers. Research projects have shown this to be a reliable and sound method and topic of research. Types of tools used to measure spiritual growth, maturity and well-being include surveys, questionnaires, scales, and formal and informal interviews. Some studies have researched the correlation between spirituality or Christian maturity and well-being, life satisfaction and vocational satisfaction. Peer-reviewed research using the FMS or SIMS has been consistently supported as reliable and valid for a research project like this project. Both tools have been designed and measured for participants in Christian ministry that resemble the participants in this project (Chandler “Pastoral Burnout,” “The Impact”; Dodson; Francis and Crea; Francis et al.; Ji; A. Jones; L. M. Jones; Lee et al.; Melton; Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge; Polonyi; Randall; Sharp; Snelling; R. Thompson; Tisdale) The instruments were chosen based on their relatedness to the research questions of this project according to their stated purposes and actual questions.

The FMS, SIMS, and researcher-designed questionnaire were all completed by the participants in a timely manner. The FMS and SIMS were given prior to the intervention, and participants were given time to read and answer the 38- and 11-question scales. Following the intervention completion, the participants were given the FMS and SIMS and again given time to complete them. After the second session, they were given the questionnaire to complete and return. They were given space and time to answer the questions as fully as desired. The forms were identified by the last four digits of social security numbers or last four digits of phone numbers and collected by the researcher. The FMS and SIMS were analyzed by an expert in research data analysis. The answers to the questionnaires were analyzed by the researcher.

The researcher is a minister who fulfilled a participative role in the intervention for which he was a biased advocate. While he was a collaborative participant and advocate who facilitated the intervention for the purpose of bringing about transformation, the researcher was also an observer of participants and noted their verbal and non-verbal feedback throughout the intervention. The researcher's observations and interpretations of participants' experience of the intervention were also included in the data collection and analysis as a potentially significant contribution to the research (Cresswell; Ograjensek; Sensing).

A similarly qualified, experienced and invested researcher could duplicate the intervention among other pregnancy resource centers. Such researcher could conduct an intervention like this one and using the same measurement tools should be able to duplicate the outcome of this research project. Notwithstanding Greenfield's warning against overgeneralizing small qualitative studies, based on the research of the literature review into pregnancy resource centers, the "principal of proximal similarity" provides confidence that the findings of this research project would apply to similar interventions done in other PRC's (Greenfield 55; Patton 581). The answers to the questionnaires indicated that the intervention was helpful and that the participants would want to participate in future similar interventions. Researchers may find the same response among other PRC staff when a similar intervention is conducted.

### **Data Collection**

The purpose of the project was to measure changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation. The intervention



training consisted of education, demonstration and participation in spiritual disciplines that were deemed to be relevant and impactful to the staff of the YCRC. The training was conducted during two three-hour sessions. The training was developed and facilitated by the researcher based on research of existing literature, prior training in Christian faith formation, experience as an Anglican priest and pastor, personal spiritual formation, and experience providing pastoral care in PRC's. The researcher developed an agenda and content for the trainings that included reflections on Scripture (*lectio divina*), elaboration on themes from Scripture related to the ministry of the PRC, teaching on prayer, participation in prayer, quiet prayer, teaching on using spiritual gifts, teaching on personal devotional practices, and small group discussion.

This researcher is an ordained Anglican priest who has served as a Pastor for over eight years and has served as a Chaplain to a local PRC for over six years. In addition to the above elements of the training that were influenced by the literature review, he also offered teachings, prayers and facilitation based on his experience in the ministry. The researcher's education, experience and personal devotional practices contributed to a foundational competency to conduct this research. These contributed to the dialogue, listening, and interaction with the participants during the intervention. Sensing affirms the value of the researcher expressing his or her own story and personal investment in ministry with the participants of the research project. He writes, "Qualitative research involves being reflexive and autobiographical; therefore, when the researcher shares some of his story, the community will have a sense of where he is coming from, where his heart is, and what the influencing factors are for him" (Sensing Intro).

## **Intervention**

The intervention was preceded by discussions between the researcher and the Director of the YCRC to schedule two training dates of three hours each. The best times for these sessions were on Thursday mornings for three hours during a time when the center does not see clients. The sessions were conducted two weeks apart.

The agenda and content of the sessions were developed by the researcher. The researcher developed a bulletin for the participants that included the agenda, Scripture, prayers and guidance for spiritual formation (see Appendix E). The researcher served as the facilitator, or what Stringer calls “the catalyst,” for the intervention. Stringer explains the role of the researcher in a participatory role in an intervention:

The role of the researcher is not that of an expert who does research but that of a resource person. He or she becomes a facilitator or consultant who acts as a catalyst to assist stakeholders in defining their problems clearly and to support them as they work toward effective solutions to the issues that concern them. (24)

The researcher established a pastoral connection to the participants that enabled the stimulation of learning, discussion, analysis, spiritual development and was intended to spark change (Sensing; Stringer).

The training included the following agenda outline and activities:

### **First Session:**

- I. Welcome and Brief Explanation of the Training and Research Process. (2 minutes)**
- II. Distribution and Instructions for Completing Participant Forms for Consent and Confidentiality and the Pre-intervention FMS and SIMS.**

**(10 minutes)** The participants were instructed to identify their assessments by the last four digits of their social security numbers or last four digits of their phone numbers. The researcher collected them and placed them in an envelope labeled “Pre-Intervention Assessments.”

### **III. Introduction by Researcher and Elaboration on the Workshop and**

**Research. (10 minutes)** During this introduction, the researcher explained the motivation and thought behind the development of this workshop and the reasons for its importance. The researcher offered a brief autobiography about why he was passionate about the ministry of PRC’s and about his own involvement in PRC’s. The researcher also explained his own qualifications in ministry and his involvement in the D. Min. program. The upcoming agenda for the workshop was also explained. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and to participate fully in the workshops by offering input, asking questions and engaging in discussions with one another.

### **IV. Reading and Reflection of 1 Samuel 1; 2.26; 3.21. (30 minutes)**

The researcher led the participants through the Scripture and offered an example of the disciplines of Scripture, Prayer, *Lectio Divina* and Small Group Discussion. The researcher emphasized lessons from the text related to those in the PRC ministry. The participants were invited to share their experiences and reflections. The researcher listened and was attentive for opportunities to speak and/or minister to individual participants as well as the group. An emphasized intention of this activity was to affirm and articulate the value of each participant to God, his love for them, his presence to them and his active

role in their ministry and lives. The researcher's tone was encouraging, exhorting, affirming, and appreciative. The following was the outline for this portion of the workshop. The Scripture references below were not all addressed by the researcher. They were for the participants to reference later. The researcher encouraged participants to follow this pattern of Scripture reflection and prayer (*Lectio Divina*) at a regular time individually on their own and with a small group. They were encouraged to reflect on Scripture in their daily lives with an emphasis on the PRC ministry and their own roles in the ministry.

- a. Trials for the Beloved of God
  - i. Jesus in the wilderness following his baptism (Matt. 3.16-4.11)
  - ii. Trials are for the building up of our faith (Jas. 1.2-4; Rom. 5.1-5; 1 Pet. 1.6-7)
- b. Sorrow and Desperation (Ps. 42-43)
- c. Turning Wholeheartedly to the Lord (Matt. 11.28-30; Rom. 8.37-39)
- d. Offering Our Deepest Desires and All We are to the Lord (Rom. 12.1-2; 1 Chron. 29.10-14; Ps. 138.8)
- e. Resistance / Apathy from Others (Heb. 5.11-14; 1 Cor. 2.14; 2 Tim. 2.23-26)
- f. Stand Firm in the Lord (Rev. 3.8-11; Exod. 13.13-14; Isa. 25.9)
- g. Peace and Blessing from the Lord (John 16.33; Ps. 46)
- h. God's Purpose Being Fulfilled (Luke 4.14; Rom. 15.18-19; 2 Tim. 4.5-8)

**V. Break (10 minutes)**

**VI. Survey of Biblical Theology of Life. (45 minutes)** The researcher led the group in a discussion on the value of the PRC's ministry of life in light of Scripture and Biblical theology that affirms and emphasizes the value and sacredness of life to God. The intention was to highlight for the participants that their ministry was close to the heart of God and at the very center of his kingdom's work in the world as indicated by Scripture. The following Scriptures were identified by the researcher and presented as highlighting the theme of life in Scripture. They were printed in the handout for the participants to take with them and read and reflect on later on their own (See Appendix E).

- The God of the Bible the only Creator of Life
  - Genesis 1.1-4
  - John 1.1-3
  - Genesis 1.26-28, 31
  - Genesis 4.1
  - Genesis 9.6-7
  - Psalm 139.1-24
  - Psalm 22.9-11
  - Psalm 71.5-6
  - Ecclesiastes 11.5
- The Birth Narrative of our Lord Jesus
  - Luke 1.13-17
  - Luke 1.24-25

- Luke 1.30-38
- Luke 1.39-44
- Matthew 1.18-2.1
- Luke 2.4-7, 21
- Isaiah 49.1-6
- Scriptural Life in the Womb
  - Genesis 25.21-24
  - Judges 13.2-5
  - Jeremiah 1.4-8
- Jesus and Children
  - Mark 10.13-16
  - Matthew 25.40
  - Psalm 109.30-31

**VII. A Prayer for Valuing all Life and Prayer for Mission. (10 minutes)** The researcher led the group in discussion on how and why to pray together for the mission of the ministry. Then the researcher led the participants in praying these liturgical prayers and invited additional prayers by participants.

**VIII. Break (5 minutes)**

**IX. Survey of the Biblical Theology of the Opposition to Life. (30 minutes)**

The researcher led a discussion on the spiritual opposition to the sacredness of life based on biblical themes. The researcher invited discussion about the spiritual warfare exhibited in Scripture and invited discussion about how this has been experienced in the participants' lives. The researcher was attentive

and responsive to the verbal and non-verbal responses of the participants. The following Scriptures were included in the handout and discussed.

- Matthew 2.1, 13-16
- Genesis 4.3-6
- Exodus 2.15-16
- Psalm 106.37-38
- 2 Kings 3.26-27
- 2 Kings 16.2-3
- 2 Kings 21.2-6
- Jeremiah 7.30-31
- Ezekiel 23.37-39
- Deuteronomy 12.31
- John 8.44
- John 10.10-16
- 1 Peter 5.8
- Revelation 12.3-4

**X. Prayer for Protection and Healing. (5 minutes)** The researcher discussed the need to pray for protection, healing, and deliverance from the forces of evil. The researcher led the group in praying this prayer aloud together.

**XI. Closing Instructions. (15 minutes)** The researcher encouraged the participants to practice reading Scripture daily and asking God to reveal his love for life and how the spiritual forces of evil strive against life. The researcher also encouraged the participants to pray over these insights during

a designated time each day. The researcher encouraged participants to write down meaningful verses, prayers, and insights in the blank pages included in the handouts and to bring them to the next session. The following prayers for the participants to pray on their own were also included in the handout. The researcher explained the reasons behind praying such prepared prayers as part of our prayer lives: “Prayer to the Holy Spirit,” “A Prayer of Submitting to God and Resisting the Enemy,” “A Prayer to be Prayed Before Ministry,” “A Prayer to be prayed after Ministry” and “Prayer for a Child in the Womb.”

**Second Session (Two weeks after the first session):**

- I. **Welcome and Feedback. (15 minutes)** The researcher welcomed the participants and invited them to share about their experiences of reading Scripture and prayer since the initial workshop. The researcher encouraged the participants to share any ways in which they felt like God spoke to them through Scripture, answered their prayers, or blessed them through their discussions with others in terms of their ministry. The researcher asked them to share how they were inspired or empowered in their ministry during the last two weeks. The researcher also asked if and how they had experienced what they perceived as spiritual opposition to their ministry. The researcher listened to facilitate any opportunities for affirmation or ministry among the participants.
- II. **Reading and Reflection on Mark 1 and Teaching on Spiritual Formation. (2 hours plus 15 minute break after an hour)** The researcher led the group in a reading, reflection and teaching of Mark 1



and highlighted the themes from the text that illustrate personal and communal spiritual disciplines for Christians – especially those in ministry with an emphasis on the ministry of life. The outline of the discussion followed the order of the chapter as follows:

- a. Mark 1.1-9: Confession and Forgiveness:** The researcher highlighted the value of regular confession and repentance of sins and receiving forgiveness. He also emphasized the need to forgive others and release them for their sins against us or that hurt us. The researcher referenced Scriptures on forgiveness and led the group in a prayer of confession, receiving forgiveness and also in forgiving others. Scriptures for reference included the following: 1 John 1.9, Acts 10.43, 1 John 3.5, Mark 11.24-25 and Nehemiah 9.17.
- b. Mark 1.9-12: Receiving the Holy Spirit and Blessing from Heaven for Ministry:** The researcher taught about the relationship of the believer to the Holy Spirit and discussed receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of heaven for Christian ministry, especially the ministry of the PRC. The researcher elaborated on Scriptures discussing the Holy Spirit and led the participants in the “Prayer to the Holy Spirit.” The Scriptures discussed included the following: Acts 1.3-5, Acts 2.38-39, John 14.23, John 17.26, 2 Tim 1.6-7, Romans 8.5-6; 11, 15-16, 26-27 and Ephesians 5.18.

**c. Mark 1.12-15: Responding with Faith to Testing and**

**Opposition in Ministry:** The researcher highlighted the testing and spiritual opposition that those in Christian ministry face and experience. The researcher invited discussion about how the participants have experienced this during their time with the PRC. The researcher discussed how to respond to such testing or opposition faithfully by turning to God and the promises of the Gospel. The researcher taught about the full armor of God (Eph/ 6.10-20) and led the participants in the prayer: “A Prayer of Submitting to God and Resisting the Enemy.” Scriptures referenced included the following: Gen. 3.1-5, Matt. 4.1-11, Acts 10.38, Rev. 2.8-10, 1 Cor. 10.13, Heb. 2.18; 4.15-16, Eph. 6.10-20 and Jas/ 4.7.

**d. Mark 1.16-34: Ministry with Jesus and the Family of Faith –**

**Healing, Delivering and Serving:** The researcher reflected on the power of God for the ministry of healing and deliverance. Additionally, the researcher discussed how God empowers us for the service of those to whom we minister. The researcher applied this to the ministry of the PRC and invited discussion regarding areas of need of healing, deliverance and service where God’s power and authority were needed. Scriptures referenced included the following: 2 Corinthians 5.16-20, Luke 9.1-2, Luke 10.8-9,

Luke 10.17-20, John 1.4-5, John 8.12, 1 Thessalonians 5.23-24 and Acts 4.23-33.

- e. Mark 1.35-39: Solitude, Silence, Listening and Obeying:** The researched explained the value of times of solitude in the Lord's presence, including times of prayer, silent listening and that lead to obedience to the Lord's call and vision for our lives and ministry. Scriptures highlighted included the following: John 14.15-20, 14.23, 25-27, 15.26, 16.13-14, Rev 1.9-10; Ps 46.10; Ps 32.8.
- f. Mark 1.40-45: Compassion and Release:** The researcher discussed the dangers of the participants suffering from stress, fatigue, exhaustion, and feeling like their spiritual resources have been depleted by the ministry. The researcher highlighted the compassion of Jesus as the source of their own compassion and spiritual resources to reach out to others. The researcher also emphasized the need to release those to whom they minister to the sovereign care of God and to forgo their own attempts at control. The researcher introduced the participants to the prayers to be prayed before and after ministry as resources to help them. Scriptures highlighted included the following: 1 John 3.16-18, Ps. 41.1-2, Matt. 10.42, Luke 10.36-37, Prov. 11.25, Rom. 8.22-27, Eph. 1.15-23 and Acts 20.22-27.

### **III. Break (5 mins)**

- IV. Establishing the Kingdom of Heaven's Reign at the Center: (15 minutes)** The researcher discussed the work of facilitating the presence of God at the PRC. The researcher discussed the characteristics of God's kingdom and presence that include grace, peace, joy, hope, rest, love, and truth. The researcher discussed the power of prayer, uplifting conversation, Scripture, faith, and holiness to influence the spiritual atmosphere and relationships at the center. The researcher led the participants to pray Psalm 23 together. The following Scriptures were referenced: Matt. 17.1-8, 18.10, Luke 17.20-21, Zech. 2.5, 1 Sam. 19.18-24, 2 Kings 6.15-23, 1 Kings 8.10-11, John 7.37-39 and Rev. 22.1-5.
- V. Invitation for Questions and Comments. (15 minutes)**
- VI. Closing with the Lord's Prayer Prayed Together.**
- VII. Explaining and Distributing the Researcher-Designed Questionnaire and Post-intervention Assessments. (3 mins)** The researcher distributed the questionnaire and encouraged the participants to take their time to complete it and to freely share feedback. The participants were invited to answer the questions on the questionnaire using as much space as they needed to write and to add additional comments that were not in response directly to one of the questions. The researcher also distributed the post-intervention FMS and SIMS assessments. The researcher gave the forms to the participants with the instructions to identify their forms with the last four digits of their social security numbers or last four digits of their phone numbers. The researcher gave them as much time as they needed and

collected the forms from the participants when they were finished and placed them in an envelope marked “Post-Intervention Forms.”

### **Quantitative Likert-Scale Assessments**

The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) is a 38 question, seven-point Likert-Scale that invites participants to assess themselves in elements related to the Christian faith and spiritual well-being. The FMS invites participants to respond to each statement with one of the following:

1 = never true

2 = rarely true

3 = true once in a while

4 = sometimes true

5 = often true

6 = almost always true

7 = always true

The researcher introduced the FMS prior to the first session of the intervention and after the second session for the participants to complete. The researcher explained the FMS in the words of its creators. It measures faith maturity to “the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life-transforming faith, as these have been understood in mainline Protestant traditions” (Benson et al. 3). The researcher also explained that the FMS questions relate to the participants’ relationship with God and other people. The researcher encouraged participants to answer honestly in accord with how things are now and not how they would like them to be or think they should be.

Along with the FMS, the researcher also distributed the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) to the participants. SIMS has eleven Likert-Scale questions that indicate the person's job satisfaction in his or her ministry role. The SIMS items are assessed according to a 5-point scale:

5 = agree strongly

4 = agree

3 = not certain

2 = disagree

1 = disagree strongly

The SIMS was introduced prior to the first intervention and after the second training session, and it was explained as measuring how satisfaction in ministry might be correlated to the training in and practice of spiritual disciplines and to a person's Christian maturity and spiritual formation. The researcher explained the reasoning behind this scale—spiritual renewal through spiritual formation has been shown to be the cornerstone of satisfaction in ministry (Chandler "Pastoral Burnout," "The Impact"; Francis et al.).

The researcher emphasized that these assessments would not be associated with anyone's name or shared with anyone for identifying purposes. The researcher also explained the process of analyzing the data that would assure confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. At the pre- and post-intervention assessments, the researcher explained that the overall purpose of this training and research project was to measure the impact of a training in Christian faith formation for the staff of PRC's on both their spiritual well-being and their satisfaction in the ministry. The researcher

encouraged the participants to answer honestly and sincerely, because their input may lead to improvements that will help PRC staff in future workshops like the one of this research project.

### **Qualitative Questionnaire**

The researcher designed a qualitative questionnaire with ten questions for the participants to complete after the second visit. The questions were designed to solicit additional and elaborative feedback and evaluation regarding the intervention. The questionnaire was introduced by the researcher with encouragement for the participants to be honest and elaborative in their answers for the purpose of honest feedback and constructive comments that would lead to improvement for future workshops and interventions. The researcher assured participants that the questionnaires would be kept anonymous without any personalized identification except the last four digits of the social security number or phone number to match them with the sign-in sheet, assuring that the participants had attended both sessions (See Appendix F). The participants were invited to write as much as they wanted and to take as much time as needed to complete the questionnaires. The researcher received the questionnaires along with the assessment forms when they were completed.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Statistical Analysis on Quantitative Assessments**

Quantitative analysis was conducted using the data from the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) that were each taken pre- and post-intervention. These scales provided data of the self-assessments of the participants prior to the intervention and following the intervention's completion. The results of each scale were analyzed descriptively to reveal the present status of the participants' spiritual well-

being and job satisfaction, and then they were analyzed to describe any changes in the assessments for each participant and to determine any patterns of change. The results of the FMS and SIMS were compared with each other to describe any correlations between the two scales' pre- and post-intervention changes (De Vaus).

The summation scores for the pre- and post-intervention assessments of each were compared to determine changes in total scores. The changes in the total scores of the FMS and SIMS from the pre- to the post-intervention scores were compared to determine whether a positive or negative correlation existed. Similarly, particular questions were compared to identify any significant changes in individual responses from pre- to post-intervention assessments.

### **Analysis of Questionnaires**

The questionnaires were collected from the participants following the completion of the intervention. These researcher-designed questionnaires were analyzed by the researcher and the answers were transcribed from the collected questionnaires according to each question. The answers' themes were summarized with some details quoted. These details were deemed relevant by the researcher as unique or indicative and meaningful for the feedback related to the research questions and future trainings. The researcher did not engage in additional communication with the participants after the intervention with the exception of unsolicited email communication with the Director of the PRC. The analysis of the questionnaires was based on the actual written answers.

### **Researcher Observations**

Because the research project was a researcher-led training for the staff of the PRC, the researcher was present and engaged with the participants throughout the project.



Through the course of the interactions, the researcher observed verbal and non-verbal feedback that offered indications regarding the impact of the project. Additionally, participants made comments and engaged in discussions during the project. These comments were noted by the researcher when indicative of the impact of the training. The researcher conveyed his observations and noted some of the particular comments for the evaluation of the research project. The researcher's observations, interpretations, and insights were collected and reported formally as representing qualitative research data that demonstrated the researcher's position as a resource in the project (Cresswell; Ograjensek; Sensing). These were reported with the acknowledgement of the researcher's bias as an invested advocate for the positive outcome of the intervention (Greenfield; Sensing).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the research data collected during the intervention of the research project. The intervention provided training in Christian spiritual formation among staff and volunteers of a pregnancy resource center. These staff and volunteers serve in an intense arena of Christian ministry but may lack training in Christian spiritual formation. The intervention aimed to better equip them for this ministry. Those serving in the ministry often recognize that they are serving on the front lines of a spiritual battle between life and death. They may even see it as an ongoing battle between good and evil. While the staff and volunteers do receive training for their vocational roles in the ministry, most have not experienced sufficient training in preparation for living and thriving in this spiritual and emotional vortex of the PRC. The consequences of deficient Christian faith formation of the staff of PRC's are that their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction suffer.

The purpose of the project was to measure changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian faith formation. Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) was chosen because it represented a typical pregnancy resource center in northeastern North Carolina that was in proximity to the researcher. The researcher conducted two three-hour sessions of training in Christian spiritual formation. These sessions were prepared by the researcher and facilitated by the researcher. The contents of the intervention were based on research for this project, the researcher's experience serving as a Chaplain to the

Albemarle Pregnancy Resource Center, and the researcher's training and experience as an Anglican priest and pastor.

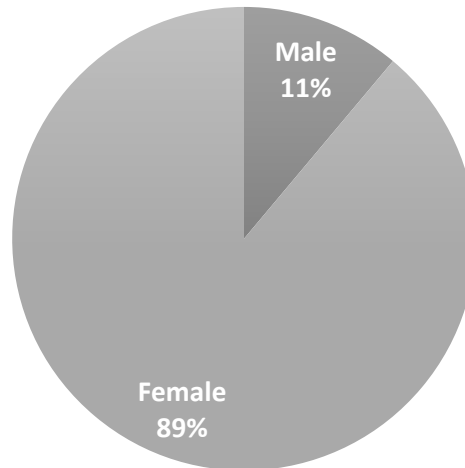
The data presented in this chapter is based on the results of pre- and post-intervention completion of the FMS and SIMS by participants, verbal feedback received during the sessions, completed questionnaires from the participants, feedback from the center's Director, and the researcher's observations. The data from the quantitative and qualitative sources are organized below in order of the Research Questions to which they correspond. The data begins with the demographics of the participants.

### **Participants**

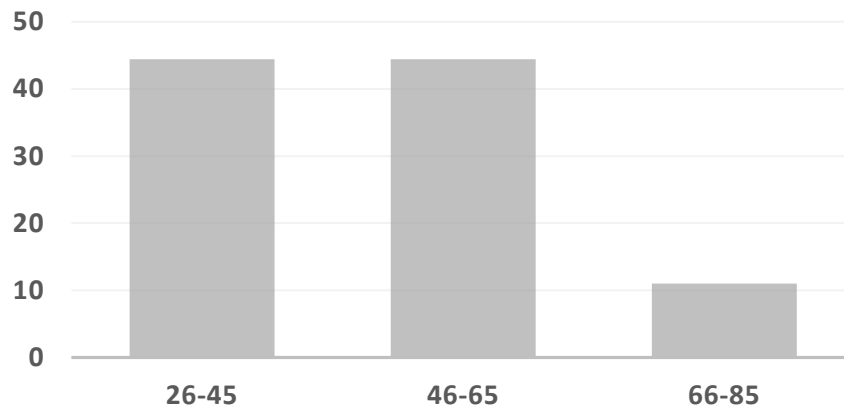
All nine of the participants of the research project were staff or volunteers at the Your Choice Resource Center in Rocky Mount, NC. All nine participated in both of the three-hour sessions and completed the pre- and post-intervention assessments and the researcher-designed questionnaire.

#### **Demographic Data on the Nine Participants that Completed both Sessions**

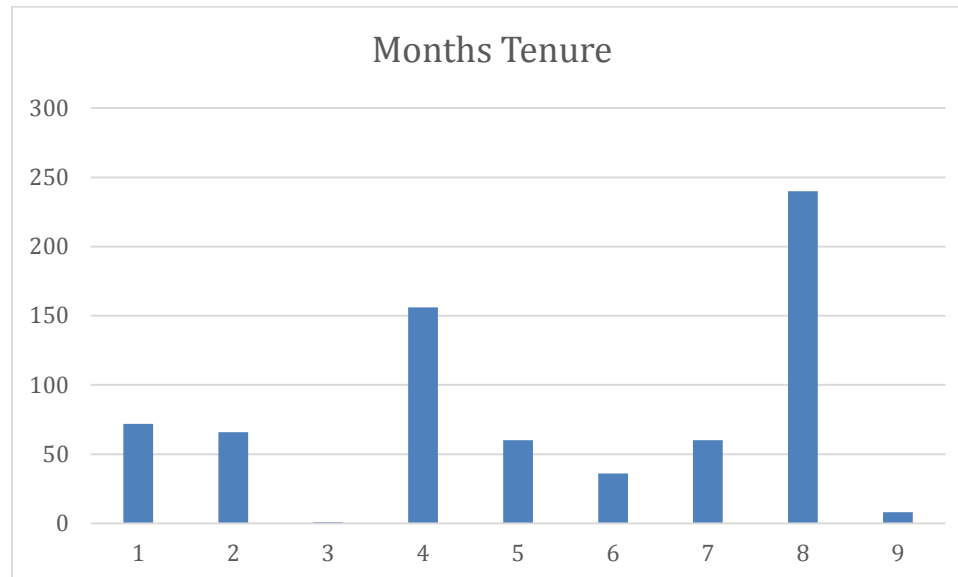
Gender = 8 females (88.9%), 1 male (11.1%)

Figure 4.1. *Percent of Participants by Gender (n = 9).*

Age =  $M(SD) = 46.78 (14.34)$ , Ranged from 29 to 70

Figure 4.2. *Percent of Participants by Age Group (n = 9).*

Months Tenure:  $M(SD) = 76$  months (72), Ranged 1 month to 240 months.

Figure 4.3 *Months Tenure as Center Staff or Volunteer (n=9)*

### Description of Evidence

#### Research Question #1:

**Research Question #1: What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center prior to the training in Christian faith formation?**

#### Pre-Intervention Quantitative Data Collected

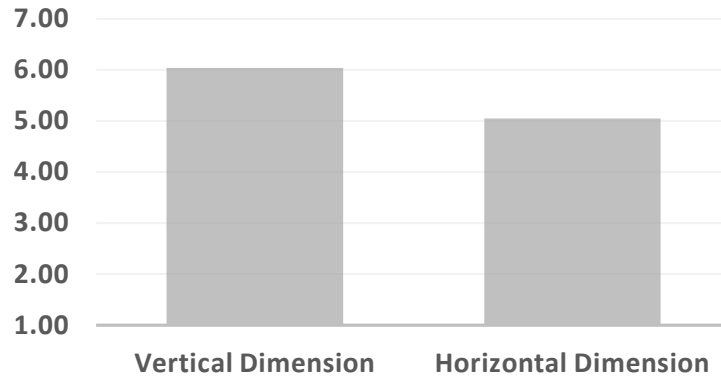
The staff of Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) completed two surveys prior to two three-hour workshops on Christian spiritual formation. These surveys included the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS). Mean responses and standard deviations for both pre-test assessments are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. *Pretest Means and Standard Deviations for the Faith Maturity Scale and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (n =9).*

Measure	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>
<b>Faith Maturity Scale (FMS)</b>	5.52 (0.65)
Vertical Dimension	6.04 (0.77)
Horizontal Dimension	5.05 (0.97)
<b>Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS)</b>	4.41 (0.41)

The FMS asks people to respond using a 7-point Likert-scale, and it includes two subscales, the vertical and the horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension captures a person's relationship with God, and this scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, suggesting strong internal reliability. The horizontal dimension assesses a person's commitment to serving others, and it also showed good internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. A related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test showed that participants described their relationship with God ( $M = 6.04, SD = 0.77$ ) as significantly more positive and stronger than their relationship, in service, to others, ( $M = 5.05, SD = 0.97$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = -2.52, p = .012$ . See Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4. Mean scores of the Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of the FMS



The SIMS asked participants to respond to items on a 5-point scale, which makes direct comparison to the FMS difficult. To compare these scores, average responses were converted to z-scores. A related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test found no difference between mean responses on the FMS ( $M_z = -0.01$ ,  $SD_z = 1.00$ ) and mean responses on the SIMS ( $M_z = -0.01$ ,  $SD_z = 1.00$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = -0.30$ ,  $p = .77$ . Note that both scales show good internal reliability; the FMS has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, and the SIMS has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

### Qualitative Data Collected Related to Research Question #1

The post-intervention questionnaire asked participants the following question:

***Have you had similar teachings previously? If so, please elaborate.***

The answers are the following ( $n=9$ ): 4 responded "No," 1 left it blank, and 4 elaborated on the answer indicating a type of spiritual formation event they had participated in prior to this research project.

<b>Question:</b> <i>Have you had similar teachings previously? If so, please</i>	<b>Elaborated Answers</b>
--	---------------------------

<i>elaborate.</i>	
	“No, These are much needed.”
	“No, I haven't had similar teaching here.”
	“Bible Study Fellowship -- Bible study based solely on God's word.”
	“No, not in this organized setting; however, I feel our Director teaches us in her devotions.”
	“I attended sessions on spiritual healing and forgiveness related to post-abortion ministry.”
	“We've gone to spiritual retreats. We have a spiritual summit every year and pastors come and pray and lead devotions for us for an hour.”
	“Many different studies at work and at church.”

### **Pre-intervention Participant Feedback**

The participants shared at the beginning of the first session that they did not know what to expect from the trainings. They shared that as a ministry and as individuals they have experienced “intense spiritual warfare.” At the beginning of the intervention, the researcher asked the participants to share some of their areas of spiritual needs. The following represent the feedback received: “Help with spiritual warfare,” “More time with God,” “Help with praying more,” “Help with dealing with difficult clients and people,” “More consistent quiet time with God,” and “Dealing with stress of ministry.” The Director explained that the staff meet most days of the week at the common table and have a morning devotion and time of prayer. The participants confirmed that this was a significant part of their day.

### **Pre-intervention Researcher Observation**

The researcher observed a cohesive team of staff and volunteers led by a Director who was fully engaged in preparing for the intervention and encouraging staff and volunteers to participate. The Director made sure no client visits were scheduled for the



morning of the first session. She prepared a hospitable welcome for the participants and researcher by offering breakfast food and refreshments. A table was set up with plenty of chairs and space for each person to comfortably join the session. The staff and volunteers appeared to arrive at the table with anticipation for a positive experience. The participants and Director all seemed eager to engage in the spiritual disciplines like Bible study, prayer, small group discussion, and sharing. All nine participants came to the table with a Bible, pen, and notebook.

The participants seemed to take their Christian faith formation seriously and to be in a habit of applying themselves to spiritual disciplines. They also seemed to be happy to serve in the ministry and possessed a high sense of meaning and satisfaction in their roles at the ministry.

### **Research Question #2:**

**Research Question #2: What is the level of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center following the training in Christian faith formation?**

### **Post-intervention Quantitative Data Collected**

The staff of the YCRC completed the same two surveys (FMS and SIMS) after attending two three-hour workshops on Christian spiritual formation that were completed two weeks apart. Mean responses and standard deviations for both pre-test assessments are given in Table 4.2. A series of related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank tests compared scores from pretest to posttest. Most mean responses remained stable. However, there was a significant change on only one measure: the SIMS. Participants reported lower satisfaction in ministry pretest ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ) than posttest ( $M = 4.62$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ),

$W_{Standardized} = 2.20$ ,  $p = 0.028$ , suggesting increased ministry satisfaction over the course of the intervention.

Table 4.2. *Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations for the Faith Maturity Scale and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (n =9).*

Measure	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>	$W_{Standardized}$	<i>p</i>
<b>Faith Maturity Scale</b>	5.52 (0.65)	5.56 (0.56)	0.65	0.515
Vertical Dimension	6.04 (0.77)	6.17 (0.60)	1.53	0.125
Horizontal Dimension	5.05 (0.97)	5.01 (0.89)	-0.70	0.944
<b>Satisfaction in Ministry Scale</b>	4.41 (0.41)	4.62 (0.25)	2.20	0.028*

In order to better understand the changes from pretest to posttest, a series of paired-samples *t*-tests<sup>2</sup> compared participants' ratings on each item between the two administrations of the FMS, even though the overall mean response did not change. See Table 4.3 for mean responses and standard deviations. Only two items showed significant differences in these preliminary screenings. Further analysis of these items was done using the related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test. Participants reported higher agreement on Item 24, "My life is filled with meaning and purpose," posttest ( $M = 6.22$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) than pretest ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = 2.24$ ,  $p = 0.025$ . Ratings of item 28, "I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and

<sup>2</sup> Given the small sample size, the more appropriate statistical test would be the related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test. However, the paired-samples *t*-tests are easier to compute and are used here as a screening tool. Any item showing a significant difference on the *t*-test will then be assessed with the nonparametric Wilcoxon signed rank test.

throughout the world,” decreased from pretest ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) to posttest ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = -2.07$ ,  $p = 0.038$ .

There was no significant change in overall spiritual well-being on the FMS, but the SIMS showed higher job satisfaction. The job satisfaction rating is a small difference on the scale, from 4.41 to 4.62, but the researcher used another value here, Cohen’s  $d$ , which is a measure of effect size (the size of the difference). According to Cohen’s  $d$ , the post-intervention SIMS showed a large change in terms of statistical language. In practical terms, it was a large enough change that many of the participants noticed it.

Table 4.3. *Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations for the Individual Items of the Faith Maturity Scale (n =9)*

FMS Items	Pretest	Posttest	$t$ ( $df$ )	$p$
	$M$ ( $SD$ )	$M$ ( $SD$ )		
Q1 I am concerned that our country is not doing enough to help the poor.	4.75 (1.39)	4.75 (1.28)	0.00 (7)	1.000
Q2 I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on a cross and rose again.	7.00 (0.00)	7.00 (0.00)		
Q3 My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day.	6.67 (0.71)	6.56 (0.53)	0.56 (8)	0.594
Q4 I help others with their religious questions and struggles.	5.89 (0.78)	5.67 (1.23)	1.00 (8)	0.347
Q5 I tend to be critical of other people.	4.56 (1.33)	4.33 (1.73)	0.39 (8)	0.708
Q6 In my free time, I help people who have problems or needs.	5.11 (1.27)	4.67 (1.32)	0.80 (8)	0.447
Q7 My faith helps me know right from wrong.	6.78 (0.44)	6.78 (0.44)		

Q8 I do things to help protect the environment.	4.89 (1.54)	5.22 (1.20)	-0.82 (8)	0.438
Q9 I devote time to reading and studying the Bible.	5.67 (1.23)	5.78 (1.20)	-1.00 (8)	0.347
Q10 I have a hard time accepting myself.	3.89 (1.69)	4.44 (1.59)	-1.17 (8)	0.276
Q11 Every day I see evidence that God is active in the world.	6.00 (1.12)	6.33 (0.87)	-1.16 (8)	0.282
Q12 I take excellent care of my physical health.	4.00 (1.00)	4.78 (0.67)	-2.14 (8)	0.065
Q13 I am active in efforts to promote social justice.	4.56 (1.59)	5.00 (1.41)	-1.32 (8)	0.225
Q14 I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually.	5.67 (1.23)	6.00 (1.00)	-2.00 (8)	0.081
Q15 I take time for periods of prayer or meditation.	5.56 (1.67)	5.22 (1.48)	1.16 (8)	0.282
Q16 I am active in efforts to promote world peace.	3.89 (2.03)	4.33 (1.50)	-1.84 (8)	0.104
Q17 I accept people whose religious beliefs are different from mine.	5.44 (1.51)	5.56 (0.88)	-0.36 (8)	0.729
Q18 I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.	5.11 (1.54)	4.89 (1.05)	0.69 (8)	0.512
Q19 As I grow older, my understanding of God changes.	6.00 (0.87)	6.56 (0.53)	-2.29 (8)	0.051
Q20 I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities and obligations I have.	4.44 (1.67)	4.33 (1.73)	0.26 (8)	0.799
Q21 I give significant portions of my time and money to help other people.	5.00 (1.00)	5.67 (1.00)	-1.51 (8)	0.169
Q22 I speak out for equality for women and minorities.	4.67 (1.50)	5.11 (1.17)	-1.51 (8)	0.169

Q23 I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people.	5.89 (0.93)	6.11 (0.78)	0.69 (8)	0.512
Q24 My life is filled with meaning and purpose.	5.67 (1.00)	6.22 (0.83)	-3.16 (8)	0.013*
Q25 I do not understand how a loving God can allow so much pain and suffering in the world.	2.89 (1.36)	2.33 (0.71)	1.10 (8)	0.302
Q26 I believe that I must obey God's rules and commandments in order to be saved.	1.78 (1.72)	2.11 (2.21)	-1.00 (8)	0.347
Q27 I am confident that I can overcome any problem or crisis no matter how serious.	5.00 (1.80)	5.33 (1.58)	-1.16 (8)	0.282
Q28 I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and throughout the world.	5.44 (1.01)	4.67 (1.12)	2.80 (8)	0.023*
Q29 I try to apply my faith to political and social issues.	6.22 (0.83)	6.33 (0.50)	-0.43 (8)	0.681
Q30 My life is committed to Jesus Christ.	6.78 (0.67)	6.89 (0.33)	-0.43 (8)	0.681
Q31 I talk with other people about my faith.	5.89 (0.93)	6.33 (0.71)	-1.32 (8)	0.225
Q32 My life is filled with stress and anxiety.	3.25 (1.83)	3.13 (1.64)	0.28 (8)	0.785
Q33 I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.	5.67 (1.00)	5.67 (0.87)	0.00 (8)	1.000
Q34 I have a real sense that God is guiding me.	6.33 (0.71)	6.33 (0.50)	0.00 (8)	1.000
Q35 I do not want the churches of this nation getting involved in political issues.	3.33 (1.50)	3.89 (2.09)	-1.47 (8)	0.179

Q36 I like to worship and pray with others.	6.44 (0.73)	6.56 (0.73)	-0.43 (8)	0.681
Q37 I think Christians must be about the business of creating international understanding and harmony.	5.33 (2.00)	3.89 (2.03)	1.70 (8)	0.128
Q38 I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation enough to help the poor.	5.78 (1.30)	5.33 (1.80)	1.32 (8)	0.225

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\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$

The participants scored mean averages of 5.52 and 5.56 on the FMS pre- and post-intervention assessments. The total mean averages show that on both assessments participants indicated that questions regarding faith maturity were generally between “often true” and “almost always true.” The vertical scores averaged 6.04 and 6.17 accordingly. The vertical scores are based on the questions related to maturity of the staff’s faith in God

Vertical Questions:

- Q 3. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day.
- Q 7. My faith helps me know right from wrong.
- Q 9. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible.
- Q 11. Everyday I see evidence that God is active in the world.
- Q 14. I seek opportunities to help me grow spiritually.
- Q 15. I take time for periods of prayer and meditation.
- Q 19. As I grow older my understanding of God changes.
- Q 24. My life is filled with meaning and purpose.
- Q 31. I talk with other people about my faith.
- Q 34. I have a real sense that God is guiding me.

Q 36. I like to worship and pray with others.

Q 38. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation.

Question 24 "My life is filled with meaning and purpose" was the one question that showed significant change from 5.67 pretest to 6.22 posttest. This went from between "often true" and "almost always true" to between "almost always true" and "always true."

The horizontal score is based on questions dealing with the participants' social involvement. These questions include asking about the environment, politics, the United States, social justice, equality of women and minorities, reducing poverty, and international peace.

The vertical scores show a mean average that indicates the vertical score questions are at least "almost always true" for the participants. This shows high maturity in the area of one's faith in God. The horizontal scores of 5.05 and 5.01 on pre- and post-intervention assessments indicate the positive questions are "often true."

When the developers of the FMS assessed in 1988-1989 a national sample of members and leaders in a broad range of 561 Christian congregations from six Christian denominations, the following mean averages were scored by the following groups below. The scores of the participants of this research project's intervention are also included in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4. *Mean Average FMS Scores for Different Christian Groups*

Group of Christians	<i>N</i>	Mean Avg
Your Choice Resource Center (This research project)	9	5.52 (pre-) 5.56 (post-)
Senior Pastors	454	5.32
Christian Ed Coordinators	404	4.85
Christian Ed Teachers	3043	4.74
Adult Members	3582	4.64
Adolescent Members	2364	4.07

(Benson, P. L., Donahue, M. J., & Erickson, J. A.)

In 2009, Ryan Thompson completed a research project using the FMS in a similar manner as this research project. He had 34 participants in the Stephen Ministries from Protestant churches in the USA complete the FMS prior to training and then following Stephen Ministries training and five months of Stephen Ministries participation. The Stephen Ministry is a Christian ministry of voluntary caregiving that requires intense training in Christian spiritual formation and caregiving.

Table 4.5 shows the scores that Thompson recorded compared to the scores from the staff and volunteers of the YCRC for this project:



Table 4.5 *FMS Scores of YCRC Staff Compared to Scores of Stephen Ministry Trainees*

Participants	Pre-test	Post-test
YCRC FMS Total Mean	5.52	5.56
FMS Vertical	6.04	6.17
FMS Horizontal	5.05	5.01
Thompson FMS Total Mean	5.00	5.15
FMS Vertical	5.61	5.71
FMS Horizontal	4.36	4.60

(R. Thompson)

Similarly, a series of paired-samples *t*-tests<sup>3</sup> compared participants' ratings on each item between the two administrations of the SIMS in order to better understand the changes from pretest to posttest. See Table 4.7 for mean responses and standard deviations. Only two items showed significant differences in these preliminary screenings. Further analysis of these items was done using the related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test. Participants reported higher agreement on Item 6, "I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives," posttest ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) than pretest ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = 2.24$ ,  $p = 0.025$ . Ratings of item 8, "I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people," increased from pretest ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) to posttest ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ),  $W_{Standardized} = 2.00$ ,  $p = 0.048$ .

Table 4.6. *Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations for the Individual Items of the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (n = 9)*

<sup>3</sup> Given the small sample size, the more appropriate statistical test would be the related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank test. However, the paired-samples *t*-tests are easier to compute and are used here as a screening tool. Any item showing a significant difference on the *t*-test will then be assessed with the nonparametric Wilcoxon signed rank test.

SIMS Items	Pretest	Posttest	<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> )	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		
Q1 I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my current ministry.	4.33 (1.00)	4.22 (0.83)	0.43 (8)	0.681
Q2 I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people in my current ministry.	4.75 (0.46)	4.63 (0.52)	1.00 (7)	0.351
Q3 I deal very effectively with the problems of the people in my current ministry.	4.13 (0.64)	4.13 (0.64)		
Q4 I can easily understand how the people here feel about things.	4.33 (0.71)	4.22 (0.44)	0.56 (8)	0.594
Q5 I feel very positive about my ministry here.	4.56 (0.73)	4.78 (0.44)	-1.51 (8)	0.169
Q6 I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives.	4.33 (0.50)	4.89 (0.33)	-3.16 (8)	0.013*
Q7 I feel that my teaching ministry has a positive influence on people's faith.	4.33 (0.50)	4.44 (0.73)	-0.56 (8)	0.594
Q8 I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people.	4.33 (0.50)	4.78 (0.44)	-2.53 (8)	0.035*
Q9 I am really glad that I entered the ministry.	4.67 (0.50)	5.00 (0.00)	-2.00 (8)	0.081
Q10 The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life.	4.44 (0.73)	4.89 (0.33)	-1.84 (8)	0.104
Q11 I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions here.	4.44 (0.73)	4.78 (0.44)	-1.16 (8)	0.282

\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$

The participants scored mean averages of 4.41 (pre-intervention) and 4.62 (post-intervention) on the SIMS. These scores set the average response for the total assessment between the answers “agree” and “strongly agree” on questions regarding positive job satisfaction. Both assessments indicate high job satisfaction in terms of the SIMS.

Two of the questions demonstrated significant increases on the post-test:

*Q6 I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives.*

Increased from 4.33 to 4.89.

*Q8 I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people.* Increased from 4.33 to 4.78.

Both of these questions indicate that the intervention correlated with an increase of an already high degree of job satisfaction, especially in these two areas. Another question increased less significantly, but demonstrated a complete “strongly agree” score of 5.0 in the post-intervention assessment:

*Q9 I am really glad that I entered the ministry.* Increased from 4.67 to 5.0.

All nine participants indicated post-intervention that they were really glad they entered the ministry of the YCRC.

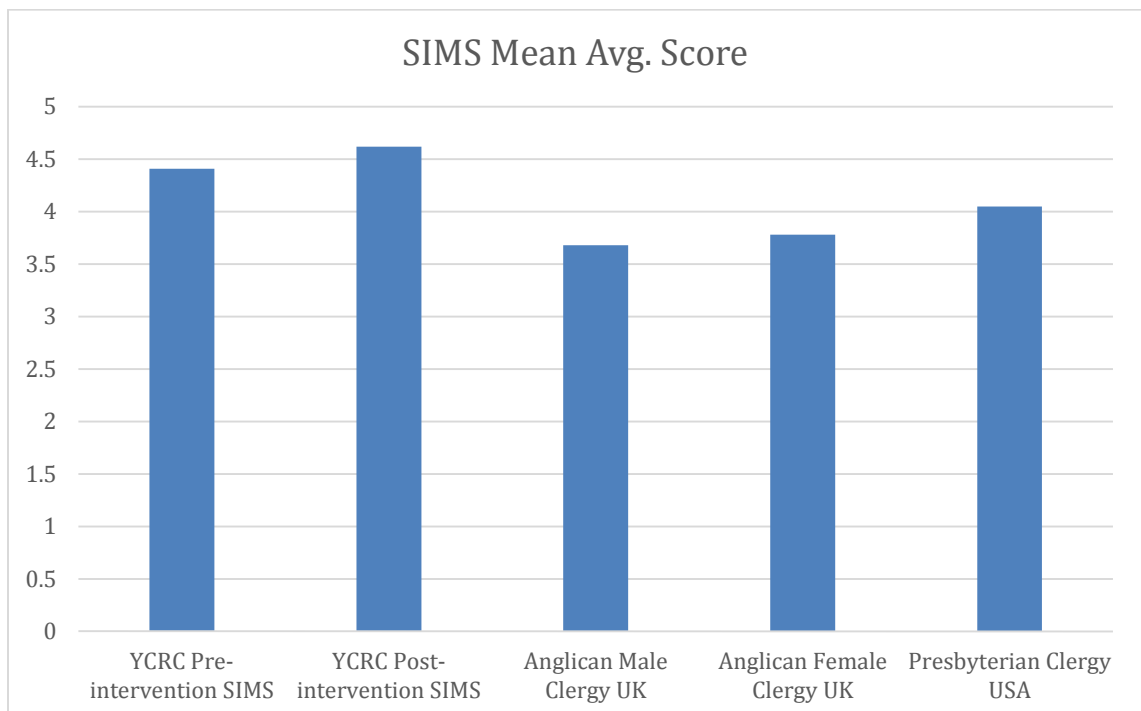
The developer of the SIMS, Leslie Francis, completed research with a participant group of 658 Anglican clergy in England and published the results in 2017. 494 male clergy scored a mean average of 3.68 and 164 female clergy scored a mean average of 3.78 on the SIMS (Francis, et al.). Francis et al. used the SIMS to assess 748 clergy serving in the Presbyterian Church in the USA in 2008. The clergy scored a mean average of 4.05 on the SIMS. This score was the highest score among eight similar studies conducted by Francis and others in the United Kingdom, USA, Australia and Italy

among thousands of Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy (Francis and Crea). These compare to the YCRC scores of 4.41 and 4.62.

Table 4.7. *Mean Average SIMS Scores for Different Christian Groups*

Participants	SIMS Mean Avg. Score
YCRC Pre-intervention SIMS	4.41
YCRC Post-intervention SIMS	4.62
Anglican Male Clergy UK	3.68
Anglican Female Clergy UK	3.78
Presbyterian Clergy USA	4.05

Figure 4.5 *Mean Average SIMS Scores for Different Christian Groups*



### Qualitative Data Collected Answering Research Question #2

The following charts show additional questions and answers from the post-intervention questionnaire that was given to participants who attended both sessions.

<b>Question:</b> <i>What did you find helpful in the workshops?</i>	<b>Elaborated Answers</b>
	“Teaching the word. Explanations of Scripture.”
	“I found helpful the relevance of Scripture being applied to real life, but not only that, but applied to the culture and life of a center. You understand the spiritual warfare of the PRC ministry.”
	“Everything that was said and done was very helpful in this workshop.”
	“The Word of God. The entire workshop was based on the Word of God and prayer – no commentary – just what God’s word says. Powerful!”
	“I found the Scripture reading helpful and the talking through it. This was especially helpful when talking through God’s view of ‘life’ in Scripture (week 1).”
	“The different ways to pray for different situations.”
	“It was a fresh look at the Word of God and how it can be applied to the ministry as a whole and to me, individually, as I minister.”
	“Different types of prayer and the references of Scripture.”
	“Discussion and input of team members.”

<b>Question:</b> <i>What are you most in need of in your spiritual life?</i>	<b>Elaborated Answers</b>
	“Consistency”
	“More quiet time with God. More & more!!!”
	“Consistency of a time of solitude with the Lord. Surrendering habits and ‘good things’ that may be in the way of my receiving the best God has for me!”
	“Letting go and letting Him be in control. Spending quality time with Him in His Word.”

	“Quiet time! Figuring out how to create times of peace to spend with God!”
	“This training – spiritual warfare.”
	“I am most in need of time to do more for God.”
	“Quiet time. Meaningful time of rest.”
	“Deeper relationship with Christ.”

### **Post-intervention Participant Feedback**

This is the researcher’s collection of verbal feedback received during and after the intervention. Throughout the intervention, the participants engaged in the discussion and consistently offered positive feedback on the relevancy and helpfulness of the topics and activities. The Biblical reflection drew out feedback and sharing regarding experiences and emotions related to their ministry. Participants shared about frustrations, times of loneliness and doubt. The Biblical reflection from 1 Samuel chapter 1 about Hannah’s life resonated with the participants who immediately began to engage in discussion.

The sessions included several moments of enlightenment and shared feelings and experiences from the ministry. The participants were encouraged and comforted by the affirmation given to their ministry experiences. They were glad to have a forum to share some of their emotions related to the ministry.

They appreciated the Biblical emphasis on the sanctity of life and were enthused to hear the coherent argument and in-depth reflection on Scripture that highlights God’s view on life in the womb and children. Likewise, the teaching on spiritual warfare and the spiritual opposition to life confirmed what they have experienced so often in their lives and ministry. They were glad to receive the resources of prayers and Scriptures to deal with it.

Throughout the sessions, several of the participants had times of sharing when they became emotional and tearful. The researcher prayed specifically for four of the participants: one for healing, one for healing & anxiety, one for stress, and one for an upcoming stressful situation.

When the researcher asked questions like “Can anyone tell me about your experience with...?” or “When has something like this ever happened...?” or “What are some times when you think or feel like...” the participants responded with experiences and feedback.

At the end of the first session, the participants admitted that they did not know what to expect but were thankful for the ministry and for what they had experienced. They stated that they were eager for the next session in two weeks.

At the beginning of the second session, all of the participants returned, and some shared how they had used the bulletin for devotional study and prayer. One woman shared how she used her week vacation to spend much time in devotional reading and prayer about her ministry and life. Another shared about reflecting on the teachings about life in the womb and revisited the story of Elizabeth and Mary from the gospel of Luke. One shared about being encouraged as she thought about the teaching that the ministry is close to the heart of God.

The participants confirmed that the teaching on spiritual warfare and healing were much needed. They also confirmed the relevancy of a discussion on the importance of having healthy boundaries in ministry.

### **Post-intervention Researcher Observation**

The researcher was encouraged by the positive feedback during and following the intervention. All of the participants seemed appreciative for the intervention and for the researcher visiting their facility. The openness and vulnerability of the participants to the researcher and to training helped facilitated the pastoral ministry which occurred during the sessions in the form of encouragement, Bible study, *lectio divina*, pastoral counsel, teaching, group discussion, prayer and laying on of hands, and prayers for healing. These flowed out of the Biblical reflections that were well-received by the participants. The researcher experienced no resistance and no hostility from any of the participants. The Director of the center was encouraging and helpful throughout the intervention. With enthusiastic agreement from the participants, the Director invited the researcher to return for future training sessions.

### **Research Question #3**

**Research Question #3: What is the correlation between spiritual well-being and job satisfaction among the Your Choice Resource Center staff?**

### **Quantitative Data Correlations**

The correlations between the pre- and post-intervention FMS scores were assessed and are displayed below on Table 4.8.



Table 4.8. *Correlations among the Mean Scores on the FMS across Pretest and Posttest (n = 9)*

	Total Pretest Score	Vertical Pretest Score	Horizontal Pretest Score	Total Posttest Score	Vertical Posttest Score	Horizontal Posttest Score
Total Pretest Score	1.00	0.94**	0.95**	0.95**	0.91**	0.75*
Vertical Pretest Score		1.00	0.81**	0.81**	0.96**	0.53
Horizontal Pretest Score			1.00	0.93**	0.82**	0.81**
Total Posttest Score				1.00	0.84**	0.91**
Vertical Posttest Score					1.00	0.61
Horizontal Posttest Score						1.00

\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$

In addition, relationships between the FMS and SIMS were assessed. The SIMS means scores from pretest to posttest were positively correlated,  $r = 0.87$ ,  $p = .002$ . However, the FMS mean scores were not correlated to the SIMS at either pretest or posttest. See Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9. *Correlations between the Mean Scores on the Faith Maturity Scale and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (n =9)*

FMS Scores	SIMS	SIMS
	Total Pretest Score	Total Posttest Score
Total Pretest Score	0.40	0.47
Vertical Pretest Score	0.41	0.43
Horizontal Pretest Score	0.37	0.45
Total Posttest Score	0.41	0.43
Vertical Posttest Score	0.37	0.36
Horizontal Posttest Score	0.40	0.40

\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$

The above analyses show that there was no definite correlation between the FMS and the SIMS, meaning that these two measurements do not seem to be linked in this sample based on measuring the impact of the intervention on the results. The  $r$  values in Table 4.6 indicate that there might be a relationship, but the small sample prevents the researcher from being able to conclude definitely. The intervention increases the total scores of the SIMS but not FMS scores.

The FMS question that did increase from pre- to post- intervention may be correlated to an increase in job satisfaction for the participants; however, correlation or causation is not proven by the similar increases. Question 24, “My life is filled with meaning and purpose,” was the one question that showed significant change from 5.67 at pre-test to 6.22 at post-test.

### Qualitative Data for Research Question #3

The following questions from the post-intervention questionnaire provided elaborated answers relevant to this research question.

<b>Question:</b> <i>How will this workshop help you in the ministry?</i>	<b>Elaborated Answers</b>
	“Clearer understanding.”
	“Be mindful and prayerful of spiritual warfare and to dedicate more time to prayer.”
	“This workshop opened my eyes in many ways and reminded me why I love this ministry.”
	“The reminder to believe God’s word and pray. The encouragement that this ministry is God’s ministry; He cares about what we do and those He has called us to serve.”
	“It was helpful in spiritual awareness— understanding the weight of this ministry. It was also very unifying as a staff.”
	“By praying not only for our needs but praying for protection against spiritual warfare. Being intentional about going to God for <u>all</u> things.”
	“It will help me be more intentional in how I pray for the ministry, my partners in ministry, my co-workers and my clients.”
	“This workshop has reminded me that God created us in his image and we are his workmanship and that when dealing with the clients, we are to show compassion and allow God to work in and through us.”
	“Encouraged.”

<b>Question:</b> <i>What changes, if any, do you expect to make in your devotional life due to this workshop?</i>	<b>Elaborated Answers</b>
	“More time in prayer.”
	“Devoting time specifically for prayer when we will be going places or ministering on-site.”
	“I will be making more time in my devotional life. Also have more time to study the word of God.”

	<p>“My time with Jesus is the MOST important and favorite time of my day. I get up at 5 am and spend about 1.5 hours with Jesus, but I <u>need</u> more..”</p>
	<p>“My prayer life! I <u>have</u> to be in constant communion with God to be in tune with His guidance and also to fight spiritual warfare.”</p>
	<p>“Spending unhurried time in devotion.”</p>
	<p>“To be more intentional in how I pray, using the Scriptures to pray for the ministry and those involved in the ministry. To pray for increased discernment of evil spirits and spiritual battles.”</p>
	<p>“I am spending more quality, quiet time with God and listening to his instructions.”</p>

<p><b>Question:</b> <i>What suggestions do you have for making this type of workshop more effective and helpful?</i></p>	<p><b>Elaborated Answers</b></p>
	<p>“At this time, I have no suggestions.”</p>
	<p>“Not really any. The guide is written well and easy to reference. The prayers are a great starting point to further grow my prayer life.”</p>
	<p>“I thought it was wonderful the way it is.”</p>
	<p>“Day 2 could bring some more practical teaching in ways to grow spiritually and be more in tune with God/spiritual things. Otherwise, very helpful!”</p>
	<p>“I would change nothing about the workshop, but I believe people are naturally skeptical about such a workshop. Good explanation of how it will run, testimonials from participants, addressing possible fears may help others agree to the workshop.”</p>
	<p>“I do not have any suggestions to make it more effective and helpful because I think it is amazing.”</p>
	<p>“I would like to have more time praying for one another as we shared.”</p>
	<p>“More time in prayer.”</p>

### **Participant Feedback**

The participants unanimously confirmed the helpfulness of the content of the intervention for their roles in the pregnancy resource center. The Scriptures and reflections on Scriptures during the intervention sessions resonated with the participants in light of their ministries. They gave feedback about the relevancy of the Scriptural reflections to the center's ministry. Likewise, the participants responded positively to the teaching on praying and to the prayers we prayed together. They stated several times during and at the conclusion of the intervention how relevant the teaching on and practice of spiritual warfare was to their roles in the ministry.

The feedback indicated the participants' experience of Christian spiritual formation and practice of Christian spiritual disciplines has a significant impact on their job satisfaction in the ministry. They were appreciative to have received the resources and training in Christian spiritual formation particularly designed for staff and volunteers in the ministry of life.

Following the first session, the Director of the YCRC sent me an encouraging email sharing how the training had been helpful and timely. She wrote, "We are so thankful that God led you to do this workshop at our Center. Everyone was encouraged and blessed from the workshop, yesterday...by the grace of God everyone's faith has been strengthened, and we are rejoicing! Thank you for joining in our rejoicing! We praise God for you" (Robberson "Spiritual Workshop").

After the second session, the Director again wrote an appreciative and encouraging email to the researcher including the following: "Again, we are praising God

for you and asking His blessings and peace for you and your family” (Robberson “Thank You”).

Both of the emails included a description of some of the struggles that the ministry and staff had been experiencing during the timeframe of the intervention. The Director shared that the contents of the training hit the mark in being relevant and helpful for their ongoing circumstances of life and ministry.

### **Researcher’s Observations**

The researcher experienced the staff engaging in the training in Christian spiritual formation for the sake of their spiritual well-being and ministry. From the beginning of the intervention, the staff appeared to have mature faith and to be engaged in regular spiritual disciplines. They also exuded a positive attitude toward their positions as staff or volunteers in the ministry. The researcher observed that the participants demonstrated positive spiritual well-being and noticeable job satisfaction. The intervention appeared to engage them in their faith and to equip them to become more satisfied in their jobs. The intervention appeared to provide relevant resources for the participants to incorporate into their ongoing Christian spiritual well-being. The resources and instruction of the training seemed to be helpful in contributing to ongoing job satisfaction. The participants also appeared to generally love their jobs as staff and volunteers. They showed a passion or calling for the ministry of life. The researcher observed that training developed specifically for their ministry contributed to their enthusiasm for their job and satisfaction in their job.

### Additional Qualitative Data

The following are additional questions from the post-intervention questionnaire. The questions were designed to gauge the participants' experience of the training. The researcher was especially interested in whether they would recommend this training for other PRC's and whether they would want to attend a similar workshop.

<p><b>Question:</b> <i>Would you like to participate in future similar training or devotional times? If yes, what would you like future events to address?</i></p>	<p>8 of the participants responded affirmatively. One left the question blank. <b>Elaborated Answers:</b></p>
	<p>“Yes, Prayer.”</p>
	<p>“Yes, Dedicate a section to prayer for one another as a staff.”</p>
	<p>“Yes, Address behavior or things that lead to pregnancy.”</p>
	<p>“Yes! Ways to lead and serve together in an authentic way.”</p>
	<p>“Yes!! Further study of what God’s word says about the Holy Spirit, spiritual growth and prayer.”</p>
	<p>“Yes I would like to participate, more on prayer and spiritual warfare.”</p>
	<p>“Open to anything. More about spiritual warfare.”</p>

For the question, “*Would you recommend this training for other pregnancy resource centers?*” all participants answered affirmatively. Four answered “Absolutely!” One answered, “Yes, it was very helpful!”

### **Summary of Major Findings**

1. The staff of Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) demonstrated mature Christian faith and positive spiritual well-being pre- and post-intervention and during the intervention
2. Participants demonstrated a higher than average job satisfaction that was positively impacted by the training in Christian spiritual formation
3. No significant correlation between spiritual well-being and job satisfaction was proven. However, the YCRC staff scored highly on the FMS and SIMS before and after the intervention
4. The staff of YCRC considers Christian spiritual formation training to be helpful and necessary for job effectiveness and satisfaction
5. The staff and volunteers of the YCRC are committed to their spiritual well-being and to fulfilling their job/role in the PRC successfully



## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

Staff of pregnancy resource centers receive training for their particular roles at the centers. However, most have not experienced sufficient training in Christian spiritual formation in preparation for living and thriving in this Christian ministry that involves significant stressors and intense ministry associated with life and death decisions. The potential consequences of deficient Christian faith formation of the staff of PRC's are that their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction suffer. This research project measured changes in spiritual well-being and job satisfaction in the staff of the Your Choice Resource Center through the intervention of a six-hour training in Christian spiritual formation.

This chapter elaborates five findings from this research project and explains how they correspond to my personal observations, the review of relevant literature, and the Biblical theology of the project. These are followed by explanations of the limitations of the research study, unexpected observations, and recommendations for further study.

#### Major Findings

- 1. The staff of Your Choice Resource Center (YCRC) demonstrated mature Christian faith and positive spiritual well-being pre- and post-intervention and during the intervention**

From my first interactions with the Director of the YCRC to follow-up communication, the staff demonstrated commitment to the ministry of the center and to their own spiritual well-being. The Director's enthusiasm and eagerness to host the

training intervention was one example of their commitment. She created six hours of uninterrupted time for all of the staff and volunteers to be present and active in the training. At the first session, the staff came prepared with Bibles and notepads. They were involved and interactive in the workshop from the initial introductions. This revealed that they possessed a mature spiritual well-being that inspired further learning and development. These observations were confirmed by the pre-intervention scores on the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) that were significantly above average for the assessment. At the beginning of the second three-hour session, all of the staff from the first training plus one more were back at the table and prepared to begin immediately with enthusiasm. The center was closed, and none of the staff were called away from the training by other demands.

During the six hours of training in Christian faith formation, the staff continued to demonstrate a mature practice of Christian disciplines, including a recognition of their own need for help in areas of deficiencies, for supportive pastoral ministry, and for help like what was included in the intervention. The staff's questions and comments demonstrated that they were attuned to the Christian faith and that it was a significant part of their daily lives. They all seemed to recognize the importance of developing their spiritual disciplines in order to grow and strengthen their faith to improve and maintain spiritual well-being.

The post-intervention FMS assessments confirmed the staff's mature Christian faith and positive spiritual well-being that maintained above average assessment scores that had slightly improved following the intervention. Their pre- and post-intervention scores averaged higher than 454 senior pastors on the FMS (See Table 4.4). Compared to

a similar demographic of participants involved in the Christian caregiving Stephen Ministries in which participants received training, the YCRC participants of this research project demonstrated higher scores in Christian spiritual well-being based on the FMS results.

The personal feedback and answers to the qualitative questionnaire confirmed their appreciation of the intervention due to its help to them in the areas of their Christian spiritual formation and spiritual well-being. Their already mature faith was further demonstrated by their appreciation of the elements of the training that targeted improving their faith. These included prayer, Scripture reflection, spiritual warfare, and the Biblical theology of the sanctity of life. The increase in the self-assessment score to the FMS question, “My life is filled with meaning and purpose,” showed that a value of the intervention was indicated in an important quantitative measurement. Increasing a sense of meaning and purpose for those in Christian ministry is a valid goal of an intervention like this.

The literature review indicated that PRC’s base their ministries on the Biblical interpretation and theology that all children are created by God in his image from the moment of conception. The PRC ministry is rooted deeply in the Biblical view of sanctity of life and love for others. The training materials of the Care Net and Heartbeat networks of PRC’s are based on Biblical foundations of life and love for others. The literature review regarding PRC staff confirmed that they are Christians with a passion for the ministry of life.

This project’s finding of Christian maturity among the participants aligns with the Biblical basis for the PRC ministries. However, the literature indicated that those in PRC

ministry may suffer from a lack of Christian faith maturity to match their passion for the ministry. This lack would leave them vulnerable to stress-related burnout and spiritual warfare. That assertion was not substantiated by this research project.

Literature supported the positive impact that training in Christian faith formation would have for those in an intense ministry like YCRC. The literature showed that training in elements of prayer, spiritual warfare, ministry gifts, and study and reflection of Scripture have been consistently shown to improve spiritual well-being of those in ministry. This assertion was confirmed by this research project.

The staff of the YCRC expressed deeply held beliefs in the Scriptural assertion that each and every person is made in the image of God. Each person is worthy of life for this reason; each person is one for whom Jesus died on the cross. The Christian nature of the PRC ministry is reflected in the belief that God is present and has given each staff person the Holy Spirit to help with their ministry. The spiritual well-being of the staff was reflected in their FMS assessments that they are fulfilling God's call for themselves in this ministry. Their feedback demonstrated a faith that they will be successful with God's help. The Scripture discussed and reflected in the content of this research study's intervention resonated with the participants, because it serves as the basis for their own vocations in ministry and in life.

## **2. Participants demonstrated a higher than average job satisfaction that was positively impacted by the training in Christian spiritual formation**

The entire atmosphere of the YCRC exuded pride and excellence. From the setting to the Director's and the participants' approach to both sessions of training, there was an appearance of high esteem for their role in the ministry. The staff demonstrated

commitment to their jobs by careful attention and eager involvement during the training. While they shared frustrations, needs, and challenges, the staff were consistently conveying satisfaction in their jobs at the center.

During the intervention, the feedback indicated that they had a grasp of the value of their ministry roles to the overall mission of the YCRC and also to God and their community. While I taught on the value of the ministry of life to God as conveyed in Scripture, the feedback showed that this resonated with the staff and confirmed their own beliefs. They were glad to receive affirmation from a pastoral source outside the center. This seemed to boost their energy and spirits regarding their tasks in the ministry.

The participants of the YCRC demonstrated a high job satisfaction compared to other Christian ministers in similar studies using the SIMS to measure job satisfaction (See Table 4.7 and Figure 4.5). This higher-than-average job satisfaction among the staff and volunteers of the YCRC was confirmed by the qualitative data. The post-intervention SIMS assessments proved that the staff's job satisfaction increased significantly. The feedback I received and what I observed indicated this increase was due to having their beliefs and work affirmed and by becoming better equipped to be more successful. Prior to the training, they were already satisfied in their jobs; the training helped them to become more satisfied. Their desire to have future trainings on similar topics confirmed the intervention's impact. The findings indicate that regularly scheduled trainings in spiritual formation might contribute to sustained job satisfaction.

The literature reviewed confirmed that those who serve in PRC's are motivated by a sense of divine call and purpose. If this call and purpose is complemented by proper Christian faith maturity, staff of PRC's should experience significant job satisfaction.

Literature reviewed for this project showed that the staff of PRC's and those in the pro-life movement have strong passions that have inspired their vocations. The ability to articulate the reasons for their passions and ministry contributes to sustaining job satisfaction, especially when it is in the midst of a supportive and encouraging atmosphere like the YCRC. Training like this intervention can help staff articulate their passions for the ministry.

Biblical theology emphasizes the theme that serving the Lord in ministry leads to joy and fulfillment. Even when a Christian in ministry faces challenges and opposition, he or she can rejoice in serving the Lord who promises to bless and reward work done in faith for his purposes. Jesus teaches that he has come to give to people "abundant life" while the "thief comes to steal, kill and destroy" (John 10.10). The staff of the YCRC see themselves as involved in this same mission to facilitate the choosing of life for babies over death from abortion. This belief fuels their satisfaction in their jobs. They also recognize that the opposition they face and the hardships they endure are due to the spiritual forces of evil working against God's purposes. This further confirms their position in a ministry highly valued by God and contributes to their sense of job satisfaction.

**3. No significant correlation between spiritual well-being and job satisfaction was proven; however, the YCRC staff scored highly on the FMS and SIMS before and after the intervention**

Prior to the intervention, the participants scored highly on both the FMS and the SIMS. This indicated that they were generally mature in their faith and experienced spiritual well-being. It also indicated that they were generally satisfied in their jobs at the

YCRC. My observations confirmed that the staff seemed to demonstrate spiritual well-being and satisfaction in working at the YCRC.

During the trainings, they were able to discuss the significance of their Christian faith. They demonstrated that spiritual well-being was a priority for them both in their jobs and in their personal lives. This commitment to spiritual well-being coincided with the high value they placed on their contributions to the mission of saving lives of babies in the womb and in teaching Christian sexual ethics.

Following the intervention, the participants' feedback indicated that the content of the training served to provide resources to improve spiritual well-being and to help them experience ongoing or improved job satisfaction. The post-intervention assessments indicated a similar FMS score and an increased SIMS score. I believe the staff are better prepared to maintain spiritual well-being and possibly see it increase over time. The training generated group discussion and increased openness and empathy with one another. This will possibly correlate with sustained job satisfaction.

Item 24 on the FMS, "My life is filled with meaning and purpose," showed significant increase from pre-intervention to post-intervention assessments. Similarly, the SIMS item 6, "I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives," and item 8, "I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people," increased significantly. These three items may signify the key indicators of spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The participants all showed improvement from the intervention that would demonstrate its helpfulness in both areas.

Spiritual well-being may be correlated with, if not causative of, job satisfaction for the staff of PRC's. Interventions like the one completed in this research may be

helpful in contributing to sustaining and improving staff's job satisfaction. The qualitative data suggests that this type of intervention contributes to sustaining spiritual well-being while contributing to improved job satisfaction for staff and volunteers of pregnancy resource centers.

The literature review revealed that spiritual disciplines like those taught and practiced in the intervention contribute to spiritual well-being. It also showed that training in spiritual formation provides resources for ongoing success in ministry jobs. The literature also revealed that training in spiritual formation can help participants better manage the stress of being in ministry. This improved stress management leads to job satisfaction. Spiritual disciplines like prayer, devotional Scripture reading/study, group reflection and discussion have been shown to contribute to job satisfaction among Christian ministers. The literature indicates that spiritual well-being would increase following a six-hour training in Christian faith formation. However, this intervention did not prove a substantial increase in spiritual well-being, even though job satisfaction did improve significantly.

The Bible teaches believers to trust God to care for them. Jesus teaches his followers to put his kingdom and their relationship with him above all other needs and concerns. Then, he will take care of their needs and provide for them (Matt. 6.33). Christian spiritual disciplines help believers live congruently with this command of Jesus. Additional Scriptures teach that by making spiritual disciplines like reading and studying Scripture and prayer priorities God leads us in success, prosperity, and peace in our inspired endeavors (e.g., Josh. 1.8-9; Phil. 4.6-7). When believers emphasize their relationship with the Holy Spirit, they experience the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace,



patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5.22). Training for ministry through the spiritual disciplines included in this intervention teaches participants the truth of the Scripture: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ” (Col. 3.23–24). These and other similar Scriptures indicate that developing mature faith not only leads to spiritual well-being but should also support job satisfaction in ministry, because the results are the positive outcomes shown above. Additionally, developing mature Christian faith should lead to bearing fruit or being effective in the ministry through the help and gifts of the Holy Spirit that empower and enable believers to thrive.

#### **4. The staff of YCRC considers Christian spiritual formation training to be helpful and necessary for job effectiveness and satisfaction**

When scheduling the intervention with me, the Director of the YCRC expressed the need for spiritual formation training for her staff. She believed that it would be beneficial for themselves and the ministry. She maintained this perspective throughout and after the training. Based on the feedback and participation of the staff, they shared her belief in its necessity and benefits for the ministry. The participants’ answers on the post-intervention questionnaire confirmed my observations that they considered the training helpful and necessary.

The qualitative data indicated that the intervention was considered something needed and helpful by the participants. The feedback provided by the participants demonstrated that the substance of the intervention was relevant, useful, and impactful to the participants. This was confirmed by the participants unanimously reporting that they

would recommend the training for other PRC's. All but one (did not answer) of the participants indicated that they would like to attend another training on topics related to Christian spiritual formation. All nine of the participants answered the questions "What did you find helpful in the workshops?" and "How will this workshop help you in the ministry?" with answers indicating positive benefits of the intervention. Similarly, eight of the nine participants answered the question "What changes, if any, do you expect to make in your devotional life due to this workshop?" with specific changes they expected to make.

The literature review noted that spiritual disciplines that contribute to spiritual well-being can be taught and demonstrated in a training format. The literature asserted that such training is necessary for those in ministry so that they will be equipped for their roles in God's mission in the world. The research literature showed that trainings in spiritual disciplines and participative workshops like this intervention can be catalysts in Christian maturity and fruitfulness. This research project showed that staff of PRC's report helpful benefits from training in spiritual formation that is designed particularly for their ministry setting and mission.

Biblical theology asserts that someone involved in ministry must make his or her own relationship with the Lord of primary importance. Jesus told his closest followers,

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered,

thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love (John 15.4–9).

This Scripture demonstrates that for those in ministry nothing is more important than their relationship with Jesus. This relationship includes an ongoing experience of being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, those in ministry are warned that they have a spiritual enemy who strives to destroy them and undermine effective ministry (John 10.9-10; Eph. 6.10-20; 1 Pet. 5.8). Any Christian in ministry needs to make ongoing spiritual formation a priority in order to sustain success in ministry. This training was Biblically-based for the purpose of helping the participants fulfill these Biblical imperatives. The participants showed an understanding of this dynamic and embraced it fully.

**5. The staff and volunteers of the YCRC are committed to their spiritual well-being and to fulfilling their job/role in the PRC successfully**

Prior to the training dates, I was unsure how the participants would approach the training or respond to it. I did not know whether they would see it as merely a required training they had to do or whether they would eagerly come with anticipation of participating in a helpful ministry event. I also was unsure how they would react to an outside expert with whom they were unfamiliar. Throughout the training, the staff demonstrated commitment to its purpose that was to increase their spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The participants' engagement demonstrated their commitment to their own spiritual growth and ministry effectiveness. I was pleasantly surprised by their

openness to the training and to me. They were as motivated as I was to make this training successful. The Director's own enthusiasm was undoubtedly contagious to the staff and to me throughout the intervention.

The Director of the YCRC was committed to the training for her staff and volunteers, even though neither she nor her staff were sure exactly what to expect from the first training session. The indications from the high scores on the pre- and post-intervention FMS and SIMS were confirmed by their readiness to receive the training of this research project. They approached it with openness and purpose. Their maturity of faith allowed them to engage in discussions of the spiritual disciplines such as study of Scripture and prayer practices including spiritual warfare and praying for others.

The literature showed that workers in pro-life ministry are often passionate about their ministry and their faith. The literature indicated that if the staff of PRC's recognize that a training will benefit their ministry then they would approach it gladly and enthusiastically. The literature does not indicate how the staff will respond to an "outsider" coming to offer them training on their ministry. However, it does show that training in spiritual formation will help those in ministry both with their own spiritual well-being and their ministries.

For those called by the Lord into a ministry as significant and intense as that of the PRC, they must be committed to it fully. The call of discipleship and ministry shown in Scripture is one of full commitment. Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 16.24-25). One of the elements of this training was to highlight the commitment that the PRC ministry

requires. It is a ministry close to God's heart. The negative side of this is that it is a target of the spiritual forces of evil. Because of this truth, it cannot be entered into and continued without staff being invested and determined to persevere. The staff of the YCRC proved themselves to be like those the Apostle Paul describes as "good soldiers" and "runners" running "to win the prize" (2 Tim. 2.3; 1 Cor. 9.24). Training in spiritual formation will help them excel in fighting "the good fight" and finishing the race (2 Tim. 4.7). This type of training nurtures the gifts and callings for ministry that the Apostle Paul describes in the following Scripture: "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4.11-12). Trainings in spiritual formation led by a qualified minister can "equip the saints for the work of ministry." It can be an integral resource to further developing spiritual well-being and job satisfaction for those in the PRC ministry.

Even after the training, the participants were eager to have additional training on prayer, spiritual warfare and ministering to one another. I believe that this attitude follows Paul's exhortation to "be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5.1-2).

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

The first implication of research findings for ministry concerns the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of the staff and volunteers of pregnancy resource centers (PRC's). The findings indicate that the staff possess positive spiritual well-being and higher than average Christian faith maturity. This is an encouraging finding for those who

are concerned about the holistic health of those in the PRC field. This indicates that the PRC's are in a position to continue effective ministry in the pro-life arena. The positive job satisfaction assessments of the staff of Your Choice Resource Center likewise gives encouragement that those in the field find meaningful purpose and fulfilling roles in the PRC's. This implies that serving in the PRC ministries provides an expression for mature Christians' passions and capabilities for serving God, especially concerning the sanctity of life.

This first finding provides impetus for the pro-life movement to continue upholding the PRC's as effective means of advancing the pro-life agenda of sanctity of life over abortion. It also can serve to help recruit staff and volunteers to the PRC's among Christians who are seeking for a meaningful way to serve God in the pro-life cause. Additionally, this finding could be cited as a reason for PRC staff to seek further and diverse opportunities to practice outreach and promotion for the cause of the PRC's. They are competent to represent the ministry as mature Christians with a passion to serve and impact people.

A second implication of the findings of positive spiritual well-being and job satisfaction among the participants is that mature faith and job satisfaction may be necessary for sustained service in the ministry of PRC's. Both were common characteristics among the participants of the research project who all showed commitment to the cause of the ministry and to the purpose of the training project. This shows that candidates for roles in the ministry of PRC's should have indications of mature faith and spiritual well-being in order to serve in the ministry. Likewise, candidates should demonstrate a passion for the purpose of the ministry and be able to

articulate why and how they would be satisfied in such a role, even if the job proves challenging and difficult. This finding should also inspire directors of PRC's to develop and implement trainings to improve the spiritual well-being of staff, because this appears to be a significant characteristic of staff of PRC's who are satisfied in their jobs.

A third implication is that the spiritual well-being and commitment to faith among the staff of PRC's motivates them to participate in training in Christian faith formation for the purpose of strengthening their spiritual well-being and equipping them for improved job satisfaction. Rather than rendering training in spiritual formation unnecessary, the spiritual well-being of the participants provided a foundation for their profitable and relevant interaction with such training as experienced in this project. The participants of this study all demonstrated positive spiritual well-being and unanimously agreed in the helpfulness of the training involved.

Directors of PRC's should look for opportunities for spiritual retreats, training in spiritual formation, or practicing spiritual disciplines as a group for their staff and volunteers. Similarly, PRC's may want to develop a relationship with a pastor or chaplain who can provide regular pastoral care and spiritual leadership to the staff and volunteers. As mature Christians in ministry, staff of PRC's will appreciate having access to pastoral care and spiritual direction in the context of the PRC at regular times and as needed. It is also good for them to receive affirmation of the importance of their ministries from pastoral resources.

A fourth implication shows that training in spiritual formation contributes to improved assessments of job satisfaction. This shows that staff of the PRC's will experience more job satisfaction in their ministry roles by participating in trainings

designed for those in the PRC ministry. The research project showed that staff will not only appreciate the attention given to their spiritual development but will also expect to benefit from it in their ministry and lives. Such training will also inspire them to seek further training in additional spiritual disciplines.

In addition to the above suggestions in the third finding, networks of PRC's like Heartbeat, Care Net, and Birthright will serve their constituents better by offering opportunities for training in spiritual formation at their regularly held conferences. It would be helpful for them to develop more resources for spiritual formation that can be distributed to the PRC's for individual and group use.

The final implication concerns those who are interested in providing training in Christian spiritual formation for PRC's. The research findings show that this is a worthwhile cause to pursue. The response of the YCRC to the research project and to me as the trainer demonstrates that this is a training that resonated with them, so that they are willing and eager to experience more such trainings and to recommend the training for other PRC's. Therefore, I can confidently present this training to other PRC directors and networks as a ministry from which they will benefit.

One of the responses to the post-intervention questionnaire suggested emphatically that I should develop the material of the workshop into a workbook that could be used for self-study by staff who have not attended a training in person. This would allow someone not attending the workshop to be "strengthened and encouraged" by such a resource. I believe this is a good suggestion, and I intend to pursue publication of a training resource that could be used by staff of PRC's on their own for the same



purposes of the training intervention. I also intend to pursue opportunities to present this training at other PRC's and at conferences for PRC and pro-life ministry staff.

Other ministers may follow this example to also implement this or similar trainings with confidence that they will be helpful and well-received.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research project focused on the nine staff of the Your Choice Resource Center who participated in both training sessions in August 2018. This methodology, time frame and demographic presented a few limitations. 1) There was a limited number of participants to monitor and assess for a research project intended to be generalized to the staff of a few thousand pregnancy resource centers throughout the United States. 2) The quantitative assessments were based on self-perceived subjective answers to survey questions designed to measure spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. The objectivity of the measurements depended on accurate and honest self-evaluations. 3) Post-intervention quantitative and qualitative tools were applied immediately following the finality of the intervention. This demonstrated short-term impact of the intervention rather than long-term effects on spiritual well-being and job satisfaction.

For the scope of this research project, the methodology and number of subjects could not have been changed or expanded to fit within the restraints of this project. Based on my additional interactions with staff of PRC's outside of this research and based on the literature reviewed for this project, I think the findings of the project can be reliably generalized to the larger arena of similar PRC's. These similarities would include the mission of the center and the commitment of the Director and staff to spiritual well-being

and job satisfaction. If these characteristics are present, I think conclusions could be applied confidently.

The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) were deemed as the best suited for the purpose of the project. Based on the historical records and evaluations of the tools, they have proven themselves useful to similar types of projects. They are not perfect due to the subjective nature of self-assessments and because they were not designed specifically for PRC's. Using the post-intervention questionnaire, verbal feedback, and my own observations helped to ameliorate these limitations.

To measure longer term effects of the intervention, I could have returned to the YCRC at a later date, after the intervention and asked the participants to take the assessments again. This would have given other scores to include in the data analysis along with a longer timeframe. I don't know whether there would have been significant change. Based on the purpose of the research, I think the data received from the immediate post-intervention tools was sufficient for the conclusions made.

### **Unexpected Observations**

I experienced two unexpected observations with the research project's intervention at the YCRC. First, I anticipated some resistance to the training in terms of openness and interaction with me and the subject matter. I was surprised and thankful that the participants were engaged right away and eager to become involved in discussions that included vulnerability and openness on their part. They also shared feedback right away and throughout the intervention. I gladly report that I did not observe or experience any resistance or push back from the participants.

Second, I was surprised at the high scores on the pre-intervention FMS and the SIMS scores. I expected the scores might be above average with some exceptions; however, the scores were high across the board. As someone who serves and supports PRC's, I was pleasantly surprised by this. I was glad to see positive spiritual well-being and job satisfaction. Of course, the scores did not leave much room for improvement.

### **Recommendations**

I believe that this research project showed the value of training in Christian spiritual formation for staff and volunteers of PRC's. Even though their faith maturity and their satisfaction in ministry were already above average, they appreciated and were helped by the training. Based on qualitative feedback, the training was beneficial and something they want to participate in again. I recommend that similar training be implemented on a regular basis at PRC's as part of a staff development program.

One way for PRC's to receive ministry like what was done in this project is to have a chaplain or pastor for the center's staff who regularly provides pastoral care and ministry training. This is what I do weekly for the Albemarle Pregnancy Resource Center and Medical Clinic in Elizabeth City, NC, where I serve as the center's Chaplain.

I also recommend that when the PRC networks plan their annual conferences or regional training events that they include training on spiritual formation that aims to support the spiritual well-being and job satisfaction of PRC staff.

The data and findings of this research project can be a basis for future research to explore the spiritual well-being and/or job satisfaction of PRC staff and volunteers with more expansive and diverse participants, longer time frames and/or more detailed

measurements. Research that includes staff that have left the PRC's could also provide further insights.

Qualitative studies that include focus groups and formal and informal interviews would provide more insight into PRC staffs' spiritual practices and stressors. Completing more in-depth qualitative measurements would provide additional interpretive resources for the quantitative assessments.

The feedback has enlightened me in some ways to improve the training by adding more text to the bulletins, focusing more on spiritual warfare, and teaching the participants to minister to one another. I believe that this research project will help me better serve the Albemarle PRC as a Chaplain on a regular basis.

### **Postscript**

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1994, Mother Teresa of Calcutta gave the keynote speech at the National Prayer Breakfast sponsored by the United States Senate and House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. The Roman Catholic nun from Calcutta, India, spoke earnestly of the evil of abortion:

But I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect

the life of her child. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts.

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, that father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. The father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion. (Teresa)

PRC's embody the proper response to the truths stated by Mother Teresa in the above text. PRC's strive against the evil of abortion and strive to bless the mothers of unborn women by helping them and their families to love and respect the children in the womb. I continue to consider PRC's as the most effective resource against abortion and for pregnant women who might be considering abortion.

In the Biblical indictments against the nations of Israel and Judah in the Old Testament, the litany of sins against God leads to the utmost evil act of sacrificing children in the fire to false gods. As an example of God's several condemnations of such acts is the following:

For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. (Jer.7.30-31).

Scriptures like this one show the severity of the sin of sacrificing children. I continue to believe that abortion is a modern-day form of this heinous sin of sacrificing children to false gods or demons.

Throughout Scripture, God reveals himself as the author of life who loves all the people he has created and for whom Jesus died to give eternal life. Jesus continues to call the “little children” to himself that he might bless them (Mark 10.13-16). We are all those children. Abortion represents a severely awful form of anti-god violence that is also anti-human and anti-life. My work with PRC’s, including the work involved in this research project, confirms that PRC’s are doing God’s work in the world of saving life and preventing death and violence. The staff and volunteers of PRC’s are being the hands and voice of God bringing about life where there might otherwise be death. They constantly give voice to the children in the womb under threat of abortion.

It has been and will continue to be my honor and privilege to serve these faithful ministers in some way represented by the work of the research project. I hope that others will commit to this cause.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Faith Maturity Scale**

The Faith Maturity Scale is a self-assessment measuring personal spiritual well-being. Each question has 7 options for answering, as indicated below. This scale will be given prior to the training workshop and following the second session to indicate the impact of the training on spiritual well-being and faith formation.

In order to match your assessments together, please write the last four digits of your social security number in the top right hand corner of this page. The FMS will remain confidential and will not be associated with your identity at any time. If you are uncomfortable with the assessment or any question, you may opt out by not answering or letting Rev. Stephans know.

#### Assessment Instructions:

Mark one for each. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it really is and not how true you would like it to be.

#### Choose from these responses:

- 1 = never true
- 2 = rarely true
- 3 = true once in a while
- 4 = sometimes true
- 5 = often true
- 6 = almost always true
- 7 = always true



	Never True					Always True	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I am concerned that our country is not doing . . . . enough to help the poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who . . . died on a cross and rose again	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My faith shapes how I think and act each . . . . . and every day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I help others with their religious questions . . . . . and struggles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I tend to be critical of other people (R) . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. In my free time, I help people who . . . . . have problems or needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My faith helps me know right from wrong . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I do things to help protect the environment . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I have a hard time accepting myself (R) . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Every day I see evidence that God is active . . . . . in the world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I take excellent care of my physical health . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I am active in efforts to promote social justice . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I seek out opportunities to help me . . . . . grow spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I take time for periods of prayer or meditation . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I am active in efforts to promote world peace . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I accept people whose religious beliefs are . . . . . different from mine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing . . . pain and suffering in the world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. As I grow older, my understanding of . . . . . God changes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities . . . . . and obligations I have	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I give significant portions of my time and . . . . . money to help other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I speak out for equality for women . . . . . and minorities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I feel God's presence in my relationships . . . . . with other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. My life is filled with meaning and purpose . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



	Never True			Always True			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I do not understand how a loving God can . . . . . allow so much pain and suffering in the world (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I believe that I must obey God's rules and . . . . . commandments in order to be saved (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I am confident that I can overcome any . . . . . problem or crisis no matter how serious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I care a great deal about reducing poverty in . . . . . the United States and throughout the world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I try to apply my faith to political and . . . . . social issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. My life is committed to Jesus Christ. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. I talk with other people about my faith . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. My life is filled with stress and anxiety. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I go out of my way to show love to. . . . . people I meet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. I have a real sense that God is guiding me . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I do not want the churches of this nation. . . . . getting involved in political issues (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I like to worship and pray with others. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I think Christians must be about the business . . . . . of creating international understanding and harmony	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's . . . . . creation enough to help the poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(R)—reversed scored

The FMS is developed by the following:

Benson, P. L., Donahue, M. J., & Erickson, J. A. "The Faith Maturity Scale:

Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation." *Research in the*

*Social Scientific Study of Religion*, edited by M.L. Lynn and D. L. Moberg, vol. 5,

JAI Press, 1993, pp. 1-26.

## Appendix B Satisfaction in Ministry Scale

Last four digits of social security or phone number \_\_\_\_\_

### Satisfaction in Ministry Scale

The Satisfaction in Ministry Scale is used to measure a person's self-assessed job satisfaction in Christian ministry. It is used for this research project to measure the impact of the training workshop on job satisfaction. It was developed by Leslie J. Francis.

In order to match your assessments together, please write the last four digits of your social security number in the top right hand corner. The FMS will remain confidential and will not be associated with your identity at anytime. If you are uncomfortable with the assessment or any question, you may opt out by not answering or letting Rev. Stephans know.

Assessment Instructions: Mark one answer for each of the 11 statements below. Please be as honest as you can in assessing your current state. The possible answers are the following:

5 = agree strongly    4 = agree    3 = not certain    2 = disagree    1 = disagree strongly

Disagree Strongly                      Agree Strongly

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

1. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my current ministry..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
2. I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people in my current ministry..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
3. I deal very effectively with the problems of the people in my current ministry..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
4. I can easily understand how the people here feel about things..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
5. I feel very positive about my ministry here..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
6. I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5.
7. I feel that my teaching ministry has a positive influence on people's faith..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
8. I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
9. I am really glad that I entered the ministry..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
10. The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
11. I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions here..... 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

## **Appendix C**

### **Training in Spiritual Formation for the Your Choice Resource Center Feedback / Evaluation**

1. What did you find helpful in the workshop?
2. How will this workshop help you in the ministry?
3. What changes, if any, do you expect to make in your devotional life due to this workshop?
4. What suggestions do you have for making this type of workshop more effective and helpful?
5. How long have you been in the ministry of a Pregnancy Resource Center?
6. Have you had similar teachings previously? If so, please elaborate.
7. Would you like to participate in future similar training or devotional times? If yes, what would you like future events to address?
8. Would you recommend this training for other pregnancy resource centers?
9. What are you most in need of in the area of your spiritual life?
10. Please share any additional feedback related to the workshop (Use the back of the page if needed).

## Appendix D

### INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

For participation in the research project conducted by the Reverend Craig Stephans

*Training in Spiritual Formation*

*For*

*Your Choice Resource Center, Rocky Mount, NC*

You are invited to be in a research study being done by the Rev. Craig Stephans for the Doctorate of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because the project is for all staff and volunteers of the Your Choice Resource Center. It is designed to measure the impact of a training on spiritual formation on spiritual well-being and job satisfaction for staff and volunteers of a pregnancy resource center.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in two three-hour training sessions on Christian spiritual formation on mornings two weeks apart at the Your Choice Resource Center and to complete the Faith Maturity Scale and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale at the first gathering prior to the training session and to complete them again two weeks following the second training session on a morning at the Your Choice Resource Center. After the second session, you will be invited to complete a ten-question questionnaire. The scale assessments and the questionnaire will remain confidential and not personally identifiable. A number will be used instead of your name. No personal information will be shared about you. There is no payment and no other requirements for your participation.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please tell Rev. Stephans. You can ask Rev. Stephans questions any time about anything in this research project. You can also ask your Director any questions you might have about this study. Please know that you can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions on the assessments and questionnaire. I realize that your participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 252-333-4797 and my e-mail is craigstephans@gmail.com

Signing this paper means that you have read this and that you agree to participate in the study. You can change your mind at anytime during your participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

**Appendix E**  
**Training Bulletin**

# *Spiritual Formation for the Ministry of Life*

A Devotional Workshop for Your Choice Resource Center  
led by the Rev. Craig Stephans  
Church of the Redeemer  
Camden, NC  
[www.redeembernc.com](http://www.redeembernc.com)



## Agenda

### First Session – Monday, August 6th, 9 a.m. to noon:

- I. Welcome and Brief Explanation of the Training Workshop
- II. Distribution and Instructions for Completing Participant Forms for Consent and Confidentiality and the Pre-intervention Faith Maturity Scale (FMS) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) assessments
- III. Introduction and Elaboration on the Workshop
- IV. Reading and Reflection of 1 Samuel 1; 2:26; 3:21.
- V. Break (10 minutes)
- VI. Survey of Biblical Theology of Life.
- VII. A Prayer for Valuing all Life and Prayer for Mission
- VIII. Break (5 minutes)
- IX. Survey of the Biblical Theology of the Opposition to Life
- X. Prayer for Protection and Healing
- XI. Closing Instructions and Prayer

### Second Session – Monday, August 20th, 9 a.m. to noon:

- I. Welcome and Feedback
- II. Reading and Reflection on Mark 1 and Teaching on Spiritual Formation
  - A. Mark 1:1-9: Repentance for the Forgiveness of Sins
  - B. Mark 1:9-12: Receiving the Holy Spirit and Blessing from Heaven for Ministry
  - C. Mark 1:12-15: Responding with Faith to Testing and Opposition in Ministry
  - D. Mark 1:14-15: Believe the Good News of the Kingdom of God
  - E. Mark 1:16-34: Ministry with Jesus and the Family of Faith – Healing, Delivering and Serving
  - F. Mark 1:35-39: Solitude, Silence, Listening and Obeying
  - G. Mark 1:40-45: Compassion and Release
- III. Break (5 mins)
- IV. Invitation for Question and Comments
- V. Establishing the Kingdom of Heaven's Reign at the Center
- VI. Closing with the Lord's Prayer Prayed Together
- VII. Explaining and Distributing the Researcher-Designed Questionnaire and post-workshop assessments. (These are the same assessments completed prior to the workshop.)

**Reading and Reflection of 1 Samuel 1; 2:26; 3:21. <sup>1</sup>**

Practicing the disciplines of Scripture, Prayer, *Lectio Divina* and Small Group Discussion. You are invited to share your experiences and reflections, especially those related to ministry. An emphasized intention of this activity is to affirm and articulate the value of each participant to God, his love for you, his presence to you and his active role in your ministry and lives. The following is the outline for this portion of the workshop. The Scripture references below will not all be addressed and are for the participants to reference later. You are encouraged to follow this pattern of Scripture reflection and prayer (*Lectio Divina*) at a regular time individually and with a small group. You are encouraged to reflect on Scripture in you daily lives with an emphasis on the PRC ministry and you own roles in the ministry.

- A. Trials for the Beloved of God: Jesus in the wilderness following his baptism (Matthew 3:16-4:11). Trials are for the building up of our faith (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Peter 1:6-7)
- B. Ministry Flows from Tenderheartedness / Broken heartedness (Isaiah 61:1-2)
- C. Sorrow and Desperation (Psalms 42-43)
- D. Turning Wholeheartedly to the Lord (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:37-39)
- E. Offering Our Deepest Desires and All We are to the Lord (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Chron 29:10-14; Psalm 138:8)
- F. Resistance / Apathy from others (Hebrews 5:11-14; 1 Cor 2:14; 2 Tim 2:23-26)
- G. Stand Firm in the Lord (Revelation 3:8-11; Exodus 13:13-14; Isaiah 25:9)
- H. Peace and Blessing from the Lord (John 16:33; Ps 46)
- I. God's Purpose Being Fulfilled (Luke 4:14; Romans 15:18-19; 2 Tim 4:5-8)
- J. The Ministry Belongs to the Lord and every Child to Jesus because He gave his Life. (Matthew 18:1-6, 10)
- K. God with Us! Our ever-present help (John 14:16-17; Ephesians 3:14-21)

<sup>1</sup>Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016. Logos Bible Software 7.19.

### **Survey of Biblical Theology of Life**

This is a discussion on the value of the PRC's ministry of life in light of Scripture and Biblical theology that affirms and emphasizes the value and sacredness of life to God. This highlights that your ministry is close to the heart of God and at the very center of his kingdom's work in the world as indicated by Scripture. The following Scriptures are indicative of the general Biblical expression of the sanctity of life including life in the womb.

#### The God of the Bible the only Creator of life

Genesis 1:1-4 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good.

John 1:1-3, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made...14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Genesis 1:26-28,31 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Genesis 4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."

Genesis 9:6-7 (God speaking to Noah after the flood) "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. 7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it."

Psalm 139:1-24 O LORD, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. 13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. 19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! 20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain! 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Psalm 22:9-11 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. 10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

Psalm 71:5-6 For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. 6 Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

The Birth Narrative of our Lord Jesus

Luke 1:13-17 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

Luke 1:24-25 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 25 “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

Luke 1:30-38 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:39-44 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

Matthew 1:18 - 2:1 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is

conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Luke 2:4-7, 21 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ...21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Isaiah 49:1-6 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

#### Life in the Womb in the Bible

Genesis 25:21-24 And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.” 24 When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb.

Judges 13:2-5 There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. 3 And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4 Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, 5 for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”

Jeremiah 1:4-8 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Jesus and Children

Mark 10:13-16 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Psalm 109:30-31 30 With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng. 31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

**Prayer for Valuing All Life and Invitation to Prayer**

*"I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."* Jesus (Mt 18:19-20)

- ◆ In a prayer group, not everyone must pray out loud; everyone may pray out loud; some should pray out loud; everyone should agree in prayer.
- ◆ Listening to prayers of others can be affirming and revelatory.
- ◆ Times of silence are productive for listening to God and sometimes necessary to be led by the Holy Spirit in prayer.
- ◆ Include listening to the Holy Spirit in times of prayer.
- ◆ You may feel led to share with others what God puts on your heart or in your mind.
- ◆ Respond to requests for prayer by praying rather than counseling or giving advice.
- ◆ Try to be God-centered during prayer groups rather than self-centered.
- ◆ Ask questions to clarify anything not understood.
- ◆ Some may want to make notes of prayer requests and ongoing prayer concerns.
- ◆ Keep discussions, requests and prayers confidential unless permission is given to share (i.e. without permission don't mention to someone that you prayed for them)
- ◆ It can be helpful to follow a pattern and have an indication when "passing it on."

**Almighty Creator, give us hearts mindful of the inherent value of all human life; that the unborn may come to birth, the disabled may draw us out of our selfishness, and the aged may be comforted in their infirmities. Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might experience your saving embrace, so clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love and speaking the truth in love, may bring others into the light of your life and to the knowledge of your love for the honor of your name and for the praise of your glory. Lord, in your mercy...hear our prayer. Amen (BCP 101).**

**Survey of the Biblical Opposition to Life** – The Ministry of life is on the frontline of the battle with the kingdom of darkness. The Bible provides a coherent message that the evil spirits and their agents hate life and oppose the birth, nurture, development and health of people. This requires knowledge, awareness and application of Biblical truths regarding spiritual realities and conflict.

Matthew 2:1:13-16 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

Genesis 4:3-6 The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” 8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?” 10 And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

Exodus 2:15-16 Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” [17 But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live...20 So God dealt well with the midwives... 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.]

Deuteronomy 12:31 You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

2 Kings 3:26-27 26 When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him 700 swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then he took his oldest son who was to reign in his place and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall. And there came great wrath against Israel. And they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.



2 Kings 16:2-3 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God, as his father David had done, 3 but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

2 Kings 21:2-6 And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem will I put my name." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

Jeremiah 7:30-31 "For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. 31 And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.

Ezekiel 23:37-39 7 For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. With their idols they have committed adultery, and they have even offered up to them for food the children whom they had borne to me. 38 Moreover, this they have done to me: they have defiled my sanctuary on the same day and profaned my Sabbaths. 39 For when they had slaughtered their children in sacrifice to their idols, on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it. And behold, this is what they did in my house.

Psalms 106:37-38 (Sinful Israel) They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; 38 they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood.

John 8:44 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 10:10-16 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Revelation 12:3-4 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

**Prayer for Protection and Healing:** Because of this conflict, we need to pray for protection, healing of wounds and deliverance from the forces of evil.

Heavenly Father, I praise and thank you for all you have given me. Please cover me with the protective, precious blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, and increase your Holy Spirit in me with His gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, hunger for prayer, guidance and discernment to help me know your will and surrender to it more completely.

Father please heal my negative emotions and any wounds in my heart and spirit. Send the sword of your Holy Spirit to sever and break all spells, curses, hexes, voodoo and all negative genetic, inter-generational and addictive material, past, present or to come, known or unknown, against me, my relationships and family, finances, possessions and ministry. Father I forgive, and I ask forgiveness for my sins and failings. I ask that my whole person, body and mind, heart and will, soul and spirit, memory and emotions, attitudes and values lie cleansed, renewed and protected by the most precious blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Dear Holy Spirit please fill up any void in me to overflowing with your presence and great love. All this Father I pray in the name of Jesus Christ by the guidance of your Holy Spirit. Amen

*(Say to spiritual forces of evil) In the name, power, blood and authority of Jesus Christ I bind and break the power and effect in or around me of any and all evil spirits who are trying to harm me in any way and I command these spirits and their companion spirits in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to leave me peacefully and quietly and go immediately and directly where Jesus commands you and never again return to me or my family. Amen* (Porteous 58-60).

You are encouraged to practice reading Scripture daily and asking God to reveal his love for life and how the spiritual forces of evil strive against life. Try to practice praying over these insights during a designated time each day. Please write down meaningful verses, prayers and insights in the blank pages or a prayer journal and bring them to the next session. Additional prayers are included in the booklet for the participants to pray on your own.

**Establishing the Kingdom of God and Authority of Jesus in our Lives: Reflecting on chapter 1 of the Gospel of Mark**

A. Mark 1:1-8: Repentance for the Forgiveness of Sins

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 10:43 “He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

1 John 3:5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins.

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Confession of Sin

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen (BCP79).**

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

**Father, in the name of Jesus and by faith, I forgive \_\_\_\_ as I have been forgiven; I release him/her as I have been released. I pray for your good and perfect will to be done in his/her life. Please give me the grace and strength to forgive others as you have forgiven me. Amen**

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in your great mercy have promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to you, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (Holy Communion 7).**

Nehemiah 9:17 you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**B. Mark 1:9-11: Receiving the Holy Spirit and Blessing from Heaven for Ministry**

“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” Jn 14:23

“I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” Jn 17:26

Acts 1:3-5 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 2:38-39 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

2 Tim 1:6-7 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Romans 8:5-6; 11, 15-16, 26-27 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace...11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you... 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Ephesians 5:18 Be filled with the Spirit.

Galatians 3:5 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith--

Galatians 5:22-25 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

**Come, O Holy Spirit, come!  
 Come as holy fire and burn in us,  
 Come as holy wind and cleanse us,  
 Come as holy light and lead us,  
 Come as holy truth and teach us,  
 Come as holy forgiveness and free us,  
 Come as holy love and enfold us,  
 Come as holy power and enable us,  
 Come as holy life and dwell in us.  
 Come, Holy Spirit, and increase in us your gifts of grace.  
 Convict us, convert us,  
 Consecrate us, until we are wholly yours,  
 And transform us into the image of Christ. Amen (Newman)**

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C. Mark 1:12-13: Responding with Faith to Testing and Opposition in Ministry

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." 11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him...Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Revelation 2:8-10 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. 9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

1 Corinthians 10:13 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Hebrews 2:18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:15-16 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

James 4:7 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Revelation 12:10-11 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

**"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."**

Ephesians 6:10-20 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

### **Praying a Prayer of Submitting to God and Resisting the Enemy**

Paul's writing about putting on the full armor of God places the responsibility and initiative in our hands to take the action required to stand firm. This happens in prayer, meditation on Scripture, speaking Scripture and standing on the promises of God. The following prayer is part of our action for arming ourselves against the enemy. It is a template for praying our submission to God and resistance of the enemy.



### A Prayer of Submitting to God and Resisting the Enemy

Father I come to you in the name of Jesus. I submit to you and resist Satan and all the powers of darkness. I ask you clothe me in the full armor of God.

I place upon my head the helmet of salvation by which I take my thoughts captive to the Lord Jesus Christ and submit my mind to the control and rule of the Holy Spirit that it would be full of life and peace. I reject the thoughts, accusations and lies of the enemy who comes to condemn and criticize. I reject thoughts of self-hatred, failure, pride and other sinful attitudes.

I place upon my heart the breastplate of righteousness. I clothe myself in the perfection of Jesus. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I fasten about me the belt of truth and pray that your Holy Spirit would lead me into all truth.

As shoes on my feet, I secure my footing with the readiness of the gospel of peace and of the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. I stand firm on your word against the storms and oppression of this world. Help me to stand firm against the anxieties of this life, fear of loss and the temptations and delusions of this world.

I take in my hand the shield of faith by which I shall block all of the attacks of the enemy. Help me to walk by faith knowing that you are an ever-present help to me and that your promises are all "Yes" to me through Jesus.

I take in my other hand the sword of Spirit, the word of God that is sharp and double-edged and shall never pass away. Inspire me to speak your powerful, life-giving word into my circumstances, against the enemy, into my own mind and life. Help me to speak blessings over my life and over my loved ones.

Father help me to rejoice in the Lord always. I receive the joy of the Lord that is my strength. Lord send and empower your angels to minister to me and to be a shield around me. Father protect me from evil and rebuke every messenger of evil from me. Let the light of your face shine upon me and fill me with your Holy Spirit, his fruit and gifts.

Dear Lord, make my home a peaceful, secure, restful and godly dwelling place. Bless and place your hand upon my family. We belong to you through the mighty name of Jesus. Amen

D. Mark 1: 14–15: Believe the Good News of the Kingdom of God

John 4:42 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

John 20:26-29 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John 20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:12 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Colossians 1:11-14 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 9:24 **“I believe; help my unbelief!”**

E. Mark 1:16-34: Ministry with Jesus and the Family of Faith - Healing, Delivering and Serving:

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Colossians 1:9-12 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Ephesians 1:17-20 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

1 John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Luke 11:20 20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

2 Corinthians 5:16-20 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

Luke 9:1-2 Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

Luke 10:8-9 (72 others) 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

Luke 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" 18 And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

John 1:4-5 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Acts 4:29-30 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

Isaiah 57:14-19 And it shall be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way." 15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. 16 For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made. 17 Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry, I struck him; I hid my face and was angry, but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart. 18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, 19 creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near," says the LORD, "and I will heal him.

Isaiah 53:4-5 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

1 Peter 2:24-25 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Jeremiah 17:14 14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. Matthew 10:1

I am the LORD your healer. Exodus 15:26

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3

They brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. Matthew 4:24

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:13-16

F. Mark 1:35-39: Solitude, Silence, Listening and Obeying

John 14:15-20 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

John 14:23, 25-27 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ...”These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 15:26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

John 16:13-14 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Psalm 46:10 10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Luke 24:32-35 They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Acts 2:41-47 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

*Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and I will be healed. Amen*

G. Mark 1:40-45: Compassion and Release:

1 John 3:16-18, 20 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 20 God is greater than our heart

Psalms 41:1-2 Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; 2 the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

Matthew 10:42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Luke 10:36-37 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Romans 8:22-27 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Acts 20:32-32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

### **A Prayer to be Prayed before Ministry**

In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of his Cross and his Blood, we bind up the power of any evil spirits and command them not to block our prayers. We bind up the powers of earth, air, water, fire, the netherworld and the satanic forces of nature. We break any curses, hexes or spells sent against us and declare them null and void. We break the assignments of any spirits sent against us and send them to Jesus to deal with them as He will. Lord, we ask you to bless our enemies by sending your Holy Spirit to lead them to repentance and conversion. Furthermore, we bind all interaction and communication in the world of evil spirits as it affects us and our ministry.

We ask for the protection of the shed blood of Jesus Christ over ourselves and our clients (*or Name*). We thank you, Lord, for your protection and send your angels to help us in the battle. We ask you to guide us in our ministry and to share with us your Spirit's power and compassion. Amen (MacNutt).

### **A Prayer After Ministry**

Lord Jesus, thank you for sharing with me your wonderful ministry of life. Thank you for the wonders of your works that I have seen and experienced. I realize that the sickness, evil, sin and death that I encounter are more than my humanity can bear. So cleanse me of any sadness, negativity, despair or pain that I have picked up. Keep my heart soft and full of compassion.

If my ministry has tempted me to anger, impatience, depression, bitterness or other sinful thoughts or emotions, cleanse me of those temptations and replace them with love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, patience and purity of heart. Come, Holy Spirit, renew me, fill me anew with your power, abundant life and health.

Jesus, I acknowledge again that I can do nothing worthwhile apart from you. I ask you to continue to abide in me, as I abide in you, so that I may bear fruit for your sake. Grant me more grace and more anointing to continue to accomplish the good works that you have prepared for me to walk in by your power. In all that I do may your name be glorified. Amen.

*(address to evil spirits) If any evil spirits have attached themselves to me or oppress me in any way, I command you, spirits of darkness and forces of evil to depart now and go straight to Jesus Christ for Him to deal with as He will. I plead the blood of Jesus Christ over my spirit, soul and body (MacNutt).*



### **Establishing the Kingdom of Heaven's Reign at the Center**

This will address the ongoing work of facilitating the presence of God at the PRC. We will discuss the characteristics of God's kingdom and presence that include grace, peace, joy, hope, rest, love and truth. Some themes to influence the spiritual atmosphere and relationships at the center include the power of prayer, praise & worship, uplifting conversation, Scripture, faith and holiness.

Matthew 17:1-8 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Matthew 18:10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Luke 17:20-21 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

Zechariah 2:5 And I will be to [Jerusalem] a wall of fire all around, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory in her midst."

1 Kings 8:10-11 And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

John 7:37-39 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Revelation 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Manifestations of the kingdom of God among his people: *1 Samuel 19:18-24; 2 Kings 6:15-23; Luke 6:12-19; John 18:6*

The Paradox of Ministry: 2 Corinthians 12:10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Sacrifices of Ministry (from Leander Harding *To Persevere in Love*):

- ◆ **Sacrifice of Poverty of Spirit**: Our own inadequacy is always front and center in ministry, so we rely on God's grace and power.
- ◆ **Sacrifice of Intercession**: We see more need than we can possibly do anything about. This powerlessness and grief over all that we see wrong leads us to despair, over function or to prayerful intercession.
- ◆ **Sacrifice of Surrender**: Our ministry will make people upset, unhappy, angry or clingy. We must humbly surrender ourselves to the Lord's comfort, mercy and grace (64-65).

### Psalm 23

**1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

**2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.**

He leads me beside still waters.

**3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

**4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come. thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen (Holy Communion 9).

**Blessing**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. The Lord put his name upon you and remain with you always. Amen (Nbrs 6:24-26).

## Christian Disciplines for Life

Acts 2:42-47 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- ◆ Scripture: Reading, Reflection, Application and Communication
- ◆ Fellowship of the Saints: Small Groups, Bible Studies and Prayer Groups
- ◆ Holy Communion
- ◆ Prayers: Thanksgiving, Confession, Petition, Intercession, Spiritual Warfare and Listening
- ◆ Receiving Ministry: Prayers for Healing, Deliverance, Spiritual Gifts and Miracles
- ◆ Ministry to Others: Counsel, Prayer, Testimony, Speaking and Spiritual Gifts.
- ◆ Giving: Tithes and Offerings
- ◆ Corporate Worship: Participation in Church
- ◆ Family Devotion and Fellowship
- ◆ Praise to God
- ◆ Seeking the Salvation of Souls — the Goal of our Faith (1 Peter 1:9)

### Additional Disciplines:

- ◆ Solitude and Silence
- ◆ Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Retreats
- ◆ Journaling
- ◆ Exercise
- ◆ Healthy Lifestyle

**Prayers****Prayer for Inner Healing**

Lord Jesus, you came to heal our wounded and troubled hearts. I beg you to heal the torments that cause anxiety in my heart. I beg you, in a particular way, to heal all that are the cause of sin. I beg you to come into my life and heal me of the psychological harms that struck me since my early years and from the injuries that they caused throughout my life.

Lord Jesus, you know my burdens. I lay them all on your Good Shepherd's heart. I beseech you-- by the merits of the great, open wound in your heart-- to heal the small wounds that are in mine. Heal the pain of my memories, so that nothing that has happened to me or that I have done will cause me to remain in pain and anguish, filled with anxiety.

Heal, O Lord, all those wounds that have been the cause of the evil that is rooted in my life. I want to forgive all those who have offended me. Look to those inner sores that make me unable to forgive. You who came to forgive the afflicted of heart, please, heal my own heart. Heal, my Lord Jesus, those intimate wounds that cause me mental, emotional or physical illness. I offer you my heart, accept it, Lord, purify it and give me the sentiments of your Divine Heart. Help me to be meek and humble.

Heal me, O Lord, from the pain caused by the death of my loved ones, which may be oppressing me. Grant me to regain peace and joy in the knowledge that you are the Resurrection and the Life. Make me an authentic witness to your living presence among us, to your resurrection, and to your victory over Satan, sin and death. Glorify your name, O God, through answering this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen (Porteous 64-65).

**Prayer of St Francis of Assisi**

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

Amen

**Prayer of Exaltation**

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation; You are worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!

To you who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might forever and ever! Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!

We give thanks to you Lord God Almighty for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Jesus, you are Lord of lords and King of kings, you are Faithful and True, the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, and you have called us and chosen us to be your own. To you who loves us and has made us a kingdom, priests to your God and Father, to you be glory and dominion forever and ever. Make us strong in the Faith and able to stand firm according to your word.

Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for your judgments are true and just; Hallelujah! For you the Lord our God the Almighty reign. Let us rejoice and exult and give you the glory. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

**Prayer of St. Columbanus (A.D. 615)**

God, you are yourself the fountain to be desired forever and ever, and consumed forever. Lord Christ, I ask you for your great benefits. You, King of glory, know how to give great gifts, and you have promised to give them; there is nothing greater than you, and you bestowed yourself upon us; you gave yourself for us.

So we ask that we might know you better and more fully, and that you give us nothing but yourself. For you are our all: our life, our light, our salvation, our food and our drink, our God. Inspire our hearts with the breath of your Spirit. Amen.

### The Prayer for Generational and Family Healing

Almighty Father, we bring before you now, in prayer, ourselves and our family members who need to be healed of all hurts and to be freed from all bondage. Send your light into all the sinful and hurting places of our families, that we may know the Truth and that the Truth may set us free.

We invoke the Blood of Jesus, shed for the forgiveness of sins, upon all the pain-filled or grieving places in ourselves and in our families, that all may be forgiven, healed and forever freed in Jesus' Holy Name.

We confess our own sins and the sins of our family members who, in past or present generations, have engaged in occult practices, in idolatry, in pagan or satanic worship or in any of the abominations associated with those practices. In the name of Jesus Christ, we renounce all occult, Satanic, pagan, New Age, and non-scriptural practices in which we have engaged. [Name specific practices—your own or family's.] Please forgive us, Lord, and break any hold such sinful practices, past or present, have over us and our families.

We confess our own sins and the sins of our family members who, in past or present generations, have hurt themselves and others by committing murder, suicide or abortion...[by name]. We ask you to forgive us and break any hold these deaths have over us and our families through anger, fear, guilt or unresolved grief.

We remember before you anyone in our family tree who was murdered, aborted, miscarried, stillborn, committed suicide or suffered an untimely death...[by name]. Into your hands we commend the sheep of your own fold, the lambs of your own flock and the sinners of your own redeeming.

We confess our own sins and the sins of our family members, past or present, who have committed acts of physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse or neglect...[by name]. Please forgive us and break any hold such sins, past or present, have over us and our families.

We confess our own sins and the sins of our family members who have caused harm to themselves and others by holding on to anger, revenge, unforgiveness or bitterness...[by name]. We forgive all those who have hurt members of our families, and we forgive all those family members who have sinned against us. We pray for your healing and freedom.

We pray for those beset by chronic illness...[by name] or by addictions...[by name]. We ask you to heal them and restore the assurance of your unfailing mercy, breaking any hold such addictions or chronic illnesses have over us and our families.

We take authority in the name of Jesus Christ over all generational bondage, all hereditary defects, genetic or of blood, and all wrong inclinations that have been transmitted to us from within our family tree or from within the spiritual families to which we belong, including the Church. Amen.

*—continued*

Deliver us, Oh Lord, from family generational sin and help us to fully recognize and repent from it. Forgive us and restore us now to new life and health following your commandments, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the honor and glory of your holy Name. Amen.

*(Speak to spiritual forces of evil) By the authority given us through Jesus, we rebuke all the forces of evil that oppress us and our families. In his Name we hereby revoke the authority of all familial spirits and all their manifestations within our lives and we place the Cross and Blood of Jesus between the power of evil and ourselves and our families, hereby destroying what otherwise might be transmitted to our descendants. Amen. (Falls Church Anglican 6-7).*

### **Blessing of a Home**

O Father, come and dwell in our home. Lord Jesus Christ come and make your home among us. Holy Spirit we invite you to inhabit our midst. Lord God, may the light of your presence fill our home with your glory and goodness. Drive far from us any evil and darkness that has gathered against us. Establish our home and family in godly health, perfect peace and secure rest that come from you alone. Guard and protect us by a shield of light and wall of fire in which you dwell in your glory and power. Pour your blessings upon our home and may salvation come to and remain in our home. Command and empower your holy angels to guard us and banish from us any evil spirits. Grant that all who live in this home may bless you and please you by the Holy Spirit and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Prayer for a Child in the Womb**

God, author of all life, bless, we pray, this unborn child; give constant protection and grant a healthy birth that is the sign of our rebirth one day into the eternal rejoicing of heaven. Lord, who have brought to this woman [or name] the wondrous joy of motherhood, grant her comfort in all anxiety, turn her heart to her child with love and compassion and make her determined to lead her child to life and the ways of salvation.

Lord of the ages, who have singled out this man [or name] to know the grace and pride of fatherhood, grant him courage in this new responsibility, and make him an example of justice, nurturing and truth for this child; turn his heart to his child with love and compassion.

Lord, endow the family of this child in the womb with sincere and enduring love as they prepare to welcome this child into their midst. Lord, you have put into the hearts of all men and women of good will a great awe and wonder at the gift of new life; fill the parents and family with faithfulness to the teachings of the Gospel and new resolve to share in the physical and spiritual formation of this child in Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen (Rite 6-7).



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**Appendix F**

**Training in Spiritual Formation for the Your Choice Resource Center  
Sign-in Sheet**

	Last 4 digits of Social Security or phone nbr	Gender	Age	Check:	Session 1	Session 2
1.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
2.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
3.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
4.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
5.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
6.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
7.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
8.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
9.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
10.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
11.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
12.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
13.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
14.	_____	___	___		_____	_____
15.	_____	___	___		_____	_____

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