

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**The Therapeutic Church**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This project aims to develop Nexus Point Church as a therapeutic environment. The Therapeutic Church environment is a supportive community, one member to another, ministering to each other empathetically, not service dependent or a dispenser of services. It is “Pew Neighbor” supportive and crisis intervention ready. The Therapeutic Church provides a therapeutic environment that heals interactively in spirit, mind, body, and relationship to improve the quality of life for the church member and those seeking help. This project identifies members as “Pew Neighbors” due to the proximity and continual closeness shared with those within the church community. Pew neighbors serve one another through love via the new commandment Jesus gave that identifies His disciples: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35, NASB).

Through an insider’s perspective method, the results of a pre-survey/questionnaire, an 8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church, and a post-survey/questionnaire measured the participants’ knowledge and understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment to determine the plausibility of developing a Therapeutic Church ministry emulating Jesus’ approach to preaching the gospel and integrative healing in spirit, mind, body, and relationship (Luke 4:14–21). Research results indicated a significant improvement in participants’ knowledge and understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment after completing the course, thus determining the favorable plausibility of developing Nexus Point as a Therapeutic Church.

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**KEYWORDS:** Ego-Salvific, Pew Neighbor, Therapeutic Environment, Therapeutic Church, Priest of All, Comprehensive, Crisis, Eclectic, Eclecticism, Integrative, Supportive Intervention

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This project is dedicated to Nexus Point Church and must honor four brothers in Christ for without them I could have given up on the vision of developing a Therapeutic Church: Israel Rivera, Elliott Epperson, Adolfo Castro, and Noel Acosta.

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## Abbreviations

KJV	King James Version
NASB	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
NPC	<i>Nexus Point Church</i>
Q	<i>Question</i>



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The purpose of this project is to develop a plan and strategy to create, nurture, and cultivate a Therapeutic Church. This is a place where its members mature and foster change ministering to each other, loving one another as Jesus commanded, “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 15:12, NASB). The Therapeutic Church must develop as a collective church ministry that empathically listens and is available to everyone. This environment is trusting and is a safe zone for those who seek help. Nexus Point Church is the model used in this project. Nexus Point Church’s demographics and cultural diversity strongly influence this model, mostly Hispanic. Most of Nexus Point’s members are immigrants from the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These facts are significant. Pew Research Centers’ December 2017 study revealed as the title of the research denotes that there is a “Rise in U.S. Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup> The increase of immigrants from these three countries creates a need for Hispanic churches to facilitate an integrative and comprehensive healing environment. As proposed in this project, the need for Nexus Point Church to be therapeutic stems from the researcher’s daily interactions and interventions with congregants and those who visit seeking help/healing.

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, December 2017, “Rise in U.S. Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere: Lawful and unauthorized immigrants increase since recession, D’Vera Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. [www.pewsearch.org](http://www.pewsearch.org).

## Ministry Context

### General Context

The where, the whom, and the why of this project is Nexus Point Church. The researcher's assumptions, definitions of new terms, delimitations, and limitations are the result of his current ministerial function as the planter and pastor of Nexus Point Church. The problem addressed and the project proposed is contextually designed for Nexus Point Church. However, the issue tackled is not unique to Nexus Point Church. Jesus established the Therapeutic Church in His earthly ministry not merely in theory or instruction but by example. The need for a Therapeutic Church has been a concern of the researcher for approximately twenty-five years within his thirty years of ministry in New York, Puerto Rico, and Maryland. The need for an environment that heals spirit, mind, body, and relationships is unquestionable.

An integrative approach is needed to foster a comprehensive healing environment. The congregation needs to be connected collectively and individually to God with the ability to minister to each other. The "priesthood of all believers," one of the cornerstones of the Reformation, as defined by Martin Luther, is to be inclusive in belief and practice in the development of the Therapeutic Church:

The notion of a "priesthood of all believers" inspired some of the earliest agenda of the Reformation. Reformers opposed a long held church tradition whereby priests were seen to receive unique, indelible character that set them apart from the laity. Reformers argued largely on the basis of the New Testament epistles of Hebrews and 1 Peter to assert that the only unique priesthood pertained to Christ, while the entire community of faith comprised a collective priesthood through participating in him.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> David M. Whitford, ed., *T&T Clark Companion to Reformation Theology*, T&T Clark Companion (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 441–43.

Believers are to intercede on behalf of one another, forgive one another, fulfilling Jesus' commandment to love one another. Timothy George denotes that, "The priesthood of all believers is a call to ministry and service; it is a barometer of the quality of the life of God's people in the body of Christ and of the coherence of our witness in the world, the world for which Christ died."<sup>3</sup> A congregation that encourages and develops a healing environment via relationships is a witness to itself and the community. Within the context of the Therapeutic Church project, all believers must understand that as pew neighbors, they will be approached by their peers in crises. Who is this pew neighbor? It is the congregant that customarily sits by another in church or group assembly, fostering a relationship of trust and a sense of belonging. Pew neighbors have in common beliefs that are shared in space and time as they assemble. A relationship often extends beyond merely worshiping together. The question, "To what extent do pew neighbors intervene in a crisis?" This approach is a result of the relationship commonality. People seek help from those they relate to and or have something in common.

This project's goal is to develop Nexus Point Church as a healing environment that is integrative as proposed by our Lord Jesus Christ. A healing environment is a supportive intervention founded on Jesus' mandate, "...that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12, NASB). The best approach is a design that is pragmatic and eclectic in its effort to integrate spirituality, theology, psychology, and relationships to better minister to the congregants. The approach must be integrative, biblically based, and emulate Jesus' ministry as defined in the book of Luke:

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues and

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<sup>3</sup> Timothy George, *The Priesthood of All Believers*. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/10/the-priesthood-of-all-believers>.

was praised by all. 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, 19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” 20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:14–9, NASB).

However, doctrinal focuses can impede the development of an integrative healing ministry. This impedance has been observed in understanding the formation of Nexus Point Church. Most members, in the beginning, came from an ego-salvific environment. The ego-salvific believer focuses on self-concern, self-preservation, and self-assurance that originates from the belief in a reward system that guarantees God’s approval and blessing. The ego-salvific motivation stems from the concept that salvation and its benefits are available and accessible via personal effort. The result is an individual effort pursued to assure salvation and its benefits, in the absence of salvation assurance. The ego-salvific focus is salvation by works.

Many Nexus Point Church congregants came from contemporary ministries identified as faith and prosperity movements that exploited them due to their ego-salvific belief. The religious faith and prosperity movements cannot subsist without customers. It is also true that there needs to be a customer who wants the product marketed. The product on sale is money and health. Who are the customers? Financially frustrated and ill believers who are susceptible and can be enticed by the prosperity movement due to their need for money and health. The other group of vulnerable believers are those who love money. Love of money has no relation to having money. It is about the “wanting of, and the desire of” money; if you do not have it, you want it, and if you have it, you want more. In the United States, possession of money, being wealthy, implies



success, gives status, and provides a false sense of assurance. Nexus Point Church has become a haven for many exploited by the faith and prosperity movement. These members openly resent the exploitation they suffered. They were susceptible due to their belief in a reward system based on “do and receive” fixed on the need to survive.

Most of the Nexus Point Church congregants are Hispanic immigrants who entered the United States to better their quality of life in pursuit of the American Dream. Barna Research denotes that “While Hispanics find meaning and pride in their work, nearly three-quarters of Latinos (72%) see their work and their faith as two distinctly separate aspects of their lives. Catholics are especially likely to see a sacred divide when it comes to their job or career.”<sup>4</sup> A message of prosperity is a powerful attraction for those in search of financial wealth. The immigrant’s mindset is to work hard to sustain his family (defined as wife, children, mother, father, brothers, and sisters). Saving for the future and the education of their children is imperative as they envision overcoming poverty. Most of the Nexus Point Church congregants are of the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Other Hispanic groups are the pastor and his wife from Puerto Rico and a family from the Dominican Republic identified as Caribbean’s. There are families from Mexico and South America: Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Brazil. Also, in the mix are African Americans from New York, Maryland, and Virginia.

The Hispanic American members and second-generation Latinos are also considered in this project. This group is culturally Hispanic/American, and their language of preference is English, though they eat and dance in “Español.” This second generational Hispanic group has assimilated the American (U.S.) culture. These are the children born to the family of those that

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<sup>4</sup> Barna Group “Hispanic America: Faith, Values and Priorities 2012 Report,” (Ventura, CA: Barna Group Barna), 9.

initially migrated to the United States. When questioned as to their identity, they reiterate their Americanism indicating “I am American,” but do not abstain from their Hispanic heritage. The complexity of Nexus Point Church’s membership denotes that Hispanics are culturally diverse. The diversity of traditional differences in language, food, and attire becomes a distinction not part of the norm; therefore, acculturation becomes a necessity. Acculturation enables the immigrant’s integration, though limited, into their new place of residence, the United States of America. Nike, Converse, Levi Jeans, McDonald’s, and Burger King, to mention a few, are assimilated into their lifestyle. The younger the people, the more readily they absorb the American culture.

The experiences of immigrants are multiple and consequential. These experiences are those that created their necessity to migrate and those that are a result of their migration. For example, their initial working and living conditions are often deplorable. The immigrant is exploited by having to pay excessive rent and receive low wages for their work. An example of this exploitation is the so-called “hotbed.” The term “hotbed” derived from the practice of renting a sleep space. The bed was rented in shifts, those who worked night shifts slept in the bed during the day, and the day worker would sleep in that same bed during the night. The “hotbed” is part of the immigration history experienced among those that immigrated in the ‘70s. This information was extrapolated from a conversation with an individual that personally experienced the “hotbed” situation. Other examples are living arrangements such as couples renting a room. Sometimes it is a family in a bedroom, obligated to share the kitchen, bathroom, and living room area with strangers. These extenuating circumstances force the immigrant to work excessively, resulting in a limited family relationship and a noncommittal congregational attachment.

Many people come to church when the consequences of their decisions and actions reach them. As experienced and witnessed by members of Nexus Point Church: immigration issues, divorce, child-rearing crises, illness, and financial problems are amongst the primary reasons they return to the church. They seek restoration and healing from societal and self-inflicted hurt and suffering. These seekers indicate that their crisis is a result of their broken relationship with God.

### Nexus Point Church

Nexus Point Church originates from a two-person Bible study that grew into a group of twelve that decided to start a church. Nexus Point Church began as a culturally diverse group composed of Puerto Ricans, Salvadorians, Guatemalans, Peruvians, Bolivians, Hondurans, Mexicans, and Ecuadorians. All came from the prosperity movement except for the Puerto Rican pastors. Differences were visible, in doctrine and practice. Prayer, worship style, doctrinal influences, and lack of education in both theological and academic areas were significant. Individuals and families came from congregations pastored by ministers with no formal pastoral education. They arrived at Nexus Point Church feeling hurt, deceived, and disillusioned. Though weak in their faith, they congregated and invited family and friends. Their mistrust in church leaders caused them to ask hard questions about the new teachings. The questioning seemed rebellious because they excessively questioned everything. Their emotional religious ritualism created many difficulties in adapting to a new church environment that was grace focused.

These immigrants worked two sometimes three jobs, many hours daily, six, and sometimes seven days per week, as they strived to better financially and support their families in their country of origin. A significant problem consisted in that some who came to Nexus Point Church were married, the wife or husband still in their country of origin and had fallen into

infidelity. However, they professed being born again, Christians. The long-term separations (many years) result in broken marital relationships and or broken relationships between parents and their children. The social, political, and religious complexity of immigrants affects all aspects of their lives. For example, a family member dies, mother, father, or sibling; they cannot go home to grieve. Another burden is that if an undocumented person dies in the United States, he or she cannot be buried in the USA. The body must be returned to the country of origin for burial, resulting in financial hardship.

Nexus Point Church encountered a communication barrier. Uniquely a language barrier within the Hispanic/Latino cultures, all speak Spanish, but with differences in words for the same object or the same word has a different meaning. One example is “bicho.” This word used to describe an insect or even children in many countries however is an offensive form of saying the male-genitalia in the Caribbean, or at least in Puerto Rico. The names of many fruits, vegetables, and spices are also different from one country to another.

The most challenging encounter for immigrants had to do with beliefs such as the legalistic view of behavior “dos and don’ts” concerning salvation and ritualistic practices. Most of the members of Nexus Point Church come from charismatic based churches. Charismatic churches are “feeling experience” based in their worship style and beliefs. For example, a “feeling experience” quite common among charismatics is speaking in tongues. To this body of believers, it is evidence that the Holy Spirit is present in ministry, prayer, and worship. Speaking in tongues is indicative of feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is physical and emotional. These believers are more about the signs and wonders than Scriptural evidence. The distortion of scriptural meaning is accepted due to the emotional response these believers rely on (the perception of their feelings) to affirm biblical truth.

Nexus Point Church is mostly Hispanic, and its members are young. Membership composition is as follows:

- Sixteen (16) Intact Families: a marriage of origin with children
- Three (3) Intact Families: only one parent attends church with children
- Two (2) Intact Families: that have no children
- Nine (9) Blended Families: where one member has children from a prior relationship
- One (1) Married Separated
- Three (3) Single Mothers
- One (1) Single Fathers
- Three (3) Single Adult Females
- Two (2) Single Adult Males
- Six (6) Male Single Young Adults, Male
- One (1) Female Single Young Adults, Female
- Thirty Children:
  - ✓ Eight (8) between ages one and three
  - ✓ Six (6) between four and six years old
  - ✓ Eleven (11) between the ages of eight and eleven
  - ✓ Five (5) between the ages of twelve and fourteen
  - ✓ Six (6) teenagers between sixteen and nineteen
- The average age of the adult members in attendance is 33.2 years old.
- Twelve of the one hundred eight members are above the age of fifty years old.
- There are thirty-five high school graduates and nine college graduates.

- The average length of membership is three and a half years.
- There is a group that has been in the congregation for about six years,
- Many have been in the church for no more than three and a half years.
- A group of about thirty-five to forty are a product of churches that exploited them financially via the prosperity movement.

Nexus Point is a young church that is becoming day by day increasingly passionate about the doctrine of salvation by grace alone and are sharing their knowledge of salvation assurance. Members are actively inviting people to Bible study groups, prayer services and Sunday worship. Nexus Point Church averages about five new visitors per week and virtually via social media has expanded its evangelistic outreach effectively attracting many to Nexus Point Church services. These are vital factors considered in the design and development of the NPC<sup>5</sup> Therapeutic Church Project. Vocationally there are professionals, housekeepers, laborers, painters, construction workers, dishwashers, contractors, etcetera.

### **Problem Presented**

The Hispanic Church in America needs an integrated healing environment fostered by the individual and collective ministry. It lacks the ability, pastoral and lay, to minister appropriately and comprehensively to those in need of integrative healing. The congregant's initial contact is with a pew neighbor. People seek advice from peers before they consider seeking any form of help. It is more likely for a member to approach another member than the pastor initially. Truth is more comfortable to share with someone related to personally as an equal (peer). Barna gleaned from his research, that "The importance of social relationships is evident in that 3 out of

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<sup>5</sup> NPC will be the abbreviation to reference Nexus Point Church throughout this project.

10 Hispanics (29%) say they talk to friends or family when they have a question or problem with finances. Only 3% of Hispanics cite a church as a source for financial advice and 7% select the Bible.”<sup>6</sup>

An example of social relationships is that teenagers seek help and advice from other teenagers. Why would someone seek advice from another who probably does not have the necessary experience? The answer is relationship. It is seeking help from a friend, brother, or sister, and in the church setting, it is a pew neighbor. The problem is that in many situations, the pew neighbor does not know how to assist the help-seeking pew neighbor. Note that poor advice may worsen the problem, but supportive intervention enables the initial path to wellness or problem resolution. Compassion and the desire to help is present, but there is a lack of appropriate intervention skills. The best advice usually given is, “Let’s pray.” Prayer is a vital part of all intervention within the church, but appropriate knowledge and the ability to listen are essential to be supportive in crises. Praying is a supportive intervention amongst believers.

Nexus Point Church members need to be taught, enabling them to intervene effectively in crises supportively. However, beyond being supportive, listening, and praying, the pew neighbor needs to know how and when to refer appropriately. Referring appropriately is particularly important in that the pew neighbor must move the individual in need to a level of assistance beyond his supportive intervention limitations. This is especially important when it relates to supportive intervention in the context of the Therapeutic Church where most giving a listening ear are not professional counselors or therapists.

Discipleship needs to include “supportive intervention” that emphasizes “love one another” and “assist one another.” The congregation is to provide emotional, relational, physical,

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<sup>6</sup> Hispanic America: Faith, Values and Priorities 2012 Report. Ventura, CA: Barna Group Barna, 9.

and spiritual first aid to each other. There is a need for integrative healing, as interpreted by Jesus' statement.<sup>7</sup> The congregation needs an ear that is sensitive to the needs of its members and visitors. The members must be values-oriented, and principle focused; transitioning from commandments based "to do's" of the ego-salvific paradigm to grace-motivated obedience of the faith-based believer. Unwellness is distinctive physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. This distinctiveness approached comprehensively, assures appropriate supportive intervention. One dimensionality of the individual affects the others, whether spiritual, mental, physical, or social. Therefore, there is a need for an integrative approach. The need for comprehensive supportive intervention is directly related to conditions present or absent in the ministry context.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project is to create an integrative healing environment via the "priesthood of all," defined as The Therapeutic Church. An environment contextualized in Luke's documented description of Jesus' self-definition of his ministry.<sup>8</sup> The Therapeutic Church is a ministry of pastoral/layman care. The Therapeutic Church is a ministry in which the pastoral team and the laity are both parts of the pastoral care of the congregation, providing integrative intervention support and healing. The Therapeutic Church is an environment that cares for the congregants via education, preaching, individualized, and community care. This

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<sup>7</sup> And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. <sup>15</sup> And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. <sup>16</sup> And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." <sup>20</sup> And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:14–21, NASB).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



congregation is focused on the Great Commission's evangelistic goal as it emulates the ministry of Jesus delineated in (Luke 4:14–21). The Therapeutic Church's members understand that by imitating Jesus in ministering to one another, they facilitate integrative healing removing the cause of unwellness (crisis), not merely alleviating symptoms. The paralytic man brought to Jesus for healing is an excellent example in which the origin of unwellness is addressed and resolved.

The paralytic's healing is extrapolated from the act of forgiveness. Jesus initiated the healing by telling the person with paralysis, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven," (Matthew 9:2, NASB). The man's response was peace. He received what he needed most forgiveness; the cause of his condition removed. More than physical healing, his need was a healing of the soul, the cause of his illness was addressed. Physical healing was the removal of the symptom related to the reason of his illness, sin. Jesus confronted his critics with, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk,'" (Matthew 9:5, NASB)? and commanded the man with paralysis "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." The unwellness was resolved in spirit, mind, and body comprehensively. In this situation, the symptom/illness and wellness were resolved as the approach was integrative, a healing of the complete person forgiveness of sins (healing of the soul), and physical healing.

Another example in which the origin of unwellness is addressed and resolved is Paul's calling. The context is religious fanaticism, Paul's persecution of the church. The resolution is Paul stricken with physical blindness because of religious blindness. Ananias was called by God to heal Paul physically, resulting in spiritual and physical health, and Barnabas introduces him to the body of the church. Treating the cause eliminates the symptoms. Paul was stricken and healed within the context of his religious fanaticism, enabling him to fulfill his true calling,

responding, “Who are You, Lord,” (Acts 9:5, NASB)? Ananias was the link to wellness physically and spiritually, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit,” (Acts 9:17, NASB). Obeying the Lord’s command, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15–16, NASB).

The Therapeutic Church provides counseling as part of the therapeutic environment but is not a counseling center. The Therapeutic Church is an environment that transcends spiritual practice and ritualism; it nurtures the soul and body to wellness. It is an environment that transcends the traditional religiosity of the “dos and don’ts. It is an integrative approach, affecting the person holistically. Lack of pastoral counseling education is a factor in the Hispanic church’s approach in the comprehensive healing of the individual, couple, family, and community.

Because church congregants (members and visitors) confront stress, anxiety, and depression that can lead to spiritual, mental, and physical illness, the need for a therapeutic environment is unquestionable. It is about the people, not the institution, and it is not about a church growth strategy. It is about the church being an instrument of healing and support within the body of Christ. Therefore, members are assured and know and understand they are cared for, and submit humbly as the apostle Peter denotes, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6–7, NASB). The Therapeutic Church is a place where individuals can lay their burdens down because Jesus cares for them.

### Basic Assumptions

The congregation at Nexus Point Church is in continual need of timely and effective therapeutic intervention as it encounters crises in relationships (marital, family, and friendship conflicts), health issues (physical and emotional), and finances (debt, loss of employment, etcetera) afflicting the congregants.

The Therapeutic Church is not a counseling provider. Many churches offer counseling, pastoral and clinical. The Therapeutic Church's focus is the integration of theology, psychology, and spirituality to provide effective supportive intervention as necessitated. The congregants must have access to supportive intervention that approaches the individual, marriage, and family in crises with love that is compassionate and heals theologically, psychologically, and spiritually without stigmatizing, connecting people via supportive relationships. What are people looking for when they go to church? The plausibility is that a congregant, whether member or visitor, will share with the pew neighbor what he is seeking. Therefore, pew neighbors must be equipped in *The Art of Helping VII*<sup>9</sup> as Robert R. Carkhuff would denote. The person they sit by, the pew neighbor, should be an instrument of connection within the church, a healer in the most basic situations, supportive and a source of referral, providing the individual in crisis an integrative environment of wellness. It is vital to emphasize that people most likely will approach a pew neighbor instead of the pastor when sharing their problems initially. Pew neighbor relationships engender trust, transparency, and openness in both directions creating a therapeutic environment. Therefore:

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<sup>9</sup> Robert R. Carkhuff, *The Art of Helping VII* (Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press, Inc., 1993).

Care begins when an individual experiencing an insoluble problem that exhausts personal resources turns to a person who represents the resources, wisdom, and the authority of religion. This person need not be clergy or an official representative of a faith tradition. However, pastoral does not specifically require one who offers care to be grounded in the resources of a specific faith tradition, to have access to the wisdom generated by the heritage of Christians' experience, and to be able to claim the authority of a "company of believers."<sup>10</sup>

The supportive and accessible pew neighbor is essential in the creation and effectiveness of the Therapeutic Church.

A program/services-focused church provides counseling. A Therapeutic Church is a relationship-focused church; it seeks to better relationships amongst the congregants, individual, couples, family, and neighbors. It is an environment that influences everyone towards integrative wellness, in spirit, mind, and body. It provides trained, disciplined lay members and pastoral counselors that promote supportive intervention. The Therapeutic Church is a congregation where discipleship is more than doctrinal beliefs such as "do and do not" behavioral requirements. It is a place where the pew neighbor is supportive and intervenes empathetically and compassionately.

### **Definitions**

*Comprehensive.* To consider the whole person, not compartmentalizing the dimensionalities of the individual (spirit, mind, and body).

*Crisis.* A situation causing distress, or anxiety, be it spiritual, emotional, physical, financial, or relational.

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<sup>10</sup> Loren Townsend, *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009).

*Ego-salvific.* Defines salvation by works belief, where the focus of the individual is based on assuring his/her salvation via “dos and don’ts” thought to be necessary to ensure non-condemnation.

*Eclectic.* The concept of utilizing resources from different fields of knowledge to gain a well-rounded understanding of issues and situations associated with an individual’s needs.

*Eclecticism.* The practice of securing from many resources physical, emotional, and spiritual with the discretion that ensures applicability to the need. “But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good,” (1 Thessalonians 5:21, NASB); Paul’s, practical, eclectic biblical advice.

*Integrative.* The integration of psychology, theology, spirituality, and relationship in the supportive intervention and counseling strategies of the Therapeutic Church.

*Pew neighbor.* A person (member or visitor) that customarily sits by another congregant in the congregation. The term pew neighbor denotes the development of a relationship that will foster trust and plausibility where advice is requested and shared by either individual.

*Priesthood of all.* All believers are ministers of the church (Body of Christ), in service to one another.

*Supportive intervention.* Within the context of the Therapeutic Church, the ability to intervene when asked, when needed, as a resource of support providing presence, listening, and appropriate referral when required.

*Therapeutic church.* An integrative and comprehensive environment where clergy and members cultivate a spirit, mind, body, and social healing environment.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Nexus Point Church is the object of this project. The information gathered via external research will be juxtaposed with the internal information collected to analyze better and develop a project that is viable and effective within Nexus Point Church. Through the conceptualization and development of the Therapeutic Church environment, others can extrapolate the supportive intervention of the priesthood of all.

Nexus Point Church is a multicultural Hispanic congregation. Most of its congregants are of Central American countries. Others are from South America, the Caribbean, Second Generational Hispanics, and African Americans. The multicultural complexity of this project will be inclusive in the internal development of relationships. The research, analysis, and application of the results will be limited to Nexus Point Church due to the nature of the multicultural complexity.

The issue of bilingualism is unique in that even though preaching and teaching are in Spanish/English, there are a variety of Spanish dialects to consider. Therefore, questionnaires and any interviews will be conducted in the language of the congregant. The African American a minority in Nexus Point Church must be included, and the Hispanic American, who prefers English.

### **Thesis Statement**

The Therapeutic Church is an integrative healing church, ministering holistically in spirit, mind, and body. Healing individuals and relationships; it is supportive intervention ready and referral conducive. The Therapeutic Church develops as a supportive intervention, and healing environment that better the quality of life of the congregation and those who come seeking help in times of crisis. It is a church where congregants provide support to one another in a healing environment during individual, marriage, or family crises and not a dispenser of

therapeutic services. This project proposes that the church needs to be therapeutic to address the issues that arise within the congregation and the issues that bring people to church seeking healing. The lack of lay preparation and primary education in a compassionate, empathetic love-based ministry of all, is nonproductive. This project will attempt to provide awareness and a viable solution in an age where self-help is promoted excessively and accentuates the ego-salvific preoccupation of the insecure Christian.

Information gathered will provide a proactive tool to develop biblical integrative strategies and needed training that is eclectic in its use of Bible teaching in conjunction with the truth present in theology, psychology, sociology, medicine, and other sciences. What did Jesus know about mixing spit and mud to heal? Why do this? Forgiving sins instead of healing the person with quadriplegia? The church is to provide an appropriate path to healing and establish assurance in the life of the person intervened.

The Therapeutic Church is not a counseling center. It is an environment that heals based on the foundational principles of integrative redemption, and complete healing of spirit, mind, and body via a theological, spiritual, psychological, and sociological eclectic approach. The Therapeutic Church is Jesus' ministry-centered therapy for the whole person, spirit, mind, body, and relationship (Luke 4:14–19), ministering in His likeness to all members within an environment of assurance and grace intervention focus.

### **Conclusion**

The Therapeutic Church Thesis Project pursues the establishment of a practical model of ministering via the "Priesthood of All" to better the quality of life of the believer, developing an environment that heals spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally via the integration of theology, psychology, and spirituality. The Therapeutic Church is a place where therapy is

defined as supportive intervention and approached integratively, biblically based, and emulates Jesus' ministry as defined in (Luke 4:14–21, NASB).



## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Literature Review

This review provides a synopsis of literature that relates to this thesis as comparative information to establish the foundation of concepts intimately related to the overall theme of the Therapeutic Church in conjunction with the surveys conducted. The literature reviewed provides contextual data that will enable the reader to extrapolate concepts applicable to other churches. The resources are available in books, articles, and journals.

Loren Townsend, in his book *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling*, emphasizes that relationships are fundamental to healing and relate to the Therapeutic Church concept developed in this thesis project. Townsend affirms, “It’s not about counseling technique; it’s the relationship that heals.”<sup>1</sup> He also denotes that a “...therapeutic relationship itself is more powerful than any specific cognitive, behavioral, or psychodynamic therapeutic procedure. However, it is equally true that the client perception of the relationship is most important.”<sup>2</sup> In context with the conceptualization of pew neighbor relationships, “The counseling relationship must be cocreated between counselor and client. Clients collectively collaborate with their therapists in this relationship work better in therapy.”<sup>3</sup> Though the pew-neighbor relationship in the Therapeutic Church environment is peer-to-peer, the relationship must be cocreated if it is to be effective:

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<sup>1</sup> Loren Townsend, *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 114

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 114

Empathy is constructed by reference for the client's unique experience and a conversation that co-creates mutual understanding. Latin American therapy is Sylvia London and Florence Rosenberg expand this idea by suggesting that ethnic, gender, national background, and social class differences are so rich that all counseling is cross-cultural. Counselor responses must rely on the expertise of the client's indigenous knowledge and not the therapist's expert analysis or observation.<sup>4</sup>

Healthy relationships between individuals within the congregation are foundational in a Therapeutic Church community.

In *Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling* author Mark McMinn defines sin as the destructor of relationships and, therefore, the separation of humans from God and each other. That Grace is the reconciliation of the brokenness of the relationship's separation. Therefore, "God is relational and created us to be relational. The tragedy of sin is the breaking of our relationships with God and one another."<sup>5</sup> The New Covenant is the restoration of a relationship initiated by God through Jesus, "...our relating to God and one another is a reflection of a God who cares so much about relationship that he sent Jesus to reestablish a covenantal relationship with lost humanity."<sup>6</sup> And those restored are to mirror His love and caring for one another. This will be done if the following citation by McMinn is believed: "Spiritual leader Richard J Foster reflects: 'as so it is. If I know, really know, that God loves me, everything is changed. I am no longer a trifling spec in a meaningless cosmos. I am an eternal creature of infinite worth living in a universe animated by love and care and friendship' (1995, p. xiv)."<sup>7</sup> McMinn asserts that "God's grace is evident in the imago Dei, some of which survived the fall and characterizes our

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<sup>4</sup> Townsend, *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling*, 112.

<sup>5</sup> Mark McMinn, *Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 48

relationships with one another.”<sup>8</sup> Denoting that, “Only when we understand how profoundly God loves and pursues us all we able to rest in a deep, abiding sense of peace and acceptance.”<sup>9</sup> It is evident that for McMinn, acknowledgment of sin and grace in humans is the path to relational reconciliation with God and others; a crucial element in an environment that is therapeutic and fundamental in a healing environment; is the Therapeutic Church.

Sandra D. Wilson is the author of *Hurt People Hurt People: Hope and Feeling for Yourself and Your Relationships*. She posits that people affected via relational hurt, hurt others due to their internalized unresolved hurts. That the unresolved hurt issues cause damage that makes the afflicted individual defensive and self-protective, provoking him to lash out and hurt others when feeling somehow threatened to become a relational afflicter. People hurt those closest to themselves, wives, husbands, children, mothers, fathers, and best friends, and at times cause a detrimental effect on the relationship. Wilson states, “Pondering this people hurt people premise can leave us feeling pretty hopeless. And hopelessness can be deadly.”<sup>10</sup> That “Wilson’s ‘Law of Relationships, ‘Hurt people hurt people’”<sup>11</sup> is that broken relationships can be fundamentally a problem that is driven by the unresolved hurt in the life of the offender. Through research and introspective pondering, the author concludes that “...in a single humanness, we normally adopt defensive, self-protective thinking and behavior patterns when we feel emotionally or relationally threatened and wanted.”<sup>12</sup> And adds, “We don’t stop being human

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<sup>8</sup> McMinn, *Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling*, 49.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 52

<sup>10</sup> Sandra D. Wilson, *Hurt People Hurt People: Hope and Feeling for Yourself and Your Relationships* (Grand Rapids MI: Discovery House Publishers, 2001), 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 15

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *Hurt People Hurt People*, 11.

when we start being Christian.”<sup>13</sup> People are not taught to deal with their humanness in Christ, resulting in not knowing how to seek relational healing in a personal and community/group environment: family, neighbor, work, church, etcetera. Human relational intervention is significant. Wilson asserts, “Jesus Christ is the only all-sufficient and perfect healer for hurt people. I believe that Jesus graciously and frequently uses human instruments in his healing work. I am praying that our loving Lord Jesus will use this book as part of the process in your life.”<sup>14</sup> The human and divine elements are so necessary in a Therapeutic Church environment.

David Hawkins in his book *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship* posits that the greatest threat to relationships is ignoring the symptoms that hurt relationships. That “... Problems Won’t Just Go Away.”<sup>15</sup> That action must be initiated, beginning a path to communication that will enable the healing of the relationship. The author extrapolates from Gottman’s book “‘Why Marriages Succeed or Fail,’ identifies ‘Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse’—the key symptoms that tell us a marriage is in trouble.”<sup>16</sup> Hawkins defines the four horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling) as “... patterns of interactions ... devastating because they interfere with communication.”<sup>17</sup> Denoting a path that not only identifies what is wrong but instead defines a path to healing; “... determining how things went wrong is important. But knowing where to go from there is even more critical.”<sup>18</sup> In

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<sup>13</sup> Wilson, *Hurt People Hurt People*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 14

<sup>15</sup> David Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2006), 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 14

<sup>18</sup> Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship*, 52.

the vast spectrum of healing relationships, Hawkins' advice is extremely applicable in a Therapeutic Church community.

*The Church is a Therapeutic Center* was written by Emmanuel Hatzidakis. He suggests that the church is more than a place of worship; it is a center for holistic wellness and healing in all aspects of life spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally. The first part of the article's heading is "The Church is a Hospital."<sup>19</sup> The author, beyond a basic definition of a hospital, denotes, "The cure we obtain in the Church is not for the benefit of our souls alone—it does not pertain only to the future life. It includes our bodies and our life here on earth. In fact, it is the most complete program, addressing all our needs—spiritual, emotional, material and intellectual."<sup>20</sup> In this respect, the Therapeutic Church must be an integrated environment because, "The Church is the Portico, where the Pool of Healing is offered to all who come with desire. The Church is the House of Mercy (that's what Bethesda means), where all find cure."<sup>21</sup> To call the church a hospital creates the question, do the healed continue in the hospital? Therefore, beyond being a hospital, it is a therapeutic environment. An environment that nurtures support and heals when necessitated by serving one another.

*Rise in U.S. Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere: Lawful and Unauthorized Immigrants Increase Since Recession* was written by D'Vera Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. The focus of this article is on identifying the growth of immigration from Central America and Mexico. The authors' study reveals that three countries El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras supersede all other countries

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<sup>19</sup> *The Church is a Therapeutic Center* 05 November 2012, <http://orthodoxwitness.org/the-church-is-a-therapeutic-center/>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

entering the U.S.A. including Mexico, and their significance within the Hispanic community of the United States of America. The study denotes a rise in immigration, both lawful and unauthorized. It also indicates a decrease in Mexican immigrants during the recession. The data reveals the sources of increase in those entering lawfully, unlawfully, and those born in the U.S. to immigrants. These differences are significant for understanding cultural differences from one country to another and the cultural influence on those born in the U.S. as both parents are lawful and unauthorized, living within a strange society to theirs, including a new language. The children assimilate the new as normal though the cultural tension is inevitable. English as a second language becomes English as a first language. This is important for understanding the dynamics of influences within the church culture and its therapeutic environment as a healing culture. The study revealed that:

The number of immigrants in the United States from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras rose by 25% from 2007 to 2015, in contrast to more modest growth of the country's overall foreign-born population and a decline from neighboring Mexico. During these same years, the total U.S. immigrant population increased by 10%, while the number of U.S. Mexican immigrants decreased by 6%, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.<sup>22</sup>

This has impacted church growth numerically, culturally, economically, and socially.

Understanding the why of immigration will delineate how to assist.

*Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away: 11% of American adults with Hispanic ancestry do not identify as Hispanic* was composed by Mark Hugo López, Ana González-Barrera, and Gustavo López researched, documented, and interpreted the issue of the identity of Hispanics in the U.S.A. The authors' conclusion from the study is that the distinctiveness of identity via culture and language of first and second-

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<sup>22</sup> D'Vera Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. Rise in U.S. "Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere: Lawful and Unauthorized Immigrants Increase Since Recession." Pew Research Center, December 2017 <https://www.pewresearch.org/>.

generational Hispanics pertains to how they identify themselves as they assimilate the cultural differences of the U.S.A. The authors denote that identity within the Hispanic population is diverse and it needs to be understood via its diversity. The question of identity must be considered as membership is considered within the congregation if the focus is to create a therapeutic environment. This study indicates that “More than 18% of Americans identify as Hispanic or Latino, the nation’s second-largest racial or ethnic group.”<sup>23</sup> How this self-identity influences the church will determine the relationships of members one to another. The study considers intermarriage, last names, language spoken, and ancestry. The following is an example of this. “By contrast, just 9% of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry say their parents often encouraged them to speak Spanish, again reflecting the distance this group has from its immigrant roots.”<sup>24</sup> But if “The language profile of self-identified non-Hispanics who have Hispanic ancestry is different. Fully 90% say they are English dominant and just 10% are bilingual.”<sup>25</sup> These are issues directly related to establishing Nexus Point Church as a Therapeutic Church for the Hispanic community in Montgomery County, Maryland. Clear and effective communication is essential in a Therapeutic Church environment.

Leigh C. Bishop in her book, *Healing in the Koinonia: Therapeutic Dynamics of Church Community* identifies within the church the relatedness of Koinonia as a therapeutic dynamic that heals because of the integration of the individual in the intimate social relationship of the church community. The power and significance of the relational value of the individual are foundational to the healing process and experience. The following citations are a sample of elements

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Hugo López, Ana González-Barrera and Gustavo López. “Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away”: 11% of American adults with Hispanic Ancestry do not Identify as Hispanic. December 20, 2017, [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 15.

highlighted by the author to be considered in the development of a Therapeutic Church community:

- “The concept of healing community has been an integral one in social psychiatry over the past three decades.”<sup>26</sup>
- “The church community differs from most other kinds of healing communities in that it is a community that is not defined by sickness, at least not by sickness in the psychological sense.”<sup>27</sup>
- “This article will review the social and psychological dynamics of healing communities in general and then examine a particular church community as an example of how the dynamics of healing community may be operative in an established church congregation.”<sup>28</sup>

In the church, this recalls the concept of the *koinonia*, the sharing communion.<sup>29</sup>

Bishop reveals the multifaceted approach that is a product of the *koinonia* environment fomented in the church community, and the end is therapeutic.

*The Need to Belong: A Theory of the Therapeutic Function of the Black Church Tradition*, authors’ Delores A. Thompson and Mary B. McRae note that though belonging is a basic need of the church how it is defined and understood is fundamental to the therapeutic function of a community in this study “Findings suggest that church membership may reflect the

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<sup>26</sup> Leigh C. Bishop, “Healing in the Koinonia: Therapeutic Dynamics of Church Community,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 13, no. 1 (1985): 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



need to belong with a group rather than to a group.”<sup>30</sup> Thompson and McRae cite, “Baumeister and Leary (1995), in one formulation of the theory of belonging, asserted that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation present in all cultures.”<sup>31</sup> Thompson and McRae state, “Members saw the church as a place where they learn how to live within the context of ‘others as community.’ Cognitive activity reflected a pervasive concern with forming and maintaining relationships in the group. Central to this concern was the development of cognitive patterns that supported caring for each other and living in relationship with others.”<sup>32</sup> It is important to note is that “Through collective identity, there is empowerment.”<sup>33</sup>

Though the immigrants from Central and South American countries have not been brought to the U.S.A. by force by migrating unlawfully they find themselves in precarious situations and need to belong. They, however, experience discrimination and racism instead of welcoming. Once here, the racial and discriminatory culture is imposed upon them. The force of this discrimination and racial circumstance is evident in the workforce, schooling, and living arrangements. In this respect, it will be compared to the black experience. A significant difference is that African Americans were enslaved, brought to the United States against their will, and had no option to return to their place of origin. For example, Hispanics are culturally different: Guatemalans do not consider themselves Hispanics; they are “Maya” and culturally identify as such (Spanish is a second language). However, all the similitudes will be considered. This study provides a wealth of important information. To develop a Therapeutic Church, these

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<sup>30</sup> Delores A. Thompson and Mary B. McRae, “The Need to Belong: A Theory of the Therapeutic Function of the Black Church Tradition: Counseling and Values,” October 2001, Volume 46, 40.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 48.

elements delineated in this paper must be assured in its context: belongingness and its effect as belonging with not just belonging to... identified culturally not necessarily by race or subcultures, but rather by those characteristics that are similar and can be juxtaposed to discover connectedness among the diversity found in all Hispanics groups of Nexus Point Church.

*Black Churches as Therapeutic Groups*, authors Mary B. McRae, Dolores A. Thompson, Sharon Cooper analyzed black churches as therapeutic groups and conclude that belonging is the fundamental core of the group; “Some of the questions were ‘Why Do You Come to Church?’ ‘What Do You Get Out of Church?’ ‘What is the most important to you in the church?’ and ‘is the church a source of support from discrimination?’”<sup>34</sup> The article denotes that “Church as family was a common theme found across all the focus groups. Black churches are considered ‘as family’ because members see themselves as holding special connections to each other.”<sup>35</sup> And that “The Black church functions as a therapeutic group by providing a sense of belongingness that facilitates an environment in which members may consistently and constructively organize the way they feel, think, and act.”<sup>36</sup> It is an environment where emotions, mental awareness, and behavior are forged by social connectivity, “family.” This cohesiveness of the church community as a family creates a healing environment and therapeutic belongingness.

*Therapeutic Enterprise: A Psychological Exploration of Healing Elements in a Local African-American Spiritualist Church* author Margarita S. Guillory examines the therapeutic effects on the individual via congregational participation. It is about the connectedness developed by the individual congregationally as they relate to the environment and how it affects

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<sup>34</sup> Thompson and McRae, “The Need to Belong,” 40.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the individual in relation to healing. Noted, “Since a person’s experiences are affected by external realities, states of realness involving, but are not limited to other persons, material objects, and societal institutions, there exists interconnectedness between the way in which the individual approaches such realities and the interpretation gained via such an interaction. Specifically, for Jung there exist four such orientations in which an individual interprets life, “sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking (Jung 1989a, p. 125).”<sup>37</sup> These orientations must be considered in the context of Nexus Point Church developing as a therapeutic environment. The charismatic backdrop of many congregants obligates consideration because sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking are seen as a guide for understanding healing.

Katja Rakow, the author of *Therapeutic Culture and Religion in America*, discusses the concept of therapeutic culture in American religion and points to “‘New Thought’ and its concept of the instrumental power of thoughts”<sup>38</sup> as historically affecting change in the therapeutics of faith. Rakow asserts that “A variety of 20th-century developments that can be framed both as secular and as religious or spiritual, such as a positive thinking, self-help, 12-step programs, New Age and the so-called Prosperity Gospel, have predecessors in New Thought.”<sup>39</sup> This article analyzes an essential aspect of many of those who have joined Nexus Point, as delineated in the introduction of this project. The Prosperity Gospel enslaves its followers in the acquisition of health and prosperity via an ego-salvific way of life. A faith centered on helping

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<sup>37</sup> Margarita S. Guillory, “Therapeutic Enterprise: A Psychological Exploration of Healing Elements in a Local African-American Spiritualist Church,” *Pastoral Psychol* 59 (2010): 69.

<sup>38</sup> Katja Rakow, “Therapeutic Culture and Religion in America,” *Religion Compass* 7/11 (2013): 485–97, 10.1111/rec3.12074 John Wiley & Sons 2013, 485.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the self to salvation, health, and prosperity. It is the “I declare” what I want; God cannot deny my declaration of faith; if I believe it, I can achieve it. Believing is the power of thought, not faith.

*A New Therapeutic Community: Development of a Compassion-Focussed and Contextual Behavioural Environment* was written by David Veale, Paul Gilbert, Jon Wheatley, and Iona Naismith. They denote that healing is reciprocal in nature benefiting the recipient and beneficial to the provider that results from a compassion-focused community. The article relates to the Therapeutic Church project in that it observes that the therapeutic community is more than a center for receiving individualized therapy in a traditional group setting. It is much more. What is new is the dynamics that result from communities and their importance in the healing process. The authors begin their introduction as follows,

Like other mammals, humans evolve and live within communities, family and kin groups. Indeed, the social dynamics of group living have been fundamental to the evolution of a number of human competencies such as self-awareness, cooperation, social sharing and capacities for mentalizing, empathy and affect regulation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dunbar & Barrett, 2007).<sup>40</sup>

The introduction, though from an evolutionist point of view, enlightens the context of the behavioral environment. An environment that denotes that

Developing positive feelings is not just about being the recipient of care (which can be helpful) but also about feeling that the care we offer to others can be appreciated. To feel that we can be helpful and rewarding to others and make a contribution that is valuable and appreciated by others is core to developing a sense of self-value and well-being (Heard & Lake, 1986) and a sense of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).<sup>41</sup>

From a God-believing perspective, the value of the observation is appreciated, understanding that the lack of these positive feelings is a product of human sinfulness and self-centeredness. The

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<sup>40</sup> David Veale, Paul Gilbert, Jon Wheatley and Iona Naismith. “A New Therapeutic Community: Development of a Compassion-Focussed and Contextual Behavioural Environment,” *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy Clin. Psychol. Psychother* 22, (2015): 285, <https://DOI:10.1002/cpp.1897.org>.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

authors assert, “There is increasing evidence that both compassion-focused and social learning approaches hold significant promise as therapeutic agents (Hoffmann et al., 2011).<sup>42</sup> The author of this project proposes that compassion-focused and social learning approaches are necessary if the church is to be therapeutic; the path is “That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34, King James Version). The Therapeutic Church should encourage every believer to serve his fellow neighbor, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10, NASB).

*Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model* was authored by John J. Pilch. He denotes that “As all healing activity follows interpretive models, interpreters of various healing stories in the Bible should clarify the model that lies behind their interpretation.”<sup>43</sup> The relevance of this article is in asserting how biblical healing is understood within the Christian community. Two models are explained and contrasted “Biomedical or Empiricist”<sup>44</sup> and the “Cultural or Hermeneutic”<sup>45</sup> models. The juxtaposition of the models provides an understanding of the language used to define illness and the approach to healing:

Human sickness as a personal and social reality and its therapy are inextricably bound to language and signification.... Thus, the cultural or hermeneutic model seeks the connection between the words (“flaky and repulsive skin condition”) and the things (parts of the body in certain conditions) and the human experience (“unclean”). Here the relationship of disease and culture is three-dimensional: words, things, and human meaning.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Veale et al., “A New Therapeutic Community,” 300.

<sup>43</sup> John J. Pilch, “Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model,” *Biblical Theology, Bulletin* 18, no. 2 (May 1988): 60.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

The juxtaposition of the models follows a comparison of six elements (1) Pathological: physical dysfunction vs. illness reality; (2) Seek: symptoms vs. information; (3) Elicitation Procedure: laboratory test vs. evaluation of patient explanation; (4) Interpretive Goal: diagnosis vs. understanding; (5) Interpretive Strategy: the relationship between symptoms and disorder vs. relationship of symptoms and illness semantics; and (6) Therapeutic Goal: intervention medicinal surgical therapeutic vs. treating the experience.<sup>47</sup> These elements facilitate selecting the appropriate model to approach healing contextually in the body (biomedically) and belief (culturally).

*The Imperial Priesthood of the Believer (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9)*, author Robert Clark asserts and affirms the priesthood of the believer and posits that all are priests in the kingdom. However, there is a responsibility not understood, not to a gift, but a universal calling to serve others as Jesus served. Clark states, “Someone has truly said that no believer can ‘walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called,’ (Eph 4:1, NASB) who does not comprehend and practice his function as a priest of the new covenant.”<sup>48</sup> Clark delineates that not comprehending the priesthood of all believers is a deviation of Jesus’ mandate (Matthew 28), love one another and serve one another. The implication is that the believer who lacks understanding of his individual calling in the body of the church, “holds rigidly to the shadow and lets the substance go.”<sup>49</sup> The all-encompassing call of “The priesthood of the believer is in keeping with his heavenly calling, birth, citizenship, association, service and rewards” (John 3:3; Phil 3:20; Eph

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<sup>47</sup> Pilch, “Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model,” 62–65.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Clark, “The Imperial Priesthood of the Believer: Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 92 (October 1935): 442.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 442.

1:3, NASB).<sup>50</sup> For this reason, the author asserts, “Let us there for fear, since this ministry is open to us all, lest any one of us come short because of sin.”<sup>51</sup> The church is responsible for discipleship that empowers the believer that as a “New Testament priest is also an intercessor. His access to the throne of grace gives him the privilege of pleading for others as well as for himself” (Heb 4:16; 7:25; 1 Tim 2:1, NASB).<sup>52</sup>

*The Church as a Therapeutic Community* the author Dean R. Smith presented this paper at the Evangelical Theological Society’s 50<sup>th</sup> National Conference on November 19-21, 1998. The author suggests and outlines a path to ensure the church is a therapeutic community that is Jesus Ministry centered and distinctively Holistic, “This holistic concept of salvation can be seen in several ways. The Hebrew term *shalom* or peace is very broad: Peace with God, Peace with others, Peace with the creation (as evidenced by Jubilee-even the land gets a rest).”<sup>53</sup> Via the question “How is the Church a Therapeutic Community?”<sup>54</sup> The author responds by espousing four (4) points; “a community of support, a community of respect and accountability, a community of healing, and a community of confession/forgiveness/restoration.”<sup>55</sup> This paper addresses the need of a Therapeutic Church community and concords with issues denoted in this project *The Therapeutic Church*; “As Jesus touches lives, he calls the church to be a therapeutic community that unwraps the bodies, distributes the resources of Jesus, proclaims deliverance

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<sup>50</sup> Clark, “The Imperial Priesthood of the Believer,” 442.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 449.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 448.

<sup>53</sup> Dean R. Smith, “The Church as a Therapeutic Community,” Theological Research Exchange Network, TREN ID# ETS-5026, MARC Record# 58676085, DOI# 10.2986/tren.ETS-5026, pg. 1. Accessed August 25, 2022.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

from the penalty of sin, and seeks to be an instrument bringing deliverance from the pain of sin.”<sup>56</sup> Dean R. Smith concludes by reiterating, “The church is to be a therapeutic community- a community of support; a community of respect and accountability; a community of healing; and a community of confession, forgiveness, and restoration.”<sup>57</sup> The article contributes to the fundamental thesis of this project, the healing relationship of spirit, mind, body, and community.

*A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus* was written by Larson, E. L., and S. M. Larson. They denote that a dichotomy occurred throughout the history of healing that perceptually separated the distinctions of human composition in reference to spirit, mind, body, and relationship approaching these dimensions emphasizing separateness.

The article traces the history of medicine and healing through the OT, during the life of Jesus, and throughout the development of the church. Jesus’ ministry presents a model for the Christian health-care provider and client. The principles of the integration of the body-mind-spirit, care and compassion, freedom of choice, and equal access can serve as the foundation for the practice of healing in our professional and personal lives.<sup>58</sup>

However, beliefs that pervade believers due to discipleship or personal interpretations obstruct the path to healing. The authors give biblical and philosophical examples:

The Old Testament teaches that Yahweh alone is the giver and taker of health. There are numerous specific examples of disease inflicted as a punishment for sin and disobedience to the commands of Yahweh ... The prevailing attitude was that since Yahweh controlled all that

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<sup>56</sup> Dean R. Smith, “The Church as a Therapeutic Community,” Theological Research Exchange Network, TREN ID# ETS-5026, MARC Record# 58676085, DOI# 10.2986/tren.ETS-5026, 6. Accessed August 25, 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> E. L. Larson and S. M. Larson, “A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus,” *Faith and Thought*, vol. 112 (1, 1986), 64. Database: New Testament Abstracts.



happened, it was not appropriate for humans to struggle against His will. If sickness came, Yahweh would heal if it was His pleasure.<sup>59</sup>

From the Greek culture also emerged a philosophy called Gnosticism, in which the nous (mind) became trapped in the less desirable physis (body), which was not really essential. Gnostics strove to separate the pure mind from the evil body. This philosophy of body-mind dualism, totally in opposition to the Hebrew view of an integrated body-mind-spirit, was prevalent during Christ's time and has continued to influence the Church up to the present time.<sup>60</sup>

Healing is not dependent on fault; it is not moralistically dependent, not reliant on being good or bad, and does not require repentance. Sin can be at the root of sickness and is not a condition that is to be imposed on those seeking to be healed:

It is interesting that there is no account of Jesus asking someone what they had done wrong before healing them. As a matter of fact, only rarely did He mention sin at all to a sick person, and even then it was without imputing blame. When a paralytic man was brought to Jesus, He said, 'Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven' (Matt. 9:2). Only when He perceived that the scribes around Him thought He was blaspheming did He heal the paralytic's body.<sup>61</sup>

"After healing the man who had lain for years at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus warned him to 'sin no more, that nothing worse befall you'" (John 5:14, NASB).<sup>62</sup> Though "sin is not the only cause of sickness. His healing ministry is striking in that it has none of the moralistic character so prevalent in the Old Testament."<sup>63</sup> Therefore, "It seems evident that the power to forgive sins and the power to heal were for Jesus different aspects of the same ministry, when He healed, it was usually out of compassion and it seemed to flow naturally."<sup>64</sup> The believer can be

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<sup>59</sup> Larson and Larson, "A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus," 64.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

understood in that the “the Christian became a source of healing, essentially and simply as a continuation of Christ’s life through his church. It was understood that Jesus became what we are in order that we might become what he is. Healing was as basic as part of early Christian thought and experience as it had been in the life of Jesus.”<sup>65</sup> The authors conclude that coming together as a community to be empowered was then and is now indispensable; they affirm that:

True spiritual healing demands another kind of preparation altogether. Let a fellowship be formed of convinced, devout and sensible people. Let them regularly pray together. It may be necessary for them to live together for periods. We forget that the disciples lived together for three years and lived with Jesus, and even then were weak and undependable.<sup>66</sup>

*Transforming Body and Soul: Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories* by

Steven A. Galipeau indicates:

The healing stories make clear that Jesus was not a medical doctor. Those who seek his healing do not approach him as a physician. In one story, about a woman with a flow of blood, we hear that the woman had “suffered under” many physicians before she searches for Jesus (Mark 5:25-34). Jesus does not criticize the work of physicians, but offers a very different and specifically religious approach. He carried no medical tools, performed no surgery, administered no drugs.<sup>67</sup>

Asserting that Jesus healed nontraditionally in contrast to the current beliefs. Physical healing was not separated from spiritual healing; Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction” (Mark 5:34, NASB). Healing for Jesus is always connected to faith; it is spiritual “believing in—God the Father—Jesus,” mental “thought—talking to self—assimilating faith internally,” and physical “action—doing—she touches.” The

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<sup>65</sup> Larson and Larson, “A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus,” 67.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>67</sup> Steven A. Galipeau, *Transforming Body and Soul: Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories*. (Carmel, CA: Fisher King Press, 2011), 3.

Apostle James indicates in his epistle that “faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself,”

(James 2:17, NASB). Galipeau, via the gospel stories, enlightens the topics:

Jesus the Healer ... Healing and the Evangelists ... Casting out Demons ... Healing and Society ... Healing and Religion ... Healing and Consciousness ... Healing and Sin ... Healing and Faith ... Healing and the Way ... The Meaning of Illness ... Healing and Death ... The Call to Healing ... Healing Today,” contextualized in Jesus’ ministry of healing (therapeutics—θεραπεία).<sup>68</sup>

Within this context, the author reiterates, “Jesus’ strange techniques and healing methods would also seem unusual to practitioners of traditional Christian spiritual healing. Very little in modern Christian healing resembles what Jesus is said to have done in the gospels. Like the modern doctor, no Christian would spit in a person’s eye. He would pray for divine intervention and lay on hands. Jesus, however, does very little praying for healing and seldom lays on hands.”<sup>69</sup> This contrast denotes a better understanding of what an appropriate healing intervention should be; “We can be grateful to the evangelists for recording the healing of Jesus as well as they did, for they had nothing in their own experience to relate it to.”<sup>70</sup> Therefore, affirming the ability to have a less biased approach to integral healing is the foundation of a Therapeutic Church community.

The limited literature selected is due to the few articles and books the researcher has been able to compile. The topic of a Therapeutic Church is not as elaborate as anticipated. Churches have counseling services and specialized therapy groups: for marriage, parenting, addiction, suicide, etcetera. The information sought is to create a therapeutic environment. A place where everyone is aware that others need their support and understanding, as well as they need the

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<sup>68</sup> Steven A. Galipeau, *Transforming Body and Soul: Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories*. (Carmel, CA: Fisher King Press, 2011), v.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

support and understanding of others in times of crisis. That support is solicited by peers, by equals who are, for the purpose of this project, pew neighbors. They share space and time in the activities of the church community. Teenagers seek support and understanding from other teenagers, married women from other married women, married men from other married men, parents from other parents, and so forth. Creating groups that identify with teenagers, women, married women, men, married men, parents, etcetera provides space and time in a supportive environment.

The literature identified in this project provides data on certain aspects of the Hispanic population specific to countries in Central America represented in Nexus Point. Some articles on Therapeutic Churches are in the context of African American churches and provide research on the Therapeutic Church environment. The books and articles included are relevant to this project. The author of this project will provide his observations documented during his planting and pastorship of Nexus Point Church. The author will also include the proposed discipleship and training in the Therapeutic Church Model.

## **Theological Foundation**

### Introduction

The ministry of Jesus is documented in the gospels, particularly in Luke chapter 4, where Jesus in the Gospel of Luke reveals the purpose of His calling and anointing, “Luke began his portrayal of Jesus’ ministry with the account of Jesus’ first sermon. This sermon is quite important, for it is programmatic, and in it Luke provided his readers with Jesus’ own description

of his mission and ministry.”<sup>71</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer states, “Luke has deliberately put this story at the beginning of the public ministry to encapsulate the entire ministry of Jesus and the reaction to it.”<sup>72</sup> A contextualized reading of this chapter will enable the reader to understand the concept of ministry more deeply as it applies to the individual believer; it denotes Jesus’ ministry for the individual. To emulate Jesus’ ministry, the believer must be able to cross the bridge between Jesus’ religious, historical, cultural, and social context to his contemporary context to apply the principles delineated in (Luke 4:14–21) appropriately. The believer must seek to understand (Luke 4:14–21) while not ignoring its context verses 1 through 13 and 22 through 44, highlighting the significance of the event, Jesus’ declaration of his anointing, and the purpose of the church. The Gospel of Luke chapter 4 concludes with this statement, “So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea,” verse 44. Though the emphasis is placed on Jesus’ outdoor preaching, it is evident that his focus was the church, “he kept on preaching in the synagogues,” (Luke 4:44, NASB). The writer understands that though there is a call to evangelize, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20) integral healing is for the church then and now. Therefore, a better understanding of Jesus’ ministry and the call to the church to minister in the context of (Luke 4:14-21) is necessary for the church to be therapeutic. Jesus’ healing ministry was integral and vital in all the individual’s dimensions, spirit, mind, body, and relational.

### Integral Healing

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<sup>71</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 153–54.

<sup>72</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, vol. 28, *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 529.

Healing is the English translation of the New Testament Greek word *θεραπεύω*. The Greek definition of *θεραπεύω* and the significance of its use contextually is necessary to understand its need in the Therapeutic Church, body of Christ, then and now:

“*θεραπεύω*; *θεραπεία*, *ας*: to cause someone to recover health, often with the implication of having taken care of such a person, ‘to heal, to cure, to take care of, healing.’  
*θεραπεύω*: ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν ... *θεραπεύειν* πᾶσαν νόσον ‘he gave them authority to heal every disease’ (Matthew 10:1, NASB). *θεραπεία*: τοὺς χρείαν ἔχοντας *θεραπείας* ἴατο ‘he cured those who needed healing’” (Luke 9:11, NASB).<sup>73</sup>

Matthew 10:1 says, “Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to *heal* every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (NASB).

The disciples were given the authority to *θεραπεία* (*heal*) and to have authority over unclean spirits. Matthew chapter 10 denotes the disciple’s training/instruction for the service that God the Father gave to Jesus; the discipleship Jesus gave to His church, the twelve first, and the then and the modern church. Mark makes a more comprehensive mention of this event, denoting the names of the twelve disciples, including names given by Jesus to Simon, John, and James:

And He \*went up on the mountain and \*summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. <sup>14</sup> And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He *could* send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to cast out the demons. <sup>16</sup> And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), <sup>17</sup> and James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, “Sons of Thunder”); <sup>18</sup> and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him, (Mark 3:13–19; Mark 6:7; Matthew 9:35; Luke 9:1, NASB).

Matthew identifies the Twelve as:

His disciples’ suggests that the Twelve have already been chosen (see under 5:1), but to date they have apparently always accompanied Jesus. Now he is sending them out on their own in twos (Mark 6:7). Matthew pairs their names accordingly. This grouping no doubt enabled the disciples to support, protect, and empower each other better than if

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<sup>73</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 268.

each went alone, and it perhaps was patterned after the law that required at least two witnesses (Deut. 19:15). By not staying together as a larger group, the disciples also maximized their ability to reach large numbers of people. Timeless principles for discipleship and missions appear here.<sup>74</sup>

The agreement between Matthew and Mark as to who the disciples are and their mission is evident in Scripture; the differences in the citations are that Matthew groups them in twos indicating the teams, whereas Mark adds that “James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James [to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, “Sons of Thunder”] (Mark 3:17, NASB). The disciples are to preach with the authority to cast out demons. *And to heal*: note that the authority Jesus gives his disciples was also for healing. Some languages will have to repeat “authority,” as in “and (he gave them) power to heal people of all kinds of diseases and sicknesses.”<sup>75</sup>

Understanding the therapeutic dimensions of the gospel of Jesus then and now is fundamental. And “he cured those who needed healing”, He also sent the twelve and seventy to do the same, (Luke 10:1–17). Θεραπεύω:

θεραπεύω (*therapeuō*). vb. to heal, restore. *To heal a sickness or restore someone to a right condition*. Throughout the Gospels and Acts, the most common use of *therapeuō* is to describe the physical healing of an individual from an illness or affliction. When the verb takes an object, it is usually a general description of illness (“disease,” “sickness”), rather than a specific disease (e.g., Matt 4:23; 9:35; Luke 9:1). In this way the term describes healing in a generic manner. However, the term is also used several times specifically of exorcism—i.e., driving a demon out of someone constitutes healing that person (e.g., Matt 17:18; 12:22; Luke 8:2). In these contexts, the term describes the restoration to a state of wholeness and well-being. In the lxx and extrabiblical literature, this term is used for the act of “serving” (e.g., Prov 29:26 lxx; Dan 7:10 lxx), but it has this meaning in the NT only once (Acts 17:25).<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 167.

<sup>75</sup> Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 283.

<sup>76</sup> Douglas Mangum et.al. ed., “Healing,” *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

Θεραπεύω describes the restoration to a state of wholeness and well-being.<sup>77</sup> Unifying healing in all aspects of the individual spirit, mind, body, and relationship is fundamental in the body of Christ; the church needs to be therapeutic focused, and integrative. An example of integrative health focus is John’s prayer for Gaius, “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers,” (3 John 2, NASB). Paul states, “may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NASB). Evidence that the concern is not only spiritual but the salvation of the complete believer spiritually, mentally, and physically. Peter refers to submission to the power of God that does away with anxiety due to Jesus’ care of His friends, (John 15:13–15) and brothers, (Hebrews 2:10–13) to whom he is their Savior, (Hebrews 2:17–18); “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you,” (1 Peter 5:6–7).

A look at the Epistle of James, chapter 5:13–20 reveals his all-inclusive healing and ministry view and practice. James instructs the church beyond the practice of physical healing. The healing encompasses the integrative healing of the believer. It will restore and raise the physically ill believer and forgive their sins. The anointing of the sick is contextualized within the body of believers. For James ministering to one another is fundamental. The expression “Is anyone among you” and what to do if there is suffering, joy, or illness reiterates that caring for one another is relational within the body of Christ. Verse sixteen denotes the intimacy of the relationship amongst the believers with this guidance “confess your sins to one another, and pray

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



for one another so that you may be healed,” (James 5:16, NASB) healing of the soul [mind, heart]. This healing does not exclude those who are not part of the congregation, “They went out and preached that *men* should repent. And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them” (Mark 6:13, NASB). The ministry of integral healing must continue:

Anointing with oil is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as a symbolic action according to which what is anointed is set apart for God’s service or blessing (while the Greek word *chriō* was more often used for this, the word *aleiphō*, found here in James, also occurs (Exod. 40:15; Num. 3:3). By anointing the sick person with oil, then, the elders are symbolically setting that person aside for the Lord’s special attention as they pray. And since it is prayer to which James returns in verse 15, it is clear that it, not the anointing, is the main agent of healing. By stressing that the prayer of faith is what brings healing, James has carefully qualified the apparently absolute nature of the promise in verse 15. For only prayers that are offered in accordance with the will of God can truly be uttered in faith.<sup>78</sup>

The disciples were sent out and empowered to preach, liberate, and heal; so is the church today.

A contemplative look at the guidance of James is a continued reminder of the type of relationship

God wants for the church, a relational therapeutic environment:

Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.<sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;<sup>15</sup> and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.<sup>18</sup> Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.<sup>19</sup> My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,<sup>20</sup> let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins, (James 5:13–20, NASB).

Healing is of the gospel; James asserts prayer and anointing with its “religious and symbolic purposes, reminding the sick person of God’s concern for his faithful people in time of distress,

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<sup>78</sup> Douglas Moo, “James,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 1161–162.

and stimulating as well as awakening faith. This is confirmed by the fact that the anointing is performed *in the name of the Lord*.<sup>79</sup> Healing of spirit, mind, body, and relationship is God given to the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the integrative aspect of healing must be understood; the church must be environmentally therapeutic.

One dimension is that physical healing restores relationships within family and community. The separateness caused by sickness is still true today as illness can cause stigmatization of the individual due to the ignorance of others; a modern-day example is AIDS. Stigmatization of disease can be seen in the New Testament times and Old Testament times, for example, leprosy. Jesus' approach is salvation driven; it is soul healing, physical healing, socially restorative, and destigmatizing, exemplified by his touching to heal the lepers, "Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed'" (Matthew 8:1-4, NASB). This gospel connectedness to healing can be gleaned from Jesus' testimony to John the Baptist, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4-5, NASB). Upon healing lepers, He referred them to the priest to be examined and declared clean. In the case of the ten lepers, the Samaritan bypassed the priest's inspection and returned to thank Jesus, (Luke 17:15-16).

The case of Simon the Leper is unique due to Jesus' interaction with him as an invited guest. Who is Simon the Leper? Is he the leper healed by Jesus documented in (Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; and Luke 5:12-16):

Some scholars believe that Simon was a leper whom Jesus had healed (Brooks, *Mark*, 221). These scholars argue that Simon could not have had leprosy at the time of Jesus' visit since lepers were considered unclean and could not live in houses. According to

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<sup>79</sup> I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 190.

(Lev 13:46), the leper “shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp” (Lev 13:46 ESV). If he had leprosy at the time of this meal, then all those in attendance would have been rendered unclean as well. Therefore, many believe Simon was healed prior to Jesus’ visit, and suggest that Simon may have been hosting Jesus and the disciples in his home as a way to thank Him for the healing.”<sup>80</sup>

An assertion implied is that to be known as Simon the Leper would be stigmatizing if he had not been healed and restored socially. Simon the Leper is now known as a sign of healing, the product of a miracle. Simon is also a Pharisee of Bethany who knew Lazarus, Jesus’ friend who was also at the table with them, (John 12:12). John, in his gospel, notes that Jesus “came to Bethany where Lazarus was,” (John 12:1, NASB), and that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5, NASB). Simon did as instructed when healed, “Jesus\*said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them” (Matthew 8:4, NASB). This inspection was necessary so Simon the Leper could be completely restored physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially. If the condition was diagnosed as an infection that worsened continually, then the following is true: “The skin diseases are detailed in Leviticus 13. If it is a new infection, the person is to be put in isolation for seven days, followed by an additional seven days if no change has occurred. If there has been no change in the infection after 14 days, the person is considered to be clean. If there has been any change, the person is considered unclean until the infection disappears (and thus indefinitely).”<sup>81</sup> Jesus healed ten lepers and also instructed the healed to “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (Luke 17:14, NASB).

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<sup>80</sup> Charles Joshua Parrott, “Simon the Leper,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>81</sup> Brenda Heyink, “Leprosy,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

In Luke's account of this invitation, he denotes that Simon is the Pharisee and is also the Leper:

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined *at the table*.<sup>37</sup> And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,<sup>38</sup> and standing behind *Him* at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.<sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."<sup>41</sup> "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.<sup>42</sup> When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?"<sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."<sup>44</sup> Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.<sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.<sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.<sup>47</sup> For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."<sup>49</sup> Those who were reclining *at the table* with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this *man* who even forgives sins?"<sup>50</sup> And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:36–50, NASB).

Comparative detailed observation of (Matthew 26:6-12; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50), and (John 12:1–8) will corroborate the assertion that Simon the Pharisee and Simon the Leper are the same person, and this dinner is the same event, (Matthew 26:6–12; Mark 14:3–9; Luke 7:36–50) and (John 12:1–8). What stands out is the therapeutic dimension of healing beyond the physical aspect of healing. Due to the woman's anointing of Jesus, "the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39, NASB).<sup>82</sup> The one who bore the stigma of being a leper, unclean, separated from wife, children, and community,

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<sup>82</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

and healed, yet harshly judged the woman's action and Jesus. Instead of acknowledging the sinfulness of the self and witnessing God's intercession, and expressing reciprocal love to Jesus, he judges and is rebuked. "Behind the statement lie the two assumptions of the Pharisee, that a prophet would not allow himself to be touched by a sinful, and therefore unclean, woman, and that the mark of a prophet is clairvoyance."<sup>83</sup> Jesus responded to Simon's unspoken judgment proving that more than a prophet was his invited guest; Jesus heard his silent thought and knew who was touching him. Jesus using a parable, compares the actions of Simon and the woman. Simon the Leper asserts Jesus' judgment of both actions, including knowing his inner thoughts: "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little," (Luke 7:47, NASB).

Another physical healing that restores spiritually, relationally, religiously, and economically is the woman with the blood issue:

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years,<sup>26</sup> and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse—<sup>27</sup> after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind *Him* and touched His cloak.<sup>28</sup> For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well."<sup>29</sup> Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.<sup>30</sup> Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power *proceeding* from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?"<sup>31</sup> And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"<sup>32</sup> And He looked around to see the woman who had done this.<sup>33</sup> But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.<sup>34</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:25–34, NASB).

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<sup>83</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 309.

In this situation, an unclean woman touches Jesus; she was unclean due to “An unnatural discharge”<sup>84</sup> “a hemorrhage for twelve years” (Mark 5:25, NASB).

Bodily discharges were unclean, and contact with them defiled a person for various periods. An unnatural discharge, since it usually indicated disease, made a person unclean for seven days after it had ceased (Lev. 15:1–15, NASB). Menstruation also produced uncleanness lasting seven days after it ceased (Lev. 15:19–24; 2 Sam. 11:4, NASB).<sup>85</sup>

Meaning this woman was considered unclean for twelve years. For twelve years, unable to worship in the synagogue, touch anyone, be sexually active, and was separated from all things relational. The woman’s healing of her affliction extended way beyond the physical healing. It is integral healing, the healing of every human dimensionality of spirit, mind, body, and relationship; it is reintegration into the community. The woman’s testimony was the tool used to assure Jairus that the interruption of his request to Jesus for the healing of his daughter would depend on believing, faith: “While He was still speaking, they \*came from the *house of the synagogue official*, saying, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?”<sup>36</sup> But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, \*said to the synagogue official, “Do not be afraid *any longer*, only believe” (Mark 5:25–38, NASB). The woman’s interruption was an example of faith, a witness to an anguished father who would believe despite the bad news. The healing and resurrection of his daughter, (Mark 5:45–43) removed his grief, and his household was restored.

Healing—Θεραπεύω, the integrative healing of the person with quadriplegia lowered through the roof of Jesus’ house, “Friend, your sins are forgiven,” (Luke 5:20, NASB). The mental anguish his sin caused was removed, and his body physically restored; the illness was of the spirit, the soul, and the body, another example of complete healing.

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<sup>84</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Cleanness and Uncleanness, Regulations Concerning,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 479–80.

<sup>85</sup> Elwell and Beitzel, “Cleanness and Uncleanness, Regulations Concerning,” 479–80.

### Joy, Frustration, and Understanding the Healing Ministry

The disciples were joyous and frustrated in the practice of their calling to minister. Three events, when contrasted, reveal the joy and frustration the disciples experienced. First, when the Twelve preached and with authority to cast out demons and heal all types of sicknesses. Second, similarly, when the seventy preached with the same authority as the Twelve. And third, when they could not cast out a demon, a complaint was made to Jesus. In the healing ministry, the expectations of those seeking healing must be addressed appropriately as then in the now. The inability to meet the seeker's expectations can be counterproductive to what is preached, weakening faith instead of strengthening it. Both the one whom ministers and the one who is ministered to must understand faith in the context of the will of God; faith is not a yes tool for all instances. One example is that of apostle Paul's personal experience is what he prayed for and believed God would provide versus the will of God:

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! <sup>8</sup> Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. <sup>9</sup> And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong, (2 Corinthians 12:7–10, NASB).

Even the Apostle Paul confronted that healing is not always God's will:

The answer he received, however, was quite different from what he expected. “Request denied,” the stake would remain. There would be no quick fix miracle, but the prayer does not go unanswered. The answer is simply different from what Paul wished. The Lord's response was to give him “a richer endowment of strength to overcome his weakness.” This response was far greater and more profound than anything Paul knew to ask from the Lord. God gives his pride a knockout blow that makes him completely dependent on divine power, not his own. As Bruce puts it, “His prayer was indeed answered, not by his deliverance from the affliction, but by his receiving the necessary

grace to bear it.” But he received more than grace to bear a vexing affliction; he received the power of Christ.<sup>86</sup>

A generation has been raised and nurtured on the concept that God cannot deny what they want or believe they need. This prosperity-driven generation cannot appropriately understand why their expectations are not met and refuse to accept the encompassing results of God’s decision. It is inconceivable and incomprehensible to a prosperity and faith believer to not receive what they declared. Perpetuating a spiritual relationship based on works, “I do,” “I believe,” “I declare,” “I sow,” and “I reap.” How it’s done? Insist! What is believed? That God must! How is it believed? Presumption! What is declared? Want! How is it declared? Voice it! It is sowing and reaping. Give to receive! How much do I sow? Much for much! The uncertainty of living by works. This is not a therapeutic environment. On the contrary, it is enslavement in a life that leads many to frustration.

What is most important? The desire and prayer for those loved to prosper in all things do not imply it is a done deal. The will of God must be inclusive in the concept of prosperity and healing in conjunction with spiritual growth. 3 John 2 states, “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers” (NASB). And in the King James Version 3 John 2, “The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” You can pray and wish for prosperity and health as your soul prospers, but as seen in Paul’s experience, healing is not a given to the believer. Also, prosperity is not a must for the believer, although being blessed is:

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<sup>86</sup> David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 523.



But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup> I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction, (Philippians 4:10–14, NASB).

Paul understood, and so must the believer today, that health and prosperity are conditional in God's will, not conditioned via the believer's wants, presumptions, or rewards of good works. God suffices the individual believer's needs via a faith that is conditioned on God's will:

Paul's secret of living was an open secret, available for all who would walk the way of Christ. It was the secret of contentment, since to know Christ and to be called to serve him was 'unsearchable riches' (Eph. 3:8). How far we know the secret of contentment and to what degree we are proving the sufficiency of Christ for all the demands of our lives are always challenging questions for us as Christians.<sup>87</sup>

God's will in the walk with Christ is the believer's contentment that enables him to "do all things."

### Joy

This section will examine Jesus' expansive discipleship including the sending out of the seventy, the joy of empowerment, and the proper foundation of joy, salvation assurance, "rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven," (Luke 10:20, NASB).

The Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come... <sup>8</sup> Whatever city you enter they receive you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup> and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'...<sup>17</sup> The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." <sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. <sup>19</sup> Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven (Luke 10:1–20, NASB).

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<sup>87</sup> Francis Foulkes, "Philippians," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1258.

True joy is to know that your name is recorded in heaven; “Jesus cautions that the disciples are not to become enamored with the sensational. The crucial thing is not the expulsion of demons and power over evil, but the assurance of having one’s name written in God’s book”.<sup>88</sup>

The only greater joy than salvation assurance is His love that provides salvation and all its benefits, “The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:9, NASB). The kingdom is the environment that provides forgiveness, healing, prosperity, and relationship within the Body of Christ as a community of faith that thrives in the will of God.

### Frustration

An anguished Father, a demon-possessed son, and the disciples’ inability to liberate the son just six days after the miraculous campaign of the seventy. The multitude seeking healing, the seventy and nine disciples were present. Jesus, Peter, John, and James were not present. Jesus parted from the former to be alone with Peter, John, and James during the Transfiguration Event: “Six days later, Jesus \*took with Him Peter and James and John, and \*brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them” (Mark 9:1–13, NASB).

The nine disciples could not expel the demon. Jesus returns to the nine disciples, the seventy, and the crowd. Jesus is confronted with the issue that the disciples were not able to cast out a demon and restore the health of a young man brought to them by his father:

Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; <sup>18</sup> ... I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*.” <sup>19</sup> And He \*answered them and \*said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!” <sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to him, ““If You can?” All things are possible to him who believes.” <sup>24</sup> “I do believe; help my unbelief.”<sup>25</sup> “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”<sup>28</sup> When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, “Why could we not

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<sup>88</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, “Luke,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 820.

drive it out?”<sup>29</sup> And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer” (Mark 9:14–28, NASB).

The word was out. Jesus had given his disciples the authority to heal and cast out demons. Those needing healing understood that the disciples had the power to heal and cast out evil spirits. The evidence “He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing” (Luke 9:1–2, NASB). They returned joyfully, and their testimony of healing and the casting out of the demons and Jesus confirmed it. The disappointment of the father and the frustration of the disciples are evident. The father’s complaint and the disciples’ question as to why they could not cast out the demon are apparent in the current expectation. Healing and the casting out of demons were in the eyes of the beholders. In the eye of the beholder were the miracles performed by Jesus and his disciples (the twelve and the seventy). What about today? Are there complaints by the seekers and frustration in those ministering? Are these the result of the current expectations? If so, who created the expectations?

The need to better understand the expectations of those who seek the church is essential if they are to be ministered to appropriately and effectively. What does the seeker believe and expect? The seeker has a need that has been marketed as solvable by the church, healing: spiritual, mental, physical, and relational. What does the Therapeutic Church believe and expect? The Therapeutic Church heals spiritually, mentally, physically, and relationally. The encounter of the church and seeker will either be joyous or frustrating, dependent on whether the expectations are met spiritually, mentally, physically, and relationally. The need for a Therapeutic Church that heals integratively in all the dimensions of the life of the individual member and the congregation is necessary. It is the congregation that seeks to love one another as Jesus loved. A healing church believes and understands healing as God’s will and submits willingly to serving and ministering to each other in love; The Therapeutic Church.

### Greater Things

More extraordinary things the disciples would see and experience. For example, in Nathanael's encounter, "Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these" (John 1:50, NASB). Jesus told his disciples, "The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel" (John 5:20, NASB). The disciples would witness more incredible things impressing and enabling them to believe what Jesus called them to do:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*. <sup>15</sup> "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:12–14, NASB).

The church then and the church now is the place to see greater things, healing in all the aspects of life, spiritual, mental, physical, and relational.

Love one another, serve one another, forgive one another, heal one another!

Greater than seeing "greater things" is the foundation of Jesus' ministry, Love. The absolute proof of the Apostles' discipleship and today's church is to love one another, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35, NASB). Jesus defines this love and its fruitfulness for the church then and now:

This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me but I chose

you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. <sup>17</sup> This I command you, that you love one another (John 15:12–17, NASB).

Jesus emphatically orders the disciples to love one another (John 15:12), and the maxima is the love of friend (John 15:13). To love one another, serve one another, forgive one another, and heal one another is the foundation of the Therapeutic Church. The church must not let signs or miracles shadow the true purpose of the gospel salvation in the context of Jesus' anointing in Luke chapter 4. This is what the Therapeutic Church is called to do:

*Jesus and the Apostles.* Rather than form a separatist reform within Judaism, Jesus seems to have called all Israel to repentance and to seek in faith God's help in his own person. From among the wider group of those who follow him, Jesus selects 12 men (Mt 10:1–4; Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:12–16), who maintain with him a particularly close relationship, receiving private instruction and witnessing his miracles and controversy with the Jewish authorities. On one occasion, Jesus sends these men out to preach the message of repentance, to cast out demons, and to heal the sick, that is, to minister in ways that were characteristic of his own work (Mt 10:1–15; Mk 6:7–13, 30; Lk 9:1–6). The same relationship is expressed in the saying, "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Lk 10:16; Mt 10:40). It is clear that the 12 are not merely to pass Jesus' teaching on but to represent his very person. This is exactly what the *shaliach* does, and it is in this sending that the Gospels refer to the 12 as apostles (Mt 10:2; Mk 6:30; Lk 9:10). The length of the *shaliach*'s assignment extends until his return, and consequently Matthew and Mark no longer use the term, although Luke continues to do so (11:49; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10).<sup>89</sup>

The disciples witnessed greater things, participated in them, and continued the work that Jesus initiated by preaching and healing in and outside the synagogues and temple, (Acts 3:1–10).

spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Jesus' preaching and healing inside and outside the church evidences the ministry of Jesus as delineated in (Luke 4:14–21). Jesus preached in the synagogues and the temple, first documented when he was twelve years old, "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were

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<sup>89</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Apostle, Apostleship," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 132.

looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house" (Luke 2:41–52, NASB)? Jesus heals in the synagogues and the temple, the bent women, (Luke 13:16) the man with withered hand (Matthew 12:10; Mark 3:1–3; Luke 6:6–8), "And *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them" (Matthew 21:14, NASB). Ironically, churches today still determine when ministering can be done by designating special services: healing service, anointing service, prosperity service, etcetera. This is no different than in Jesus' day when a synagogue official said, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day" (Luke 13:14, NASB).

Jesus also preached and healed outside the synagogues and temple: sitting on a mountain (Matthew 5:1), from a fishing boat on the beach shore (Luke 5:3), by Jacobs Well to the Samaritan Woman and the Samaritans (John 4:1–42). Healing outside the church: woman with the blood issue and Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56), Syrophenician's daughter (Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30), the ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19), and man with leprosy (Matthew 8:3; Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13), blind men in the streets (Matthew 9:27–30), in his house—the quadriplegic (Matthew 9:2–8; Mark 2:1–11; Luke 5:17–26), and in Peter's house—his mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14:–15) a few of the many healings witnessed and documented in the Gospels and Acts.

### Jesus Grew in Stature

The limited documentation of Jesus' childhood and upbringing is revealing in that it allows the believer to see significant aspects of Jesus' development; He grew in wisdom, physically, in favor with God and men, and the grace of God was upon Him. Joseph and Mary presented Jesus at the temple, and he was circumcised, "And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was

conceived in the womb” (Luke 2:21–40, NASB). Luke documents significant events in Jesus’ childhood development:

- “The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40, NASB).
- “And when He became twelve, they went up *there* according to the custom of the Feast” (Luke 2:42, NASB).
- And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house” (Luke 2:49, NASB)?
- “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52, NASB).

Jesus was born, nurtured, and grew naturally, though the Holy Spirit conceived Him. His human development is compatible with all humans, except He was without sin, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15, NASB). And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews adds, “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8, NASB). Hebrews 4:15 and 5:8 highlight Jesus’ spiritual development “often overlooked or ignored”<sup>90</sup> He was “tempted” and “learned obedience”, and the Gospels attest that he sought God the Father intimately in prayer. Jesus’ human dimensionality is undeniable though He is our Savior, “In the beginning (*He*) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John

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<sup>90</sup> Dr. Stephen Vandergriff, “I think Luke 2:52 mirrors several psychological/developmental stages: mentally, physically, socially, and spirituality (and typically the latter is often overlooked or ignored.)” September 26, 2022.

1:1–3, NASB). Paul asserts, “the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:46–47,

NASB). Jesus is the second man, the spiritual, the Messiah Servant:

*The servant of the Lord,”* in specialized biblical usage, points to the Messiah while also alluding to Isaiah’s central message. Though Isaiah, with others, employs “servant” with a range of significations, he composed some passages known as the Servant Songs. These distinctive sections of his book are distinguishable in content, but they cannot be extracted from the surrounding context without disrupting the flow of prophecy. Isaiah’s focus is on the future Messiah-servant. None can question the NT’s unanimous messianic interpretation of Isaiah’s servant, nor its application of this understanding to Jesus Christ.<sup>91</sup>

### Serve One Another

To serve Jesus is to serve others. Serving God is fundamental; believers are expected to love one another, care for one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, help one another, counsel one another, and support one another. Serving one another is seeking the benefit of the other, going beyond the self. Jesus speaking of final judgment indicates that serving one another is equal to serving Him as delineated in Matthew 25 by Jesus:

- “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40, NASB).
- “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me” (Matthew 25:45, NASB).

Believers are to serve one another. Christians are responsible for serving each other; the modus operandi is love. Via the Holy Spirit, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10, NIV). Jesus said, “But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27, NIV). Paul states, “but through

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<sup>91</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1180.



love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Galatians 5:13–14, NASB). The disciples then and now are commanded to “love one another” (John 13:34, NASB).

#### The New Commandment “love one another”

Jesus indicated that His disciples then and now were and are to, under a new commandment, relate intimately differently. A commandment that would define church as infinitely different: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34, NASB). John asserts, “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining” (1 John 2:7–8, NASB). John, in his second epistle, establishes Jesus’ new commandment was not new to him or the church, “Now I ask you, lady, not as though *I were* writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another” (2 John 1:5, NASB). John is ascertaining to the church that loving one another was not new or old, but the foundation of the gospel as Jesus established. To love one another and serve one another, as denoted by Paul, “For you were called to freedom, brethren...but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Galatians 5:13–15, NASB).

#### Paul “but through love serve one another”

The Apostle Paul denotes that those redeemed are to serve one another through love in the letter to the Galatians “but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13–15, NASB).

Paul's ministry is relational. It is about loving ones neighbor as oneself: he is a Jew, a gentile, and weak person, whatever it takes to serve Jesus, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). In Ephesians, "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 5:21, NASB). The following Pauline expressions amplify the foundation of serving one another in love:

- "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor" (Romans 12:10, NASB).
- "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8, NASB).
- "...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2, NASB).
- "...and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you" (1 Thessalonians 3:12, NASB).
- "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another" (1 Thessalonians 4:9, NASB).
- "...and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:13, NASB).
- "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater" (2 Thessalonians 1:3, NASB).
- "...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24, NASB).

The biblical references encompass the many dimensions of loving one another that Paul understood are fundamental in the church. Elements needed to be a Therapeutic Church.

### Peter “love for one another”

Peter expands the dimension of loving one another by indicating, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8, NASB). To love is to forgive. Forgiveness is the true test of love. Love for one another forgives offenses and restores the offender. Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses (Proverbs 10:12). But more than forgiveness of offenses, Peter indicates it covers a multitude of sins. The coverage is high, deep, and wide. Ministering therapeutically to the transgressions of mind, body, soul, and relation to one another. Following the advice of the disciple that once denied Jesus, and learned “you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22, NASB).

### John “love one another”

The statement “love one another” is used liberally by John, Paul, and Peter. Still, the phrase “A new commandment” is written exclusively by the apostle John “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34, NASB). Two more times in his gospel documents, Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 15:12, NASB). And “This I command you, that you love one another” (John 15:17, NASB). The children of God (1 John 3:1), are commanded to love one another:

- “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 John 3:11, NASB).
- “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 John 3:23, NASB).

- “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7, NASB).
- “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11, NASB).
- “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12, NASB).

The uniqueness of the gospel is that, according to Jesus, “love for one another” exemplifies the love of Christ for all. The commandment to “love one another” repeatedly reiterates the direction in which the Therapeutic Church must pursue. Love for pew neighbor “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (1 John 4:21, NASB).

### Conclusion

Θεραπεύω is a Greek verb often translated as healing, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord ... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:14–21, NASB). It is God’s initiative. The church is Spirit-empowered because Jesus is present, “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst” (Matthew 18:20, NASB). Jesus is present; therefore, θεραπεύω (healing) is available “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19, NASB). The spirit-empowered Therapeutic Church anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, heal physical illness, free the oppressed, and release the spiritual, religious, social, and political captives. The

Therapeutic Church must live in and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord; proclaim integrative healing today and tomorrow until He returns in glory and all things are made perfect.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### Introduction

The project is designed to develop the church into a vital, comprehensive ministry that heals beyond salvation; more than accumulating a multitude, it is about total wellness: spiritually, mentally, physically, and relationally. To accomplish this, the church needs to understand its purpose contextualized in Jesus' approach to integral healing. According to Luke chapter 4, an anointed ministry guided by the Holy Spirit is an approach that heals the seeker entirely internally, externally, and relationally. Jesus approached the seeker from the outside in and healed them from the inside out. The church's contemporary approach to the seeker needs to emulate Jesus' evangelistic principles to provide as necessitated. Jesus taught, fed, forgave, and healed those who sought Him holistically. The church community must respond to the call to minister, knowing and understanding that they are part of the priesthood of all believers. Every member of the body of Christ, the church, is a priest to those in need of healing. In a spectrum of healing provisioned by Jesus via the Holy Spirit. Healing the non-believer and the believer seeking complete healing as they move from church to church. By better understanding what they desire and why, the church can effectively and efficiently minister to the sick physically, mentally, spiritually, and relationally. What is needed is an integrative therapeutic support model.

This project initiates via the acknowledged need for healing within the local church effectively and efficiently for those seeking healing from the hurt of the religious legalism, the Faith Prosperity Movement, and lack of salvation assurance; it is an assumption vs. faith issue.

The need for integrative healing focuses on the need for holistic healing; spiritual, mental, physical, and relational wellness is essential. Motivated and resulting from the writer's bivocational ministry and social service 30 years of experience:

- Pastoral Ministry
- Academic Peer Advisor
- Assistant to Disabled Students Counselor
- Job Coach at Easter Seal Society
- Social Services: Welfare (income maintenance)
- Child Protective Services
- Director of Federal Programs
- Program Manager Child Support

There is a correlation between people service-related work and ministering in the church community. Believers suffer the same hurts and needs of the population in general and are also seeking help.

Therapeutic healing in church ministry has focused on “one on one” professional counseling provision:

- Pastoral Integrative Counseling
- Biblical Counseling
- Professional therapeutics counseling: Therapist client-centered

Models that are focused on providing individualized service versus the project's intent, the development of a therapeutic environment where all in the church community serve each other in the spectrum of healing via an eclectic approach. The models are service provision biblical theories, for example, the “Nouthetic Model” vs. the “Integrative Model,” their differences are

preferences in the approach to individualized counseling or therapy. The “Nouthetic Model” rejects the integration of psychology in the healing process of the counseled. Whereas integrative theories integrate theological knowledge, psychology, and the sciences acknowledging their contributions to healing in the human life spectrum.

The project’s theoretical proposal is an integrative therapeutic support model. It is eclectic, integrative, and biblical. The eclectic approach facilitates the acquisition of information that will provide proactive techniques to develop biblical integrative strategies in a supportive intervention therapeutic environment; and needed eclectic training in its use of Bible teaching in conjunction with the trues existent in theology, psychology, sociology, medicine, and the sciences. The church community is to provide the appropriate path to healing and establish assurance, a safe place, in the life of the person ministered via the priesthood of believers.

The Therapeutic Church is a person-relationship-centered community environment that provides healing. The need for a Therapeutic Church’s healing environment community is indispensable. It is not a new idea of how the church should be but rather a return to the ministry that Jesus originated in the New Testament Church. The Therapeutic Church is Jesus-centered therapy ready to minister to the whole person, spirit, mind, body, and relationship; ministering in Jesus’ likeness via all members within an environment of absolute assurance and grace intervention focused as revealed:

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. <sup>15</sup> And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.<sup>16</sup> And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:14–19, NASB).



The Therapeutic Church is not a provider of services. It is an integrative redemption environment defined in this project as all-inclusive healing of spirit, mind, body, and relationship via a theological, spiritual, psychological, and sociological eclectic approach. The Therapeutic Church is a pastoral and layperson care ministry. The pastoral team and the laity assume pastoral care in a comprehensive healing ministry one on one relationship focused. It is a healing environment that cares for God's people via education, preaching, healing, and individualized and community care; conscient of the Great Commission calling, including holistic healing as a part of the evangelistic goal.

Jesus sent the Twelve, the seventy, and all future believers to preach salvation, forgive sinners, liberate the demon-possessed, and heal the sick, (Mark 3:13–19; [Mark 6:7]; Matthew 9:35; Luke 9:1 [Luke 10:1–20]; John 17:18–20, NASB). “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word” (John 17:18–20, NASB). The church must emulate the ministry of Jesus delineated in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 4:14–21). Via an integrative holistic approach, Larson and Larson assert, “We believe that what the ministry of Jesus reminds us is that people are a totality of mind, body, and spirit. Not method but redemptive concern lay at the heart of His ministry—concern that encompassed the whole man—the making of the whole man, whole.”<sup>92</sup> Jesus healed integratively, understanding the implications of illness beyond being simply biological, “The peoples of the world today are tired of an intellectualized culture which makes great discoveries, does fine things in theory, but has ceased to help them in leading their real

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<sup>92</sup> Larson and Larson, *A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus*, 72.

lives. We must stop thinking that the spiritual world has nothing to do with science, psychology, politics, commerce, or medicine.”<sup>93</sup>

### Therapeutic Community Environment

The therapeutic environment is indispensable for the church to establish itself as Jesus centered New Testament guided. It is a redemptive integrative healing community, ministering holistically to heal spirit, mind, body, and relationship. It is individual, marriage, and family, crisis intervention ready, able to refer effectively. The therapeutic-based congregation is developed as a supportive healing environment to provide a better quality of life to the new congregant and the member. The Therapeutic Church is a supportive congregation, one member to another, ministering to each other in times of individual, marriage, or family crisis. A community that is empathetic and ministering as opposed to services dependent or a dispenser of services. This project proposes that the church must be therapeutic to address the issues that arise within the congregation and the issues that bring people to church who need healing and are seeking healing. The lack of lay preparation and primary education in compassionate, empathetic love-based ministry is nonproductive.

House—Family First, Serving from the Home via Faith—Christ-Centered  
Redemptive healing begins at “Home” in a Christ-Centered household that is loving, compassionate, merciful, and grace driven. Scripture speaks to saving the believer and his household; the following three unique events all conclude with the saving of the household:

1. The context “Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well-spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was *divinely* directed by a holy angel to send for you *to*

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<sup>93</sup> Larson and Larson, *A Philosophy of Healing from the Ministry of Jesus*, 72.

*come to his house and hear a message from you*” (Acts 10:23, NASB). God’s message to Cornelius was Peter “will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (Acts 11:14, NASB).

2. The context Paul and Silas imprisoned the conversion of the Jailer: They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31, NASB).
3. “Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized” (Acts 18:8, NASB).

Fundamental to the believers is the salvation of self and family. It is the believer’s first ministry, the household. Paul instructs Timothy on the requirements for those aspiring pastoral ministry and the seal of approval is how they manage their households:

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.<sup>2</sup> An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,<sup>3</sup> not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.<sup>4</sup> *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity<sup>5</sup> (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),<sup>6</sup> *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.<sup>7</sup> And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Timothy 3:1–7, NASB).

The household first is also contextualized in the widow’s first responsibility. Paul is unequivocal concerning household first ministry failure to do so is to deny the faith:

Honor widows who are widows indeed;<sup>4</sup> but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.<sup>5</sup> Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.<sup>6</sup> But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.<sup>7</sup> Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.<sup>8</sup> But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:3–9, NASB).

### Jerusalem first...

In the book of Acts, Jesus tells the disciples, "...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NASB). Denoting they will be empowered to preach beginning in Jerusalem. In the Gospel of Luke chapter 24, verse 47, Jesus mandates it will come to pass "beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:17, NASB).

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:44–49, NASB).

In the larger spectrum, Jerusalem first, disciples your house first, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the world. The context for the individual is home first, community (local mission), the church of membership, and world missions (Great Commission):

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20, NASB).

The believers are priests first to their households and then to all the reachable in their life path.

### Person-Centered Church Community vs. Organizational-Centered Church

The church needs to have an organizational structure, but the organization's purpose is to serve the person, not the organization.

**Table 2.1. Church Serving Focus**

CHURCH SERVING FOCUS	
Organizational Centered	Person-Centered
Institutional submission	Kingdom submission
Works guided	Spirit guided (Heb 11:6, 11:1) Acts 15
The church-centered relationship Membership	The believer-centered Relationship Pew Neighbor
Numerically Focused “Mega Church”	Belonging—my family—Ownership
Leader healing—spirit, mind, body, and relational “Growing in authority.”	One another healing—spirit, mind, body, and relational “Growing in favor with God and men.”
Legalism: Law Driven	Spiritual: Grace Driven

Grace directed—Forgiveness-Enabling—Healing.

David Hawkins states, “One of the surest forms of healing comes through the act of forgiveness. I use the word *act* cautiously because forgiveness comes in stages, many of which are repeated over and over again.”<sup>94</sup> Matthew 28:15–35 denotes the importance of forgiveness within the church community; it is relational and intimate. Verses 15 through 22 are a process that directs the forgiver to forgive limitlessly (7 X 70), and verses 23 through 35 illustrate why:

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, “that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” <sup>22</sup> Jesus \*said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

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<sup>94</sup> David Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2006), 67.

<sup>23</sup> “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup> When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup> And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup> So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ <sup>30</sup> But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. <sup>31</sup> So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then summoning him, his lord *said* to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup> And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. <sup>35</sup> My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:22–35, NASB).

And as Jesus accustomed, he told the disciples a parable on forgiveness, teaching that it is mercy based and that forgiveness cannot be received if it is not given. It is not just forgiving to receive forgiveness. The parable ends with this phrase “if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” Peter denotes, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8, NASB). Reiterated by James “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19–20, NASB). *Covers a multitude of sins*, it is relationship reconciliation, it is forgiving the person not a number of sins. Restore the sinner and the multitude of sins committed are forgiven and the relationship is restored.

### Via the Priesthood of the believer

All believers are called to ministry. Robert Clark denotes, “The priesthood of the believer is called a royal priesthood by Peter, and John says: ‘He hath made us kings and priests unto God’ (Rev 1:6. NASB), a better translation is that ‘He hath made us a kingdom of priests.’”<sup>95</sup>

Clark reiterates:

Priesthood is for all believers. It is a birth relationship like the Aaronic priesthood. This cannot be said of any particular gift. For while all have gifts, not all have the same gifts. “Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? (1 Cor 12:4, 29, NASB). But all are priests with the right of exercising priestly functions. The New Testament denies the right of men to elect some of their fellows to a priestly class, with special privileges of access to God. We are a kingdom of priests with Christ our Great High Priest. We are a spiritual house, or family, an holy priesthood. This is true of the most humble believer as it is of the most instructed child of God. The priesthood of the believer is individual and personal. The church, as a corporate body is not said to be an holy priesthood. It is true that every believer is a living stone in the holy temple, and a priest; but he is a priest because he is a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ.”<sup>96</sup>

The believer must be disciplined beyond the dos and don’ts of denominational creeds. The challenge is to always place the well-being of the individual in need of intervention as the priority in the Ministry of All.

### Preparation of believers as a Priest

Basic skills in understanding the “who, what, when, how, where, and why ....” contextualized in compassion, empathy, and attentive listening. Compassion, empathy, and attentive listening are indispensable for effectively ministering one to another. First, ministering must be compassionate motivated, and observant of the need of the individual seeking help physical, mental, spiritual, and or relational. Jesus saw the true condition of the people and their need so must the believers within their calling to the priesthood of all (kingdom of priest). Jesus

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<sup>95</sup>Robert Clark, “The Imperial Priesthood of the Believer: (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9),” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 92 (October 1935): 444.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 445–46.

responded via compassion in particular situations and taught specifically in two parables about being moved by compassion:

- “Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36, NASB).
- “When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick” (Matthew 14:14, NASB).
- “When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34, NASB).
- “When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, ‘Do not weep’” (Luke 7:13, NASB).
- “But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion” (Luke 10:33, NASB).
- “So, he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20, NASB).

Jesus’ compassion is love based and can be defined as “Figuratively, the inward parts indicating the breast or heart as the seat of emotions and passions. In the NT, of the gentler emotions as compassion, tender affection indicating the mind, soul, the inner man.”<sup>97</sup>

The minister must be empathy driven. Empathy is defined as “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings,

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<sup>97</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).



thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.”<sup>98</sup> The believer, minister, the priest must be able to identify with the person seeking healing spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally. The minister must place himself symbolically in the predicament of the healing seeker to understand better the person’s situation. It is commonly said “place yourself in the shoes of the other” without succumbing to the issue, this is empathy. Listening is essential to empathetically minister.

Hawkins denotes that “Listening is one thing; soulful listening another thing entirely... Soulful listening involves hearing not only what is said... (*it*) involves taking the next step—actually putting yourself in other people’s shoes and helping them express what they may not be able to say. It is a powerful technique that will bring you much closer.”<sup>99</sup> Miller and Jackson assert that the “Reflective Listening” technique creates a safe place for mutual understanding for the speaker and the listener; it tells the listener:

- You are important.
- I respect you.
- I want to understand you.
- You have within you the resources and wisdom to find your own solutions.

(Facilitator in Action)

- Keep talking.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy>.

<sup>99</sup> David Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2006), 66.

<sup>100</sup> William R. Miller and Kathleen A. Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Englewoods, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 54-55.

Scripture denotes “*This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak” (James 1:19, NASB). Listening is the beginning of the healing process whether it is spiritual, emotional, physical, or relational. Reflective listening initiates healing. Miller and Jackson state that “Acceptance is the total attitude beneath the process of reflective listening, and it is central... To accept is not”<sup>101</sup> :

- To approve or disapprove
- To give advice or criticism
- To interpret or reassure
- To question or probe
- To be silent<sup>102</sup>

“Rather, to accept is to give all your attention and energy to the process of understanding what the person means and to reflect that meaning back to the person accurately. It is being open, allowing the other person to be as he or she really is, without using masks or filters. It is listening without judging.”<sup>103</sup> Careful, attentive, soulful, reflective listening assures the appropriate support will be provided.

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<sup>101</sup> Miller and Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*, 55.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

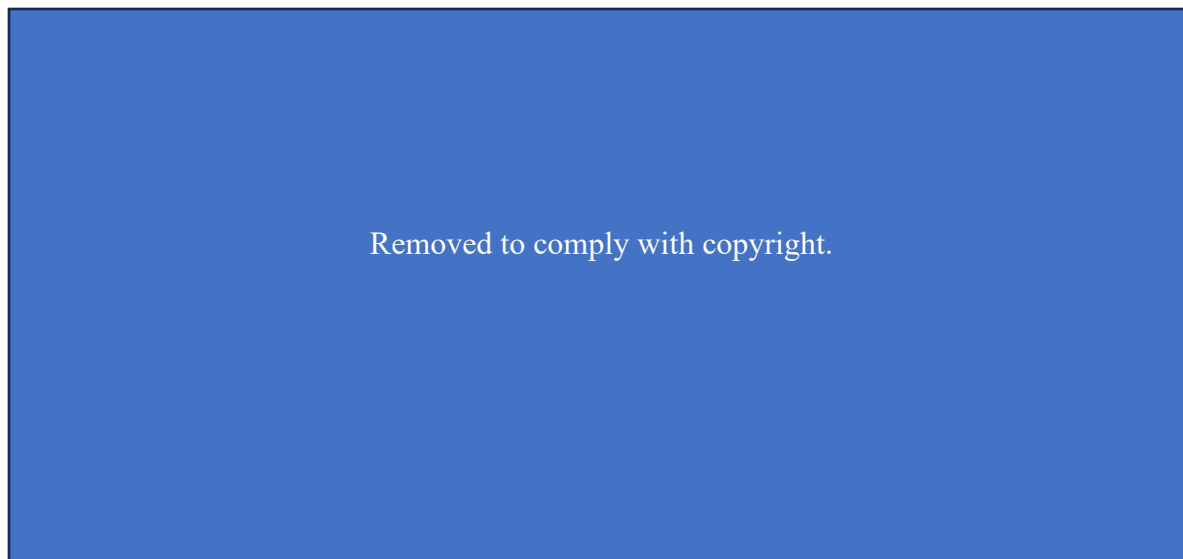


Figure 2.1 A model of communication <sup>104</sup>

It is important to understand the language used by the speaker. What the speaker means to communicate is very important. The speaker's descriptive language is influenced by the country of origin, culture, region, religion, education, language, idioms, etcetera. For effective and efficient help, the description of the need must be understood clearly. The attentive listener will ensure accurate information via a more precise interpretation of the language used and its context enabling effective and efficient intervention. John J. Pilch asserts:

The layperson uses an implicit cultural model in constructing an illness into a meaningful human reality. The symptoms presented are not a code but rather condense in an appropriate idiom a series of personal tragedies. ... In a society where kinship (real and fictive) is one of the two major formal social institutions, separation from the community is a personal tragedy indeed. The word "leprosy" and "leper" as used in the Bible certainly carries these meanings above all. ... Human sickness as a personal and social reality and its therapy are inextricably bound to language and signification.<sup>105</sup>

The minister and layperson (pew neighbor) must be compassionate, and empathetic, and have attentive listening skills that are indispensable in helping and healing those who seek assistance.

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<sup>104</sup> Miller and Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*, 57.

<sup>105</sup> John J. Pilch, *Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model*, 61.

### Supportive: Serve One another

The minister and layperson (pew neighbors) must be ready and willing to be supportive in the process of helping and healing in the church community environment. The pew neighbor in action is a supportive, encouraging, caring, understanding, helpful, and therapeutic (healing) resource in the church environment, not just someone sitting by another worshipper. Paul indicates that the believer "... through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13, NASB). Jesus according to Matthew asserted, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28, NASB). His actions demand believers do as He did:

Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them, (John 13, NASB).

Peter learned from Jesus' washing of his feet and the disciples' what serving meant and reiterates that "As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10, NASB).

"And who is my neighbor" (Luke 10:29, NASB)? Jesus responded with a parable "The Good Samaritan" it is about a man that is beaten and robbed and left for dead. A priest and a Levite pass him by, but the Samaritan "felt compassion" and did everything to heal and protect caring for him and assuming financial responsibility. Jesus asked, 'Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?' And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same'" (Luke 10:30-37, NASB). The pew neighbor serves through love and compassion.

### Ability to Refer Upon Reaching Personal Supportive Limitation

It is vital that the minister and layperson (pew neighbors) understand their abilities and limitations. This will enable the helper to refer the person helped to the appropriate resource, such as the pastor, counselor, social worker, medical doctor, etcetera. It is important that the minister or pew neighbor helping does not go beyond their knowledge and understanding of the situation at hand. If the minister or pew neighbor lacks knowledge and experience in a particular area: do not guess, do not experiment, and refer appropriately.<sup>106</sup>

### Ministering the Word to Heal

Preaching can hurt or heal the listener. Preaching must be therapeutic to the wounded, ministering integrative healing to the traumatized. Paul D. Duke explains it as follows:

How easy it is these days in worship to acquiesce to ‘the triumph of the therapeutic,’ to play a kind of psychosociological ping-pong in the pulpit with ‘the crisis of the week,’ offering therapeutic insights rather than ‘the breadth and length and height and depth’ of the Gospel... The most effective proclamation to the traumatized will be a discipline of regular preaching from the scriptures, expounding upon all the themes of the Gospel, and doing so with vigilant pastoral attention to the woundedness of the people addressed by the Word. Such preaching will have more power to heal because instead of being an immediate need scrambling for a relevant word, it will be a prior Word constantly touching immediate needs—and perhaps redefining what the immediate needs really are.<sup>107</sup>

The Therapeutic Church is an environment for healing the traumatized and not highlighting the traumas:

The shepherd performs not only the inclusive function of gathering, but the protective function of *guarding*. Week by week, preachers who are pastorally sensitive to traumatized people will take particular care to guard against doing them further harm in the sermon. It is well to ask of any sermon before preaching it, not only ‘What good will this do?’ but ‘What harm *could* this do to people already wounded?’ Not all sermons will do much ‘gathering’ of the traumatized, simply because not all scripture pertains to

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<sup>106</sup> Miller and Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*, 419.

<sup>107</sup> Paul D. Duke, “Preaching to The Traumatized,” *Faith and Mission* 03:1 (Fall 1985), 40.

woundedness. But on those Sundays when we do not call them out for healing, let us at least be certain that we do not run them over with insensitivity.<sup>108</sup>

The Therapeutic Church must emulate Jesus as Mark documents: “When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34, NASB). Preaching and teaching must be compassionate, protective, and care driven.

### Conclusion

The theoretical basis of this project is a result of the great divide existing in the church today in reference to healing in the extensive spectrum of the church. Healing has become a specialized or a particular target for a specific church. There are churches that use healing to attract believers and nonbelievers; one example is the faith and prosperity churches. Other churches provide counseling services: marriage counseling, and drug and alcohol addiction counseling; some specialize in pornography counseling, homosexuality counseling, fitness, healthy eating, etc., etc. This project’s theoretical proposal is based on the development of a therapeutic environment. This implies educating the church community in the art of helping each other in a therapeutic environment. An environment in which all are givers and receivers of healing in all dimensions, understanding that they are the priesthood of believers. Comparing this project's theoretical basis to service-focused churches will differentiate and demonstrate the need for a community that serves and loves one another as commanded in Scripture. Observing the difference between providing a service and being an instrument that serves in a Therapeutic Church community environment provides a place of healing accessible to all. A supportive place that heals in spirit, mind, body, and relationship.

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<sup>108</sup> Duke, “*Preaching to The Traumatized*,” 42.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The development and understanding of the need for a therapeutic environment in Nexus Point Church are based on (Luke 4:16, NASB). This is not unique to Nexus Point Church, as this project identifies circumstances that can also be supposed to churches in general. The aim is to develop a plan and strategy to create, nurture, and cultivate a Therapeutic Church environment. Therefore, it is fundamental to understand why a church needs to be therapeutic, defined in this project as an integrative healing community. It is not about being a church that provides services. The church provides services to its community, but is it healing it? Beyond providing services, Nexus Point Church must be a safe place where healing is all-inclusive in spirit, mind, body, and relationship via the ministry of all; that is the target. The church's principal focus is evangelism, which is fundamental to all churches. Many churches focus on prosperity, physical healing, or behavioral intervention in marriage, youth, and addiction counseling.

The healing of the soul is "salvation," but beyond evangelism's salvation focus, there is the need to prosper in all things. John's desire for his brother in Christ is still needed today "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2, NASB). The verse implies that the church needs to assume a more encompassing role in serving its members and the community via integrative healing that considers all dimensions of the person seeking help. As Paul states in 1 Thessalonians, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit, soul, and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He

who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (5:3–24, NASB). Holoteles “ὅλοτελής”<sup>1</sup> is translated as “entirely,” Paul does not refer to relationship here but is referencing the tridimensionality of an individual. But he does refer to fulfilling the Law in loving and serving one another (Galatians 5:12–14) and denotes the importance of relationships in Ephesians chapter five.

Pastoral care efforts are confronted with the problem of the church community not drawing members to serve one another as pew neighbors with the need to “love one another” as Jesus commanded. Members do not consider themselves to be a priest in the kingdom. The question is, are not all saved called on to be priests in the kingdom? Does ordination remedy this situation? Or did the reformers get it wrong, and the priesthood is a hierarchy maintaining authority as to who can minister to those in need? Establishing the priesthood of all is foundational in the body of Christ. It will enable the healing of one another, pew neighbor to pew neighbor, because all are ministers to each other. The foundation laid is love that serves as the apostle Paul delineated in Galatians. The challenge is love that is compassionate and empathetic, enabling serving one another in the church community.

This research aims to determine the need for a Therapeutic Church in a community that lacks an authentic healing environment and an integrative approach. There is an ongoing struggle within the ministry to serve the local church community first. Instruction in healing one another and becoming an integrative healing church community is essential. The quantitative focus on growth through attractiveness ignores the church’s and community’s internal needs and instead focuses on numbers. However, understanding that the problem is the need for an integrative

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<sup>1</sup> 3651. ὅλοτελής *holotelés*; gen. *holoteloús*, pl. *holoteleís*, masc.–fem., neut. *holotelés*, adj. from *hólos* (3650), all, the whole, and *télos* (5056), completion. All or the whole, completely or entirely (1 Thess. 5:23). Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000.



therapeutic environment will lead to a coherent, effective, and efficient vision of the path to pursue. The church must learn to heal within itself before healing beyond its walls. How can the church do for others what it cannot do for itself (the local church)? The church's mission is to go; Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone" (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:16–20, NASB). However, "beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47, NASB) applies to the local church in its surrounding community. The responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission without diligently serving Nexus Point Church and its community first contradicts the Therapeutic Church's calling to serve and love one another.

The restoration of the relationship with God and those called to redemption via the sacrifice of Jesus is the manifestation of God's Love for the sinners (John 3:16). God's initiative is to restore our relationship with Him "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19, NASB).

The book *The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness* denotes relationships as the core foundation for physical and mental wellness and long life. The information reaped from the most prolonged research conducted is that relationships are essential to happiness and provide assurance that can only exist in a safe place of personal connection with others:

Through all the years of studying these lives, one crucial factor stands out for the consistency and power of its ties to physical health, mental health, and longevity. Contrary to what many people might think, it's not career achievement, or exercise, or a healthy diet. Don't get us wrong; these things matter (a lot). But one thing continuously demonstrates its broad and enduring importance: good relationships. In fact, good relationships are significant enough that if we had to take all eighty-four years of the Harvard Study and boil it down to a single principal for living, one life investment that is supported by similar findings across a wide variety of other studies, it would be this good relationships keep us healthier and happier. Period. So if you're going to make that one

choice, that single decision that could best ensure your own health and happiness, science tells us that your choice should be to cultivate warm relationships.<sup>2</sup>

The research in the book *The Good Life* is compatible with the results expected via the Therapeutic Church proposed by the researcher in that good relationships are the foundation of a healing (therapeutic) environment.

The findings of this research give evidence to the need for a therapeutic environment within the church though the study is contextually done within Nexus Point Church; from the results, other congregations can extrapolate how to target and guide their churches to become a therapeutic community establishing it as an environment within their cultural inclusion.

Envisioning the church as a ministry of all in an integrative healing environment is at the center of the research project. It is challenging because societal healing is professionalized, specialized, and spiritually inefficient. Medical doctors for physical healing, psychiatrists and psychologists for behavior, to understand this better, the influence of society is alive and well in the church. Churches do not have the resources or cannot provide services. The issue is not whether the church cannot provide services to those in need. Instead, it is about creating a healing environment via members who are knowledgeable in providing support to others rooted in compassion, empathy, and support initiated via the relationships of the pew neighbors. Everyone in the church is a pew neighbor.

The problems are the absence of a therapeutic environment, the church's narrow understanding of the integrative therapeutic environment, and a commitment to serve each other via love. The lack of a therapeutic environment has created a gap between the will—the desire to serve and serving in a ministry that heals holistically. The problem is exacerbated by different

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Waldinger and Marc Shulz, *The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness* (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 2023), 10-11.

beliefs without in-depth theological integrative knowledge. Understanding that helping one another and caring for children, youth, men, women, older people, people experiencing homelessness, couples, and divorcees fulfills the commandment to love one another. Fulfilling the command to preach the gospel must be an internal practice and an external witness to those outside the church, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35, NASB). Those outside of the church community will witness what the gospel is. A congregation with an internal and external healing environment fulfills the great commission without neglecting the needs of the local church. The church’s vision is not “growth-only” but instead is focused on salvation into the kingdom based on a relationship with God and His people.

There is no “priesthood of all” focus which creates another issue, lack of training. The lack of training in supporting one another contradicts the Christian Church’s foundation as Jesus established in going the extra mile for one another. It refers to turning an adverse situation into a positive one. Going the extra mile is taken from what is experiencing an adverse or negative situation; Jesus denotes, “Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matthew 5:41, NASB). Jesus’ followers are to love unconditionally to the extreme of loving their enemy; within this context, Jesus reiterates, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies” (Matthew 5:43–44, NASB). If loving is expected of the believer regarding those considered enemies, how should they act towards their pew neighbors and their community? Discipleship in loving as Jesus loved is the answer. No commitment to serve one another in love indicates no appropriate discipleship or belief in the biblical foundation and accentuates self-centeredness. The need is discipleship founded on

compassionate and empathetic love for one another, understanding that the person is the essential aspect of the environment.

The research aims to determine the need to develop and establish a Therapeutic Church environment that provides healing in spirit, mind, body, and relationship through the “priesthood all.” Providing information for discipleship for developing a supportive therapeutic environment that listens, prays, and heals the spirit, mind, body, and relationship with God and others: parents, siblings, spouses, friends, colleagues, and the church family. The information taught prepares the individual members as facilitators of a healing environment via the ministry of all. These facilitators are called pew neighbors in this project. The pew neighbor is not a professional counselor, psychologist, or social worker. The pew neighbor is supportive, someone to lean on in times of crisis, or simply an attentive listener who creates a safe place for the person in need. The trained pew neighbor knows how and when to refer appropriately.

Knowing when to refer is important; the pew neighbor is a facilitator who recognizes his limitations and guides the person needing help to the appropriate person or place. The therapeutic congregation provides emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual first aid from one member to another. The Therapeutic Church is an environment that cares for its congregants via education, preaching, individualized pastoral care, and an integrative healing community via the “priesthood of all.” The Therapeutic Church can provide counseling as part of the therapeutic environment but is not a counseling center. Church congregants, members, and visitors confront stress, anxiety, and depression that can lead to spiritual, mental, and physical illness; the need for a therapeutic environment is unquestionable.

The Therapeutic Church is not a counseling center. It is an environment that heals based on the foundational principles of integrative redemption and complete healing of spirit, mind,

and body via a theological, spiritual, psychological, and sociological eclectic approach. It is developing an eclectic biblical integrative strategy and training in its use of Bible teaching in conjunction with the truth present in theology, psychology, sociology, medicine, and other sciences. The Therapeutic Church is an integrative healing church, ministering holistically in spirit, mind, and body; it is supportive, intervention-ready, and referral conducive. The Therapeutic Church develops as a supportive intervention and healing environment that betters the quality of life of the congregation and those who come seeking help in times of crisis. It is a supportive church that ministers one member to another during individual, marriage, or family crises. An empathetic church that ministers comprehensively and is not a mere dispenser of services. This project proposes that the church needs to be therapeutic to address the issues that arise within the congregation and the issues that bring people to the church seeking healing.

### **Intervention Design**

To establish a Therapeutic Church that heals spirit, mind, body, and relationship in an integrative environment. This project aims to educate the participants to become facilitators in a therapeutic setting. Teaching the church community that their function as ministers is to become facilitators of the grace of the gospel one to another as pew neighbors, named pew neighbors identified as the “Priesthood of All.” All are pew neighbors and priests, which are synonymous in this research project. Also, all are facilitators.

Participants are evaluated in their knowledge of a Therapeutic Church environment and trained in the ministry as a pew neighbor, facilitator, and “priesthood of all” to accomplish the goal. The pew neighbors sit by each other in church service, sometimes needing help, not professional help, mostly supportive assistance.

The pew neighbors training focuses on the eight essential principles outlined and documented in this research project. These principles are fundamental in establishing a Therapeutic Church environment, understanding Jesus' ministry, and the believer's ministry to all as an example to emulate, beginning with an introduction to Jesus' ministry in the context of Luke chapter four. Instruction in understanding the training of the disciples establishes the need to emulate an integrative healing approach to ministry from all within the church. It is an instruction that defines compassion that is empathically rooted in God's love that is grace-based. It postulates that distinction is visualized and assimilated via a pew neighbor and an ego-salvific perspective of a ministry-oriented life. Listening compassionately, effectively, and efficiently creates a safe place for the person seeking help, establishing the importance of presence and being supportive. Determined on the conviction of the calling to minister to all via "the Priesthood of All."

### Designing the Intervention

#### Selection and Training of the Proctor

The researcher selected and trained a Nexus Point church elder as the proctor in this research project. The selection of a proctor facilitates the research process, is monitored for timely completion independent of the researcher, and ensures that all documents used are appropriately distributed, collected, and stored. The proctor also avoids the researcher's influence in completing the initial survey/questionnaire. Assuring the researcher's influence results exclusively from lectures via the "8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church" after the presurvey/questionnaire.

Training consisted of recruiting the participants, understanding the survey/questionnaire, tabulating results, and ensuring participants complete the consent form before completing the

survey/questionnaire. The proctor's understanding of the questions facilitates him in assisting the participant who does not understand a question. The proctor will ensure that all documents provided to participants are completed and collected.

The proctor monitors the coordinated schedule and ensures participants' attendance for timely completion. The proctor will tabulate the results of both surveys/questionnaires, pre- and post-training with the researcher.

### Survey/questionnaire

It is a twenty-five-question document (Appendix C). Questions one through four provide the participant's demographic information:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Marital status
4. Education

Questions five through thirteen are related to the participant's relationship with Nexus Point Church:

5. Are you Christian?
6. Are you a church member?
7. Are you a member of Nexus Point Church?
8. How many years have you been a membership of Nexus?
9. How often do you attend church services?
10. Does your family attend with you?
11. Why did you start coming to Nexus Point Church?
12. Are you active in church ministry?

13. Do you believe in supporting the church financially?

Questions fourteen through twenty-five relate to the participant's knowledge of what a Therapeutic Church is:

14. A Therapeutic Church should have the following:

15. What do you dislike about church?

16. Who do you seek help from when needing advice?

17. When faced with a need or a crisis, who do you or would you approach for assistance?

18. What do you feel comfortable sharing?

19. Do you know what a Therapeutic Church is?

20. If you do not know what a Therapeutic Church is, would you like to know?

21. If you know what a Therapeutic Church is, select all that apply.

22. Man is spirit, mind, and body.

23. The church should minister to spirit, mind, body, and relationships.

24. The Therapeutic Church is about healing; select all that apply.

25. All believers are ministers to each other:

### Consent Document

The researcher developed a consent document per Liberty University IRB specifications to retrieve individual participant consent: Consent document (Appendix B), IRB Approval (Appendix F).



## Recruitment

The sampling process begins via the recruitment process. Prospective participants are members of Nexus Point Church. Members receive an invitation to participate via verbal announcements in church services and flyers handed out on Wednesday and Sunday services and posted on the church bulletin board for thirty days before beginning the study. The requirements for participation eligibility are announced verbally and in the flyer (Appendix A: Therapeutic Church Project Recruitment Flyer). The minimum age is eighteen, must be a member of Nexus Point Church and participate in 8-session training and pre- and post-training survey/questionnaires. The flyer discloses the purpose of the study “to determine the need to develop and establish a Therapeutic Church environment that provides healing in spirit, mind, body, and relationship through all members of the church” (Appendix A). Participation is voluntary participants can terminate participation at any time during the study. Those who choose to participate are notified of the scheduled date of participation. The proctor will communicate the information via verbal contact, text, and email via the participant’s preference.

## Assessment

The researcher created a training course, pre-training, and post-training survey/questionnaire for the evaluation. The data collection document is a printed survey/questionnaire consisting of questions about the individuals’ demographics, relation to the church, and their knowledge of a Therapeutic Church environment created by the researcher. The data collected is analyzed to determine the level of understanding of the Therapeutic Church environment of the participants considering their individuality and similitude per gender, age, marital status, years as a believer, and time as a member of Nexus Point Church. Participants complete the survey/questionnaire before completing the 8-Session Course and retake the

survey/questionnaire after training completion. Retaking the survey/questionnaire provides a comparative analysis of the participant's before and after training level of knowledge of what a Therapeutic Church is.

### Training

The 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church consist of two sessions per week for four weeks beginning the week after the completion of the information gathering via the survey/questionnaire. The proctor reminds the participants of the training start date as a follow-up one week before the scheduled training start date during the consent form and survey/questionnaire information gathering scheduled meeting.

### Participants

Respondents to verbal contacts, text messages, or emails requested are vetted to ensure participation eligibility as per recruitment requirements. The proctor verifies research project participants are members of Nexus Point Church and are eighteen or older and participating on a volunteer basis. They are not obligated to continue if they do not desire as indicated in the "Recruitment Flyer" requirements.

Participation Eligibility 1) age eighteen years or older 2) member of Nexus Point Church. Study Participation Requirements 1) complete pre-training in-person survey/questionnaire 2) participate in 8-session training twice a week for four weeks and 3) complete post-training in-person survey/questionnaire (see Appendix A).

### Location

The Church Fellowship Hall will be used to conduct the project research to provide a controlled environment with the selected proctor who will administer the Consent Document

(Form) and survey/questionnaire, ensuring privacy and uninfluenced data collection. The facility will be the location of the training.

The timeline for data collection and training is limited to 6 Weeks.

1. Week 1: completion of consent form survey/questionnaire pre-training
2. Weeks 2-5: eight training sessions, two per week, four weeks
3. Week 6: completion of survey/questionnaire post-training

### Data Collection and Evaluation

The researcher's role is limited in the first phase of the data collection process. On the scheduled date, the proctor ensures that the participants complete the consent form to participate and complete the survey/questionnaire: What is a Therapeutic Church? Documents will be provided and collected by the proctor to the participant. Participants complete the Consent Document (form) and the survey/questionnaire. The research project proctor gathers the completed forms. Upon completing the survey/questionnaire, the proctor will give the participants the 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church outline. Participants are informed of the start date of the course. The only source of data collection is the survey/questionnaire (see Appendix C) provided before and after the 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church: sessions are 90 minutes long (see Appendix E).

### Initial Meeting

Participants complete the consent document and pre-training survey/questionnaire and receive the course outline and start date.

Outline 8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church

Week One: Sessions 1 and 2

Session 1

Introduction to Jesus' Ministry Luke 4

1. Foundation the Word
2. Tempted
3. Anointed
4. Preaching
5. Healing in all dimensions of humanity

Spirit, mind, body, and relationship

Session 2

The Disciples' training (discipleship by Jesus)

1. Foundation the Word
2. Faith in emulating Jesus
3. Anointing
4. Authority
5. Preaching Salvation
6. Healing

Week Two: Sessions 3 and 4

Session 3

Am I Compassionate?

1. Defining Compassion

2. Jesus' Compassion
3. Emulating Jesus
4. Understanding our Neighbor's Situation "In the Shoes of My Neighbor"

#### Session 4

#### Am I Motivated to "Love" Neighbor?

1. The New Commandment
  - a. Discipleship Evidence
  - b. The Law Fulfilled in One Commandment

Week Three: Sessions 5 and 6

#### Session 5

#### Am I a Pew Neighbor? Vs. Am I Ego Salvific?

1. Who is My Pew-Neighbor?
2. Identifying the Who?
3. Establishing Relationships

#### Session 6

#### Am I Listening?

1. Hearing vs. Listening
  - a. Physiological
  - b. Psychological
2. Reflective Listening: understanding the communicator, indicating you understand by reaffirming what was said, repeating (word for word), paraphrasing (with similar terms), or reflecting (own words) the statement.

### 3. Soulful Listening

#### Week Four: Sessions 7 and Eight

##### Session 7

Am I Present and Supportive? “My Brother’s Keeper,” “Being a Facilitator”

1. I am Here for You.
2. You, Me, and God “A Safe Place”
3. Supportive Guidance
4. Referral “understanding our limitations as a facilitator.”

##### Session 8

The Priesthood of All

1. Kingdom of Priests; a nation of holy priests.
2. All are Called to Minister to Each Other. How? Serving, forgiving, and supportive; creating a safe environment (place) for each other
3. All are Called to Preach. How? “Great Commission”
4. All are Called to Heal Through Faith Guided by the Holy Spirit in Spirit, Mind, Body, and Relationship. How? By emulating the Ministry of Jesus.

##### Final Meeting

The final meeting is after the 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church for completion of the post-training survey/questionnaire. The project researcher and proctor will complete a tabulation of results to compare the before and after training survey/questionnaire completed by the participants. Diagrams and charts will illustrate results: quantified per question

and comparative graphs. The intervention design for this project does not include the use of recording devices.

## **Implementation of Intervention Design**

### **Initial Meeting Week 1**

Twenty-three Nexus Point Church members attended and signed the attendance sheet. The proctor gave instructions for completing the documents. The proctor explained the reason for the Consent Form and reiterated that participation was voluntary, and the individual could terminate participation at any time during the process, as announced and offered through the recruitment flyer. All participants met the Recruitment Flyer (see Appendix A) criteria for participation:

1. Age eighteen years or older
2. Nexus Point Church member
3. Study participation requirements:
  - a. Complete pre-training in-person survey/questionnaire
  - b. Participate in 8-session training via attendance twice a week for four weeks.
  - c. Complete post-training in-person survey/questionnaire
4. Voluntary participation

The proctor gave attendees the Consent Form to complete; upon completion, the proctor collected the consent form and gave the participants the survey questionnaire to complete. The survey/questionnaire does not solicit names, addresses, or personal information to ensure confidentiality. A number was assigned to the pre- and post-training evaluations to compare learning changes before and after training. The consent document was signed and stored separately from the survey/questionnaire and scanned into two encrypted files to comply with the



IRB rule to save research results for three years. The participants agreed and completed the consent form and survey/questionnaire.

### Training Weeks 2 through 5

The training session will consist of a lecture and question and answer section. The 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church is designed to train all church members in their roles in the therapeutic environment proposed in this project. Through the eight sessions journey, members learn the fundamentals of ministry delineated in Luke chapter four, verses 14 through 21. The first two sessions establish the foundations of the therapeutic ministry, learning from Jesus and emulating Him. Seeing, contemplating, and imitating Jesus is the focus of a Therapeutic Church environment to emulate His compassionate, empathetic ministry, identifying with the situation of the people.

### Session 1

The focus and goal of this session is for participants to learn and understand the ministry of Jesus as He introduced, initiated, and practiced it documented in (Luke 4:14–21, NASB).

#### Jesus' Ministry

The Introduction to Jesus' ministry in Luke chapter four is not just about highlighting Jesus' ministry. It is about understanding his ministry. It illustrates to the church Jesus' focus on the church. He is present and active in the synagogue. The context is Jesus' temptation after his baptism, preaching, and teaching in other Galilea cities in the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke documents that Jesus was tempted and anointed to preach and heal in all dimensions of humanity, healing spirit, mind, body, and relationship with God. Luke chapter four explains Jesus' ministry in a biblical prophetic context. Jesus read and ascribed the fulfillment of Isaiah

61, verses one and two, to himself in the synagogue in Nazareth, ““Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.””

5. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
6. Because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.
7. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
8. And recovery of sight to the blind,
9. To set free those who are oppressed,
10. To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19, NASB).

Jesus healed the sick, freed the possessed, and announced the kingdom’s closeness to, amidst, and in the people. This session aimed to visualize and understand the ministry Jesus would delegate to his disciples and church throughout the centuries after his ascension to heaven. Emphasis was made on Jesus’s ministry, not on his act of salvation. Questions and comments from the participants enabled them to understand the importance of distinguishing between Jesus’ ministry and his salvific action in accomplishing the session’s goal. Jesus declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21, NASB). As He did, the church must do. That is the calling.

As a result, participants assimilated this session’s connection to their calling and the need to emulate Jesus’ ministry as the church’s ministry for today. An open discussion on the teaching followed the lecture. Questions revealed a preoccupation with physical and emotional healing and the difficulty of restoring relationships, especially with God, through preaching to the “poor.” What poor? In spirit or physical need? The participants manifested that the spiritual was more readily resolved though it was strongly implied that it was connected to all dimensions of healing. Why don’t we see physical healing as often as in the Bible? Can we differentiate

between psychological illness and demon possession? The participants need to continue studying ministering based on the different healing needs associated with society documented in (Luke 4:18–19, NASB) to enable integrative healing.

## Session 2

The focus and goal of this session are for participants to learn and understand their calling to the church's ministry contextualized in the ministry of Jesus, emulating His ministry today as He introduced, initiated, and practiced it documented in (Luke 4:14–21, NASB).

### The Church's Ministry

Ministry that is comparative to Jesus' ministry is the goal, as He did, the contemporary church must do. Jesus' ministry is the example the church must emulate. The emphasis of this session was Jesus' training of the disciples' it was on-the-job training. A Therapeutic Church environment is local and extended to the community through the ministry of the priesthood of all. Jesus prioritizes sending the twelve and the seventy to the community of Israel:

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give'" (Matthew 10:1, 5–8, NASB).

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:1–2, 17–20, NASB).

Jesus prepared the disciples and the church to:

1. Receive the Spirit
2. to be anointed to preach the gospel to the poor
3. to proclaim release to the captives
4. to restore the sight of the blind
5. to set free the oppressed
6. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord

Emulating Jesus, believing in Him, and faith in the Word is today's disciple's foundation: believing "every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3, NIV). Responding, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone'" (Luke 4:4, NASB). The Holy Spirit empowers the church's ministry to preach the gospel of salvation, the Cross, the forgiveness of sins, and God's grace through the anointing, in authority, given in Jesus' name. The disciples were not able to rebuke a demon from a man. The devil tested the disciples' faith, and the man's father complained to Jesus. "I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here" (Luke 9:40–41, NASB). The issue is not believing; the disciples' faith was tested.

A participant asked, does God tests us? The discussion clarified that the fulfillment of ministry calling depends on believing in God and faith in Scripture. That faith is tested by Satan, not by God. Satan tempted Jesus, and Jesus responded, citing Scripture, "It is written." That must be the answer of his disciples today as it was yesterday. The test is to believe at all times and in all circumstances; it is to live in dependence on the Father, in the trust of Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit. God is not in the business of testing the faith of His church. Instead, faith is

tested through Satan's temptation and not believing in Scripture. The devil creates circumstances that will demand a decision to abandon or persevere in faith. That is why the apostle James says, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-3, NASB). Faith is tested via temptation or doubt, not by God.

In conclusion, "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone" (James 1:13, NASB). Is the church tested, or is it empowered? The church, God's disciples, are empowered and constantly tested through trials, tribulations, conflicts, finances, illnesses, and relationships: marriage, parental, filial, work, and as pew neighbors in the local congregation. Does God need to test us to approve us? No. Why test us if He empowered us all with "a measure of faith" (Romans 1:23, NASB) to accomplish his calling? And "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thessalonians 5:24, NASB).

Through personal testimonies, participants learned, understood, and affirmed their calling to the church's ministry. The session exceeded the time allotted to the participants as most wanted to share their personal experiences as they contextualized their experiences in Jesus's ministry and affirmed that emulating His ministry today is fundamental as they made the connection.

Goal accomplished; the participants understood that their calling to the church's ministry is to be contextualized in the ministry of Jesus, as He introduced, initiated, and practiced it, documented in (Luke 4:14-21).

### Session 3

The goal of this session is for participants to understand that love, as defined biblically, is a lot more encompassing than an attempt to demonstrate kindness, care, etcetera. Defined as compassion that is empathy translated into action, “manifested compassion” is visible and palpable by the giver and receiver; Jesus illustrated it through the “Parable of the Samaritan” to establish who is the neighbor served via mercy and grace, the ultimate expression of love.

Am I Compassionate?

“To answer the question, Am I Compassionate? Compassion must be defined in a biblical context as the “Quality of showing kindness or favor, of being gracious, or of having pity or mercy. In the Bible, God is described as like a compassionate father to those who revere him (Ps 103:13, NASB). Jesus Christ exemplified God’s compassion in His preaching and healing (Matt 9:36; 14:14), in his concern for the lostness of humanity (Luke 19:41), and finally in His sacrifice on the cross (Rom. 5:8). The church is to demonstrate compassion as one facet of the love Jesus commanded (Matthew 5:4–7; John 13:34; James 2:8–18; 1 John 3:18, NASB). In scriptural usage compassion is always both a feeling and the appropriate action based on that feeling.”<sup>3</sup>

Understanding Your Neighbor’s Situation “In the Shoes of My Neighbor”

In the Epistle to the Colossians, there is an example of biblical compassion that denotes empathy, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity”

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<sup>3</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Compassion,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 504.

(Colossians 3:12–14, NASB). A definition that aligns with the above text is “compassion, a deep awareness of and sympathy for another’s suffering. It is to feel deeply or viscerally, to yearn, have compassion, pity.”<sup>4</sup>

In *The Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, “Empathy is often defined as understanding another person’s experience by imagining oneself in that other person’s situation: One understands the other person’s experience as if it were being experienced by the self but without the self.” *The Cambridge Dictionary* defines empathy as “The ability to share someone else’s feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in the person’s situation.” The *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* and the *Cambridge Dictionary’s* definition of empathy makes imagining the feeling or situation central. However, with Jesus, it is different because He knew the real emotions and circumstances of the people he approached or approached Him. “...He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man” (John 2:24–25, NASB).

### Jesus’ Compassion

The session teaching focused on Jesus feeling compassion which denotes empathy resulting in caring and ministering to those in need. The following Bible verses exemplify Jesus’ compassionate, empathetic, and manifested love:

- Matthew 9:35–36
- Matthew 14:14
- Matthew 15:32
- Matthew 18:27–28
- Matthew 20:32–34

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<sup>4</sup> Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*.

- Mark 1:40–41
- Mark 6:34
- Mark 8:1–3
- Mark 9:22–24
- Luke 7:13–16
- Luke 10:33–35
- Luke 15:20

### Emulating the Compassion of Jesus

To emulate Jesus is to love as he loved and commanded, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35, NASB). To “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32, NASB). And being “...harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8–9, NASB). In summary, to love as he loved.

As a result of participating in this session, participants via the review and focus on Jesus’ compassion volition as documented in the Gospels, were impacted in their awareness of a love that flowed from within, a force that can only be a product of the Holy Spirit. It is not motivated because it is a commandment, but it is the inner flowing of the love received, giving what was given to the children of God and receiving what God receives. God is loved because He loves first. The takeaway from this session is better understood via a participant’s statement, “God is moved by mercy and grace by compassion through empathy in Jesus; God is love and is driven



by who He is because He loved us, He gave Jesus in sacrifice for us.” In conclusion love is the fruit of love, not an obligated action.

#### Session 4

The focus of this session is to define love as defined by Jesus, evidencing his discipleship as the motivation within the body of the church, serving as Jesus through love, compassionately, and empathetically. Understanding that love for others first is central to His kingdom through doing as He taught, identifying who my neighbor is, and through love serving my neighbor.

Am I Motivated to “Love” Neighbor?

The New Commandment and Discipleship Evidence

It begins with Jesus, “A new commandment I give unto you, love one another; As I have loved you, may you also love one another. By this all shall know that you are my disciples, if ye have love for one another” (John 13:34–35, KJV). First Corinthians chapter twelve verse thirty-one, the last verse in the chapter says, “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.” The more excellent way is to love First Corinthians chapter thirteen. However, Paul states in Galatians, “For all the law in this one word is fulfilled: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Galatians 5:14, KJV). The person loves God because God loved the person first (1 John 4:19); it is the reciprocal response to God’s initiative. The centrality of this session is that love is the driving force of all actions in the Therapeutic Church environment.

PowerPoint was used (Appendix G).

English Version: Spanish Version was used during training; the participants were all Hispanics, and Spanish is their primary language.

The impact of this teaching was made evident in the dynamic discussion of the participants via active group participation defining love commenting on the PowerPoint

presentation. The participants were divided into groups of approximately five. The question postulated to motivate the group discussions was simple, why is love for one another the New Commandment? The small group leaders gathered to give a global response to the twenty-three participants. The agreed answer was that although Agape Love to most was not possible, the commandment to love one another as self is only genuinely defined by practice through faith manifested by the Holy Spirit in the believer.

### Session 5

This session focuses on defining the concept of pew neighbor and ego-salvific and how they facilitate or impede ministering within a Therapeutic Church environment. The comparison is to create self-evaluation and self-identification and better understand the significance of serving others first.

Am I a Pew Neighbor? Vs. Am I Ego Salvific?

Who is a pew neighbor?

A pew neighbor is a person (member or visitor) who sits next to another congregant. The term pew neighbor denotes individuals sharing proximity and developing a relationship that fosters trust when an individual requests or shares advice. A pew neighbor is or can become an intimate acquaintance in a crisis. A pew neighbor can be a Samaritan, an unknown person who enters your environment, in or outside the place of worship. “And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” (Luke 10:27–29, NASB)? Jesus answered by illustrating the parable of the Good Samaritan, the manifestation of love for the person needing assistance, and how the church should act within a therapeutic environment (Luke 10:30–37).

Who is my neighbor? It is the pew neighbor, the one in need, and the one that helps. Being a pew neighbor is about relationship building via serving the person, known or unknown, which is the most important thing for God; to love first is to be loved in return.

**Note:** The Pew Neighbor is in and outside the meeting place.

Who is the Ego-salvific Believer?

Am I Ego-salvific? The ego-salvific believer understands salvation is self-centered, accomplished via self-effort by works, where the individual focuses on securing salvation through “dos and don’ts” believed to be necessary to ensure non-condemnation. This ego-salvific believer’s focus is not losing their salvation. The ego-salvific believer is law focused, not grace focused.

Beyond the fact that the Ego-Salvific believer is self-focused, not others-focused, is its comparative value within this context. What motivates him to serve? In contrast to why a pew neighbor serves. The need to refocus the church to serve others via love for one another obligates self-evaluation, necessary for self-definition in the context of the Therapeutic Church environment. The needed comparison is demonstrated by comparing the spirit-led ministry versus the law-focused ministry denoted in 2 Corinthians 3 to answer the questions: Am I Ego-Salvific, or Am I a Pew Neighbor?

Identifying the Who?

First Corinthians chapter three is the contrast comparison of life and ministry in the old and new covenant. The ego-salvific believer is attached to the old covenant. The pew neighbor is part of the new covenant ministry defined in (2 Corinthians 3:1-18, NASB). The pew neighbor, as part of the “priesthood of all,” belongs to the ministry of the Spirit. The juxtaposition of the verses facilitates understanding why the church must adhere to the new covenant to live and

minister in the Spirit. The following illustration described the basis for spirit-led ministry to the participants as conditional to being a pew neighbor in a Therapeutic Church environment.

Chart New Covenant Ministry vs. Old Covenant Ministry. The chart was used for teaching Grace-focused pew neighbor versus Law-focused ego-salvific believer (see Appendix).

The ego-salvific believer is not in agreement with living in freedom from the ministry of condemnation, “But we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be shut and all the world may be under the judgment of God; for by the works of the law no human being shall be justified before him; for through the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19–20, NASB). The apostle Paul reiterates that if the veil of the old covenant remains, it can only be removed by Jesus. “Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Jesus Christ, to be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16, NASB). The session concluded with the participants responding adamantly convicted, affirming to pursue a Spirit-led life and participate in ministry and stating the need to be part of a Therapeutic Church environment. The session result is an emotional response and is impacting as the participants self-evaluate via the 2 Corinthians chapter three study. One expression that stood out was, “I never thought I was Ego-salvific, but I was because I am not living a Spirit-led life as I am so concerned continually law conscience; I am troubled because I struggle in my faith, always thinking I must be doing something wrong” (paraphrase of participant’s statement). Many in the group agreed, identified with the participant, and affirmed their need to refocus and be part of a therapeutic environment. The researcher understands from this lesson that being an Ego-Salvific, law-focused individual impedes, and being Pew-Neighbor, Spirit-focused facilitates the development and sustains ministry in a

Therapeutic Church environment. This session indicated that participants self-evaluated, self-identified, and better understood the significance of serving others first, per the discussion and agreement of the participant's statement above. This is foundational in a Therapeutic Church environment where healing is integrative, received, and given by pew neighbors. All are committed to becoming pew neighbors in Nexus Point Church.

### Session 6

The goals for this session are for participants to learn and acquire the practical skills of listening effectively to efficiently assist appropriately in times of need and ensure excellent, understandable communication. Training focus:

- Importance of Listening
- The difference between Hearing and Listening
- Listening Techniques:
  - Reflective Listening
  - Soulful Listening.

Am I Listening?

The importance of listening was the focus of this session. This session was intense, as most participants did not know how to listen effectively. Learning to listen makes an effective facilitator and supportive pew neighbor. People need and want to be listened to, especially when needing advice in a crisis, an indecisive situation, or simply wanting to be part of the conversation.

Hearing vs. Listening and Physiological vs. Psychological

Differentiating hearing from listening is very important. The session began defining and contrasting hearing and listening. Hearing was defined as physiological and listening as

psychological. Listening to people is psychological; it is paying attention to understand what is said. Hearing assimilates sounds, and listening is intentional attention focusing on sounds, voices, noises, etcetera.

Reflective Listening: understanding the communicator, indicating you understand by reaffirming what was said, repeating (word for word), paraphrasing (with similar terms), or reflecting (saying in your own words) the statement. Attentive listening lets the other person know “I am listening, I understand, I am understanding”. Role-playing was used to teach reflective listening skills developing the ability to listen attentively, enabling the participant to reflect through repetition, paraphrasing, or in their own words, what was said accurately to the person communicating, indicating I listened and understood.

According to David Hawkins<sup>5</sup>, Listening to the soul demands our full attention and requires the listener to seek to understand where the other person’s expression comes from. Listening is not a passive process; it is very active. When people really listen, they validate the person’s right to their perception. Listening is one thing; soulful listening is another thing entirely...soulful listening to the soul involves hearing what is said and what is not said.”<sup>6</sup> It is reading between the lines. Then you ask, “Why do they say what they say? What is unfinished in their heart?”<sup>7</sup> “Soulful listening involves taking the next step—actually putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and helping them express what they may not yet be able to say. It is a

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<sup>5</sup> David Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription for Healing a Hurting Relationship* (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon, 2006), 66.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription*, 66.

powerful technique that will bring you much closer.”<sup>8</sup> It brings a person closer to another person and creates a safe and trusting relationship.

The first part of the session was the lecture on the importance of listening; the central question to answer is, am I listening? Goal accomplished by emphasizing the importance of listening, defining “Hearing vs. Listening,” and teaching Reflective and Soulful Listening techniques. The participants understood the importance of listening and learned the difference between hearing and listening. Participants learned and role-played reflective and soulful listening techniques. However, following up with more training in this area is necessary. The time allotted for the session was insufficient for all participants to practice the techniques. The integration of role-playing was very effective and needed to be practiced and experienced by all.

#### Session 7

This session aims to understand the importance of being supportive, protective, and caring by being present. The three questions to answer:

- Am I supportive?
- Am I my “Brother’s Keeper”?
- Am I a facilitator?

The answer to these questions begins with first answering Am I present?

#### **Am I Present and Supportive? “My Brother’s Keeper,” “Being a Facilitator”**

#### **I am Here for You**

“Am I my brother’s keeper” (Genesis 4:9, NASB) was Cain’s response to God. He was referring to not caring, not loving, and being jealous for not doing what was right. Rather than a

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<sup>8</sup> Hawkins, *The Relationship Doctor’s Prescription*, 66.

harmful statement, it can be used positively. The believer is present when needed in spirit, mind, and body; sometimes, presence can be on the phone, Zoom, etc., although physical presence is more powerful. Nothing is more important than being present with the people one relates to in need. People live in an environment that is becoming increasingly isolated physically. Today the phone separates people from each other; communication has become short texting unless one is Facetiming because social media has captivated most people's attention. A person can have a medical appointment or a counseling session on a phone. Churches are providing services online and pastoral counseling via Zoom and other applications. The questions are, Are you here for me? Am I here for you? "Can you see me?" Body language and demeanor are nonvisual in non-presence communication. Though anger and screaming can be expressed in text using capital letters. The need to be present is beyond physical presence; it is what physicality brings to the environment, body language, contact, and voice.

Believer's Biblical Support: Am I here for you?

The researcher reviewed the following Bible verses with the participants, and their commentaries enriched the verses' applicability in ministry and their importance in knowing and understanding as pew neighbors their context in all relationships and in the Therapeutic Church environment:

- Proverbs 27:17 "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (NASB).
- Hebrews 10:24–25 "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (NASB).
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (NASB).



- Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity” (NASB).
- Romans 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor” (NASB).
- Romans 12:15 “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (NASB).
- 1 Corinthians 12:26 “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (NASB).
- Hebrews 3:13 “But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (NASB).
- Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (NASB).
- Galatians 6:2 “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ” (NASB).
- Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (NASB).
- John 13:34 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (NASB).

## Present in Suffering and Illness

The pew neighbor will be present and supportive among the suffering, the cheerful, and the sick. James chapter five, verses thirteen through sixteen, are a guide to those in need to request ministrations:

Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much (James 5:13–16, NASB).

And those called are to be present, attentive, and intentional, knowing the effectiveness of praying in the name of Jesus to the Father in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

## You, Me, and God “A Safe Place”

Supportive and restorative presence is delineated in Matthew:

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst (Matthew 18:15–20, NASB).

Being in the present moment, or the “here and now,” means that one is aware and mindful of what is happening in the moment. In this context, being present means listening to others, being aware of your surroundings, and engaging with those around you. For this reason, Jesus’ instruction is essential in restoring one who sins. Jesus establishes a restoration process first one-on-one, second two or three-on-one, and third to the church if unsuccessful, let the sinner suffer the consequences of not receiving rehabilitation. Throughout the process, the sinner

is provided with a safe place of non-disclosure enabling repentance and confession. Love is the foundation of this vital process following Jesus' most excellent instruction "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35, NASB).

Being present was defined in this session via the question, "Am I present?" being supportive, your brother's keeper, and present in suffering and illness, part of the lecture/discussion, developed well. However, in "You, Me, and God 'A Safe Place,'" the Bible context used Matthew chapter eighteen, verses fifteen through twenty, became difficult for the participants as they debated the issue of confidentiality. Participants agreed that not sharing the person's guilt in the confessor's restoration process is fundamental, with exceptions. The exceptions emerged due to the severity of the sins exposed, what if it is domestic violence, child abuse, murder, etcetera. What about applying the priestly vow of secrecy vs. evangelical commitment to confession and restoration? The consensus reached among the participants was that there are sins that cannot remain secret and must be revealed or reported legally appropriately when the life and well-being of an individual are at risk, whether it is of others or personal (e.g., a suicidal person). The consensus among the participants is that being present, supportive, a brother's keeper, and a facilitator to the person in need or crisis, with the exceptions of actions that put at risk or endanger others or self.

### Session 8

The focus of this session is for participants to learn that all are priests in the church and are called to minister to one another. Questions to answer: Am I a priest? Why?

The Priesthood of All

The priesthood of all is God's "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, NASB). All are called to minister to each other. How? As reviewed in session seven, serving, forgiving, and being supportive, creating a safe environment (place) for each other. All are called to preach. How? The Great Commission is the call to all believers to share the Gospel as commanded by Jesus:

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:16–20, NASB).

All are called to heal through faith guided by the Holy Spirit in spirit, mind, body, and relationship. How? Emulating Jesus' ministry per (Luke 4:14–21, Luke 9:1–6, Matthew 10:5–15, and Mark 6:7–13, NASB) document that Jesus "called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing."

We are all one "Body" in Christ 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

All believers are part of the body of Christ yesterday, today, and tomorrow until He returns: "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13, NASB).

### **All are called to minister to one another. How? 1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The Most Excellent Way 1 Corinthians 12:31-1 Corinthians 13:13

“Seek therefore the best gifts. But I show you an even more excellent way. “And now faith, hope and love remain, these three; But the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13, NASB). In summary, believers are called “kings and priests” and are a priesthood to serve the church and community, as the apostle Paul denotes in Galatians chapter five verse thirteen, “serve one another through love.” The session’s goal was met as participants learned that they all are priests in the church and are called to minister to one another. Question answered: Am I a priest? Yes. Participants biblically understood that they are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9, NASB). As chosen participants are all one “body” in Christ, all are called to minister to one another. Why? The Great Commission is a calling to the body of Christ, the church, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:16–20, NASB). The authority is extended from then and them to the church today and those in the church of tomorrow “even on to the end of the age.”

This calling is by Paul denoted as “a better way.” The Holy Spirit empowers all through the gifts for the church’s ministering to edify one another, as indicated in First Corinthians chapter twelve:

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good <sup>11</sup> But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills ... <sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and *yet* has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>25</sup> ... but *that* the parts may have the same care for one another. <sup>31</sup> ... And yet, I *am going to* show you a far better way." Love. Without love, the greatness of the gifts to serve is null, "but do not have love, it does me no good" (1 Corinthians 13:1–3, NASB).

1 Corinthians 13:13 states, "But now faith, hope, *and* love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

This project's goal is for the church to develop into a therapeutic environment in serving one another through love, as indicated by Paul "serve one another through love" (Galatians 5:13, NASB). And denoted in Hebrews chapter six verse ten, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, by having served and by *still* serving the saints." The motivation is love as the foundation to serve.

#### Final Meeting Week 6

The research project participants are all members of Nexus Point Church. The 8-session course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church began as planned and completed as programmed, two sessions per week through four consecutive weeks. Upon course completion, the proctor provided a survey/questionnaire to the participants, an exact duplicate of the initial survey/questionnaire given before the training and collected the completed form. The repeated survey/questionnaire completed by the participants provided data for a comparative analysis of before and after data collected to evaluate whether training increases understanding and knowledge of a Therapeutic Church environment. The lectures were dynamic, ending with question-and-answer sessions. The perception from the group and the researcher is that very much was learned, increasing the knowledge of those who participated. However, the tabulations

and comparative analysis of the survey/questionnaires will reveal whether significant improvement resulted from the 8-session course.

In his book *Qualitative Research*, Tim Sensing provides four triangulation methods that enhance the researcher's ability to interpret the data collected: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation. The researcher will use data triangulation comparing data from before and after the survey/questionnaires and training, "8 sessions course: Elements of the Therapeutic Church" participant feedback. By comparing the pre and post, survey/questionnaires, participants' feedback from lectures, and the researcher's observation and evaluation of questions and answers, group debates, and discussions, within the sessions, a more precise interpretation of the data collected was facilitated. The triangulation provided participants' knowledge level before training, the level of knowledge after training, and notes from training sessions offered insight into training effectiveness. The notes provided the researcher's "in the moment" perspective of participants' interaction with the lectures, discussions, and group debates that emerged during training sessions.

Other members and newcomers who participated in the 8-Session Course did not complete the before survey/questionnaire. These participants were allowed to receive the lectures but were not included in the comparative analysis. These course participants' data must be considered separately from those that completed the pre-training and post-training survey/questionnaire.

The results for the surveys/questionnaires before and after the 8-Session Course were tabulated. The participants that completed the 8-Session Course increased their knowledge of what a Therapeutic Church environment is and its need in Nexus Point Church. Significant

improvement in understanding a Therapeutic Church environment will provide the need for developing discipleship based on integrative healing in the church community.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The pre- and post-training survey/questionnaire supporting this research project was disseminated to participants aged 18 - 60+ years old to measure their understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment. The “Therapeutic Church” research project indicates the plausibility of developing integrative healing in Nexus Point Church. The perspective of the project’s participants enables the development of the “Therapeutic Church.” A combination of demographic, multiple-choice, and written responses compose the twenty-five questions of the survey/questionnaire. The quantified and comparative results from the pre and post survey/questionnaires are documented via graphs and interpretive comments as concluded by the project’s researcher. The first four questions, Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4, are related to the demographics of the participants: age, gender, civil status, and education; questions Q5 through Q13 concern the participants’ religious affiliation and relationship to Nexus Point Church. Questions Q14 through Q25 delineate the participants’ understanding, disposition, and perspective and define Nexus Point Church’s therapeutic paradigm. Footnotes document the raw data collected and reported in tables and graphs per question.

In summary, the twenty-five-question survey/questionnaire consisting primarily of qualitative and multiple-choice questions was utilized to facilitate understanding of the participants’ beliefs, perceptions, and suppositions regarding a Therapeutic Church environment. In Chapter 3, data for each question was compiled and categorized as pre- and postsurvey/questionnaire questions to identify beliefs, perceptions, and suppositions about

members who participated in the thesis project and their unique affiliation with Nexus Point Church. Individual responses for each question were then categorized, reviewed, and evaluated, allowing the researcher to form presuppositions. Finally, the study compared participants' beliefs, perceptions, and presuppositions concerning their pre- and post-answers to the survey/questionnaire.

### Data Results and Analysis Part I: Demographics

Q1 through Q4 address participants' demographic differences in age, gender, civil status, and education. The data collected provides this research project with an amplified view of the disposition of participants in different age groups, genders, education, and civil status.

**Table 4.1. Q1: Age–Q2: Gender**

<b>N=23</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Gender by Yrs.</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-21 Years	4	17.4%	2 Males 2 Females
	22-30 Years	2	8.7%	1 Male 1Female
	31-44 Years	13	56.5%	6 Males 7 Females
	45-59 Years	2	8.7%	1 Male 1 Female
	60+ Years	2	8.7%	2 Females
<b>Gender</b>	Male	10	44%	
	Female	13	56%	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>N = 23</b>		<b>100%</b>	

Table 4.1 combines data collected from questions Q1 and Q2 to highlight participants per age and gender. The table facilitates a specific view of gender per age group.<sup>1</sup> It Delineates the amplitude of the participants revealed through age and gender, revealing a more inclusive participation. That data notes that 83% of participants are between eighteen and forty-four, which denotes a young group in the research project. Male and female distribution is, on average, per age group fifty percent. The exception is two females above sixty. The age and gender distribution are significant because it provides a diversified sample of the participants enabling a path to change needed to develop a Therapeutic Church environment.

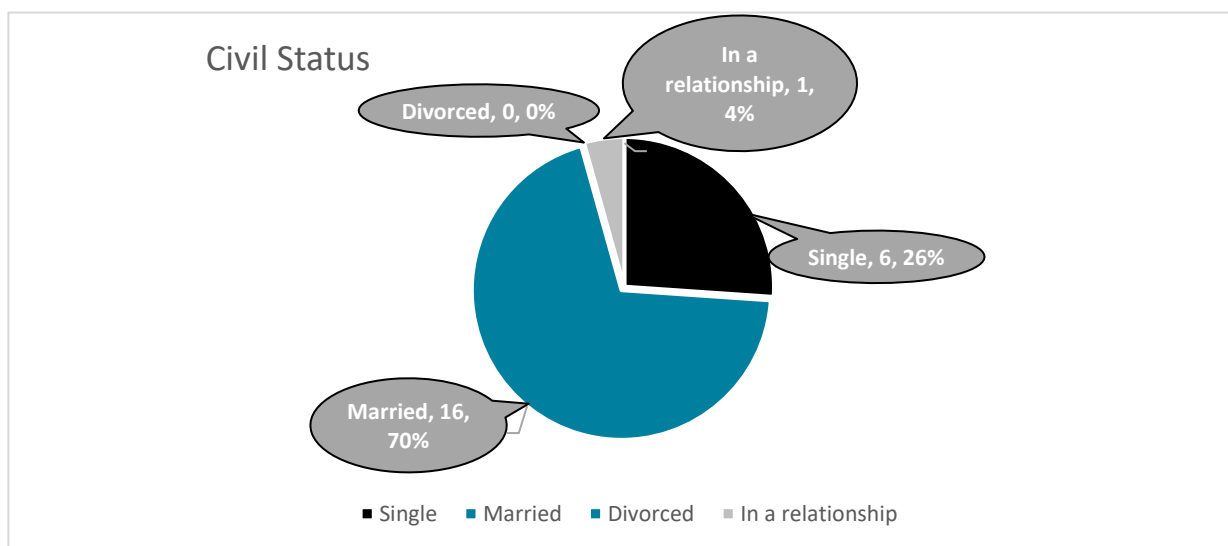


Figure 4.1. Q3: Civil Status

The civil status of participants breakdown is 26% are single, 70% are married, 4% are in a relationship, and no divorces.<sup>2</sup> The survey/questionnaire civil status data collected provides a

<sup>1</sup> **Q1 Age:** N = 23: 18-21 yrs. = 4 = 17.4% (gender is two females and two males), 22-30 yrs. = 2 = 8.7% (one female and one male), 31-45 yrs. = 13 = 56.5% (seven females six males), 45-59 yrs. = 2 = 8.7% (one female one male), 60+ yrs. = 2 = 8.7% (two females). **Q2 Gender:** N = 23: Male = 10 = 44%, Female = 13 = 56%

<sup>2</sup> **Q3 Civil Status:** N = 23: Single = 6 = 26.1%, Married = 16 = 69.6%, Divorced = 0%, In a Relationship = 1 = 4.34%

view of the varied perceptions of the participants. However, a limitation of this project is that it does not provide the divorcee perspective; none of the participants were divorced.

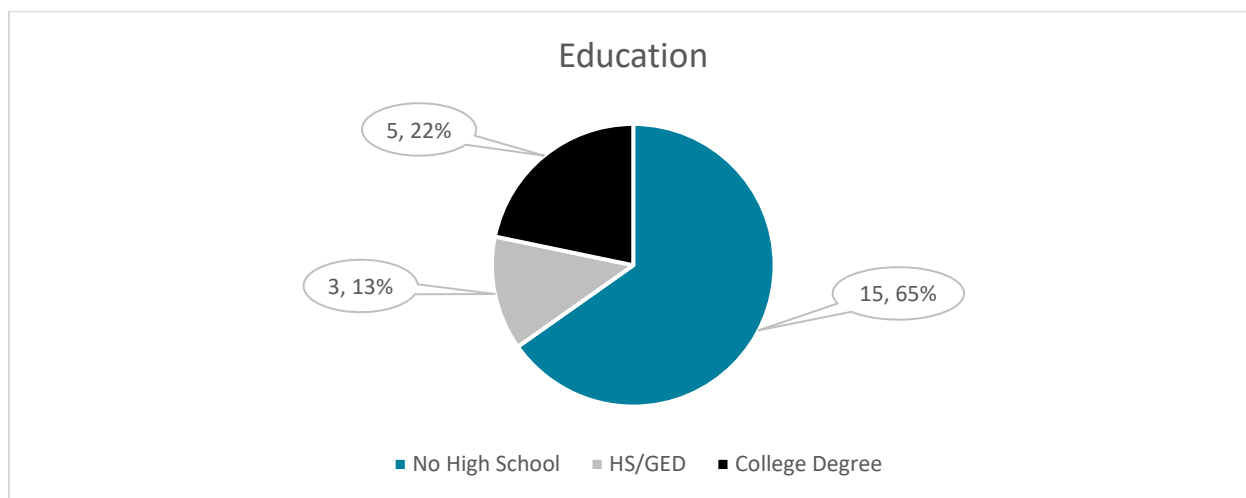


Figure 4.2. Q4: Education

Education, Sixty-five percent (65%) of participants have less than a high school education, thirteen percent (13%) have completed high school or approved G.E.D., and twenty-two percent (22%) have a college degree. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the participants are high school, G.E.D., and college graduates.<sup>3</sup>

### Data Results and Analysis Part II: Membership

The participants' Religious Affiliation and Relationship to Nexus Point Church are indispensable for the church to transition into a therapeutic environment. Q5 through Q13 relate to religious affiliation and the relationship to Nexus Point Church: Are you Christian? Are you a church member? Are you a member of Nexus? Years membership? Attendance frequency? Household attendance? Who invited you to Nexus? Are you active in a ministry? Do you believe in financially supporting the church? If yes, how: tithes, offerings, or both? Data reveals

<sup>3</sup> N = 23: N = 23: Less than High School = 15 = 65.2%, High School/G.E.D. = 3 = 13.04%, College Degree = 5 = 21.7%

fundamental Christian faith and commitment to the participant's disposition to participate in the therapeutic environment, establishing the plausibility of developing Nexus as a Therapeutic Church and opening a path towards this goal.

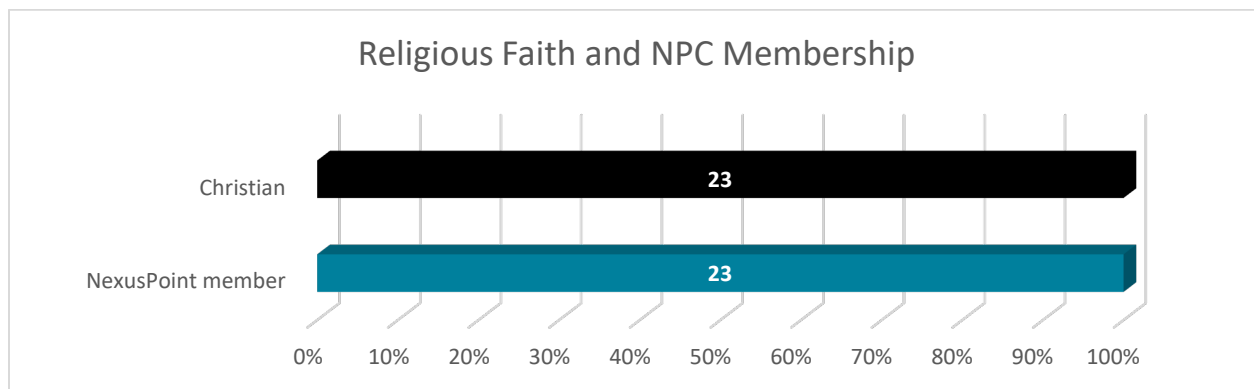


Figure 4.3. Q5, Q6, and Q7 Religious Faith and NPC Membership

Q5, Q6, and Q7 summarize religious faith and membership; all participants are Christians and members of Nexus Point Church. Nexus Point Church membership and Christian faith are the essential thesis criteria determining participation in this project.<sup>4</sup>

Years of Nexus Point Church Membership

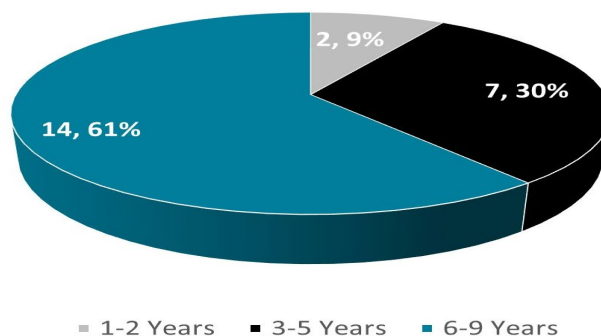


Figure 4.4. Q8: Years of Nexus Point Church Membership

<sup>4</sup> N = 23: Q5 = 23 = 100%, Q6 = 23 = 100%, Q7 = 23 = 100%

All twenty-three participants are Christians and members of Nexus Point Church. Two participants are members for one to two years, seven for three to five years, and fourteen for six to nine years. The majority, ninety-one percent, have been members for over three years. Twenty-one of twenty-three (91%) of the participants is a significant amount of the sample recruited for the thesis project. Three years is a substantial relationship to the church (30%), but more important is that 61% exceed six or more years of membership. These two groups of participants represent members committed to Nexus Point Church and an excellent group to initiate a Therapeutic Church environment.<sup>5</sup>

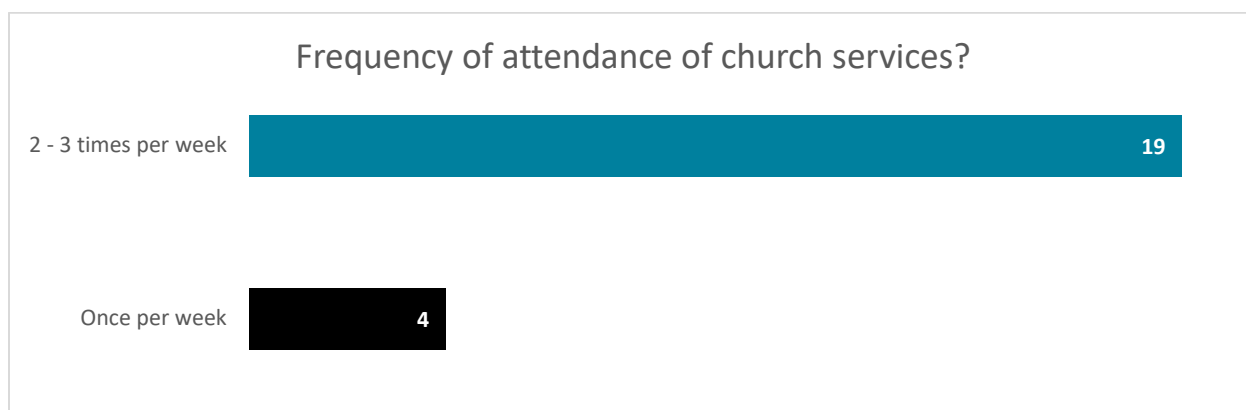
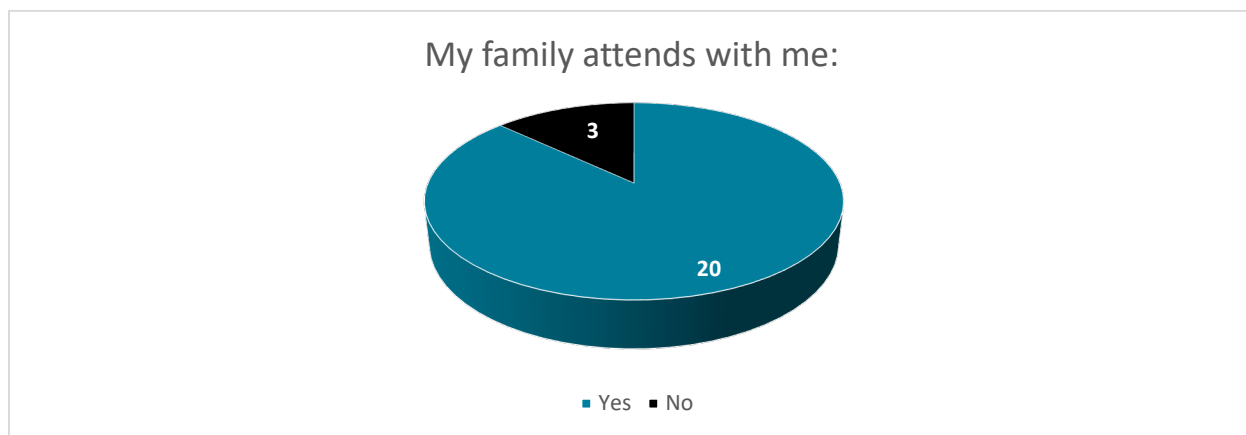


Figure 4.5 Q9: Frequency of Attendance



<sup>5</sup> N = 23: 1-2 years = 2 = 8.7%, 3-5 years = 7 = 30.4%, 6-9 years = 14 = 60.9%

Figure 4.6. Q10: Family Attendance

Eighty-three percent of the participants attend church services twice a week, and seventeen percent attend at least once a week, Q9. Twenty participants report that their family attends with them, and three of the participants attend without family, Q10.<sup>6</sup>

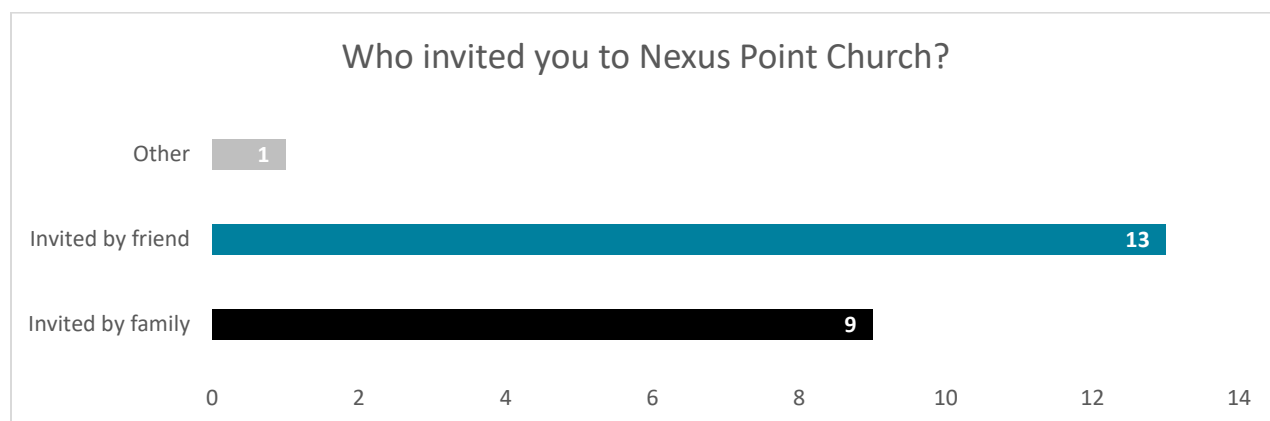


Figure 4.7. Q11: Initial Contact with Nexus Point Church

Twenty-two of twenty-three participants came to Nexus Point Church invited by someone known to them, thirteen by a friend, and nine by a family member. One of the twenty-three answered “other” but did not specify how. Ninety-six percent of participants came to Nexus Point church invited by a friend or family member.<sup>7</sup> This indicates that the best path to membership growth is via personal evangelism.

<sup>6</sup> Attendance frequency? Once a week = 4 = 17.4%, Two or more times a week = 19 = 82.6%; Household attendance? Yes = 20 = 87.0%, No = 3 = 13.0%

<sup>7</sup> N = 23: Invited by family = 9 = 39.1%, Invited by friend = 13 = 56.5%, Other, describe briefly = 1 = 4.3%

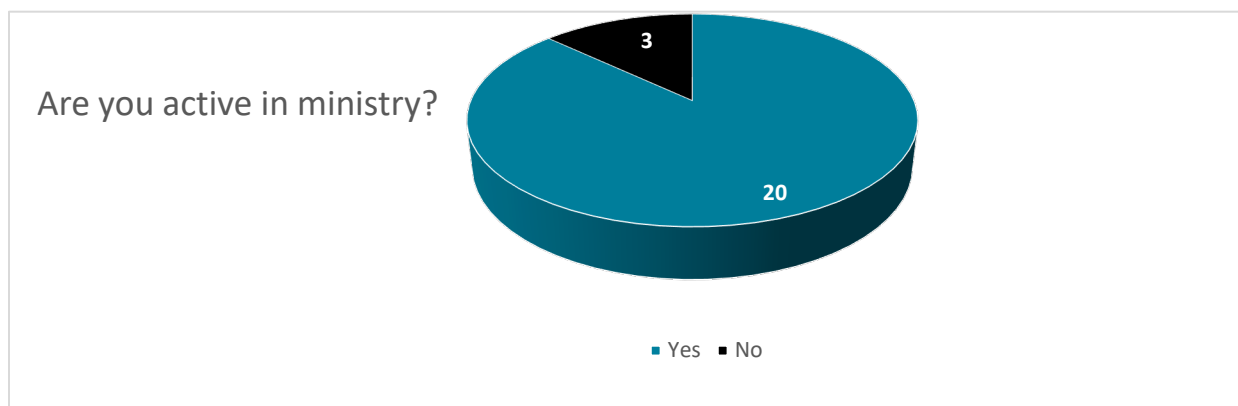


Figure 4.8. Q12: Active in Ministry

Twenty of the twenty-three participants are active in a ministry representing eighty-seven percent of members participating in the thesis project pre- and post-survey/questionnaires and Therapeutic Church training. This implies that participants are an active part of the church's vision, a significant part of the church, and foundational for establishing a therapeutic environment.<sup>8</sup>

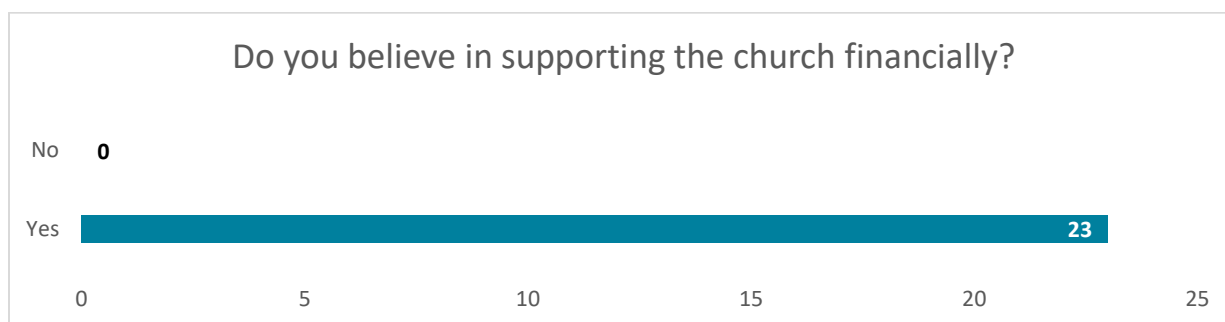


Figure 4.9. Q13: Financial Commitment to Nexus Point Church

<sup>8</sup> N = 23: Pre-training and Post-training Survey/Questionnaire: Yes = 20 = 87.0%, No = 3 = 13.0%



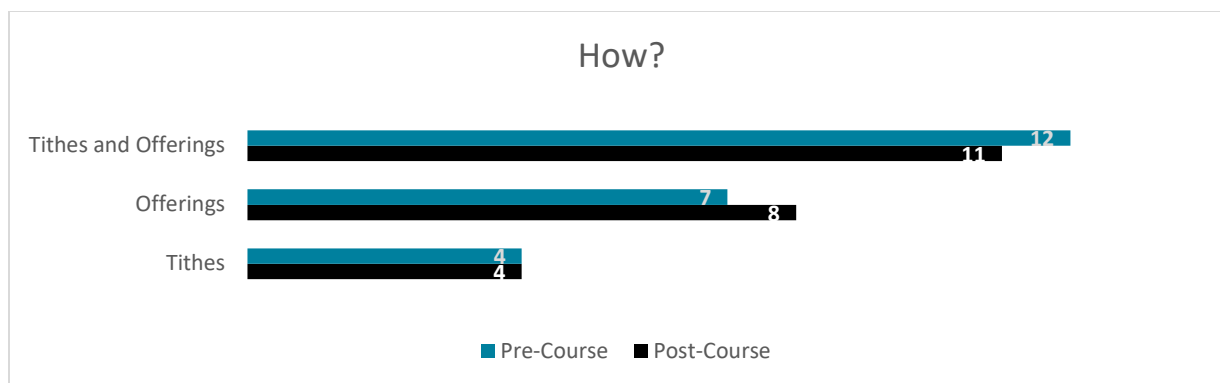


Figure 4.10. How?

Question thirteen seeks to understand how participants are financially committed to Nexus Point Church. Q13: Do you believe in financially supporting the church? If yes, how: tithes, offerings, or both? All the participants affirm the importance of financially supporting the church, but the “how” is diverse. Four understand it should be via tithing, seven through offerings, and twelve by both tithing and offering. Participants are tithing, and the offering is faith-based, not obligated. The member’s decision and commitment are to support the church and God’s vision for Nexus Point Church.<sup>9</sup> It reflects stewardship as taught at Nexus Point Church.

### Data Results and Analysis Part III: Therapeutic Church Environment

Q14 through Q25 measure an individual’s knowledge of a Therapeutic Church environment. The responses to the questions in Part III reveal Nexus Point Church’s participants’ therapeutic understanding and paradigm.

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<sup>9</sup> Do you believe in financially supporting the church? If yes, how: tithes, offerings, or both? N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 23 = 100%, Tithes = 4 = 17%, Offerings = 8 = 35%, Tithes and offerings = 11 = 48% **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 23 = 100%, Tithes = 4 = 17%, Offerings = 7 = 30.4%, Tithes and offerings = 12 = 52.2%

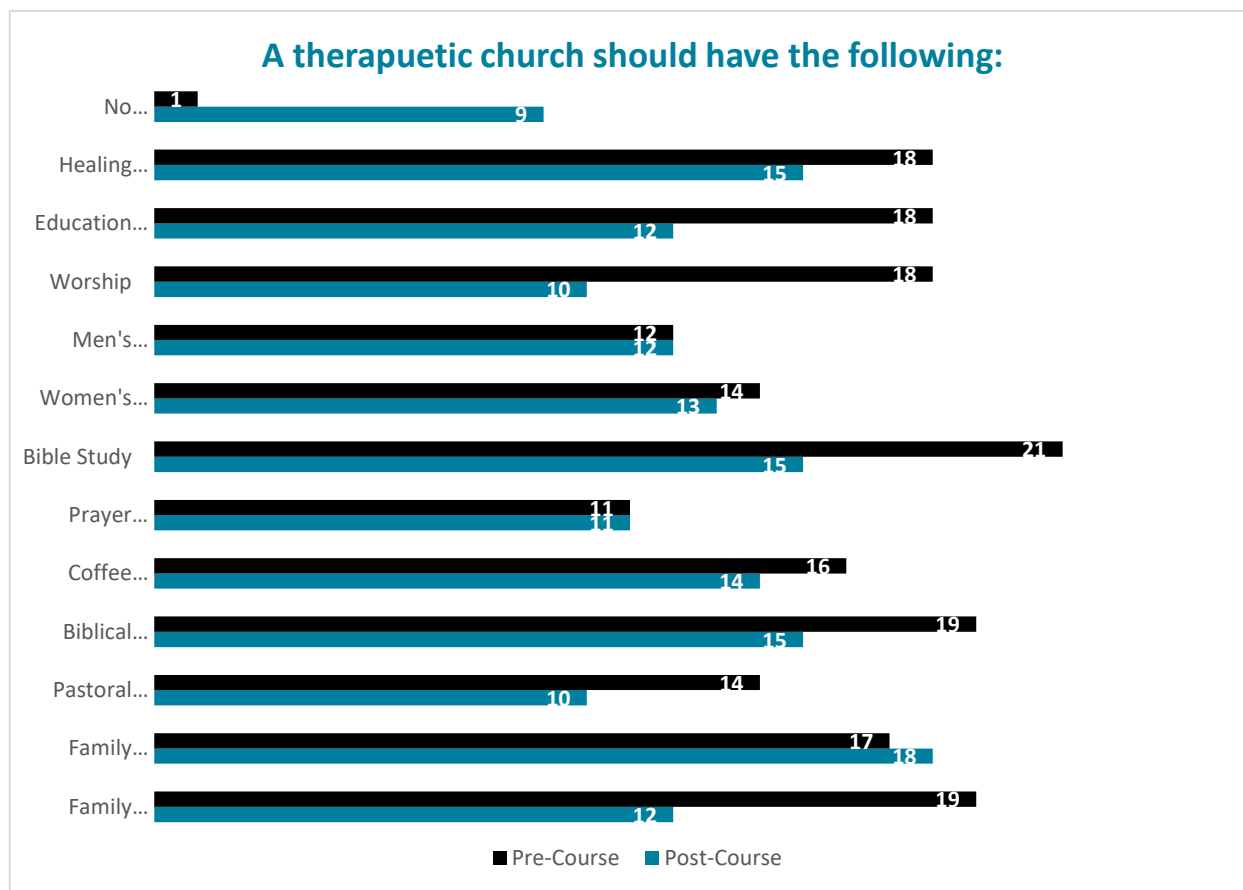


Figure 4.11. Q14: A Therapeutic Church should have the following:

Participants were asked to select from a list of inclusive activities or focuses of a Therapeutic Church to assess the participants' knowledge and understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment. The individual focuses and activities delineate the participants' group's general definition of a therapeutic environment.<sup>10</sup> The data in the post-survey/questionnaire indicates that nine of the twenty-three participants did not respond. This change notes a decrease in all but three categories; two remained unchanged, men's group and prayer meetings, and a

<sup>10</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Family focus = 19 = 82.6%, family retreats = 17 = 73.9%, pastoral visits = 14 = 60.1%, biblical preaching = 19 = 82.6%, coffee breaks = 16 = 69.6%, prayer meetings = 11 = 47.8%, Bible study = 21 = 91.3%, women's group = 14 = 60.1%, men's group = 12 = 52.2%, worship = 18 = 78.3%, edification focus = 18 = 78.3%, a healing focus = 18 = 78.3%, no response = 1 = 4.3%. **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Family focus = 12 = 52.2%, family retreats = 18 = 78.3%, pastoral visits = 10 = 43.5%, biblical preaching = 15 = 65.2%, coffee breaks = 14 = 60.9%, prayer meetings = 11 = 47.8%, Bible study = 15 = 65.2%, women's group = 13 = 56.5%, men's group = 12 = 52.2%, worship = 10 = 43.5%, edification focus = 12 = 52.2%, a healing focus = 15 = 65.2%, no response = 9 = 39.1%

slight increase in the family retreat selection from 74% to 78%. It seems that change in understanding is reflected in that nine of twenty-three participants did not respond to Q14 in the post-survey/questionnaire. There was an average decrease of 46% in the categories and an increase of 35% in those that did not respond. The 39% nonresponses are significant compared to the average decrease of 46% in categories. The changes could reflect the participants understanding that a Therapeutic Church environment is not a provider of services but a healing environment, as emphasized throughout the “8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church designed for this thesis project.

**Table 4.2. Q15: What do you not like about the church?**

N=23	Pre-Survey/Questionnaire	Post-Survey/Questionnaire
	Informality Irresponsibility Lack of Commitment Children’s Education Participation or development of Activities Conflicts among members All is Good = 3 Youth Group Confusing Therapeutic Environment with Social Group Divisions Positions based on devotion and preparation Lateness “not always.” I like everything = 1 No response = 6	Teaching No sufficient moral support No asking for forgiveness when offended. Non-punctuality Irresponsibility  I like everything. We must leave in a hurry.  No response = 16 = 69.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>N = 23</b>	<b>N = 23</b>

The purpose of question Q15 is the collection of data that identifies issues considered not likable by participants, fourteen and six no response pre- and seven and sixteen no response post-

survey/questionnaires. The “no response” category increased significantly from six (26%) pre- to sixteen (69%) post-survey/questionnaire. The data reveals what the participants understand are deficiencies in behavior within the congregation. The deficiencies enabled the project researcher to understand the participants’ perceptions of things to be bettered and implement them as part of the strategies to begin the Therapeutic Church project.

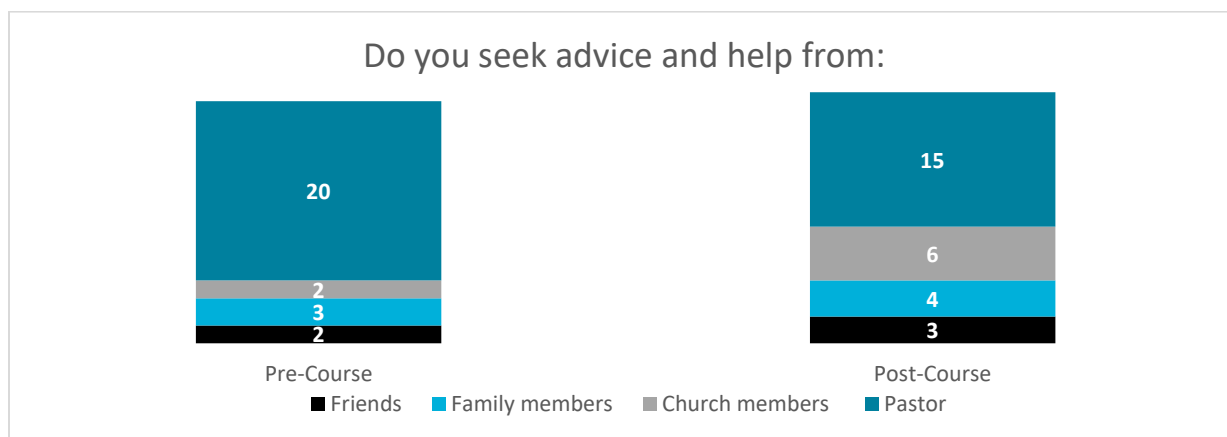


Figure 4.12 Q16: Do you seek advice and help from:

Question Q16 indicates an increment in all categories and a decrease in those seeking help from the pastor. The decrease and increments are related to the training received by the participants, resulting in participants indicating a willingness to seek help from others.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Friends = 2 = 8.7%, Family members = 3 = 13.0%, Church members = 2 = 8.7%, Pastor = 20 = 87%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Friend = 3 = 13.0%, Family Member = 4 = 17.4%, Church Member = 6 = 26.1%, Pastor = 15 = 65.2%

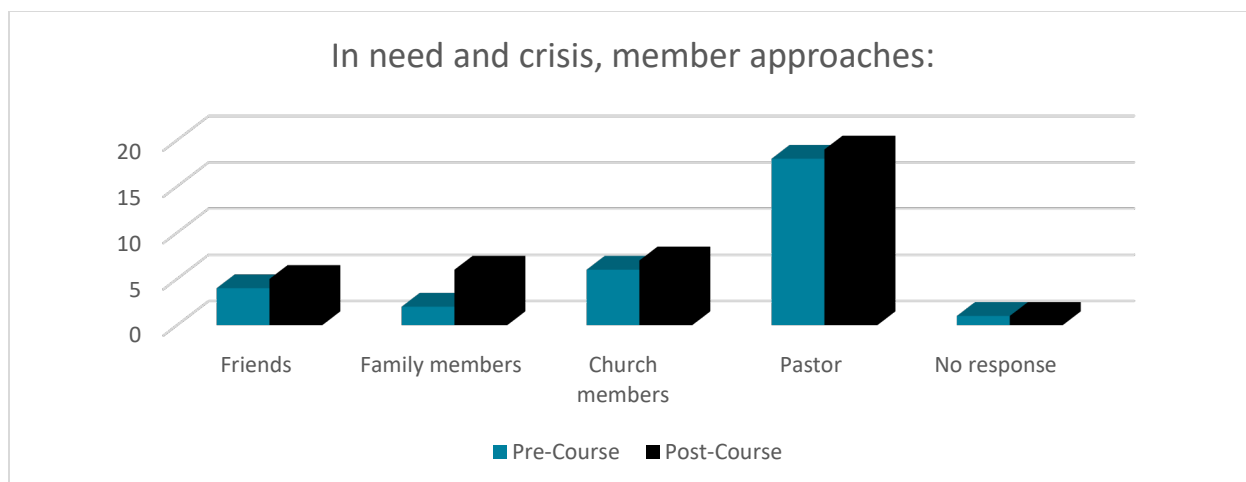


Figure 4.13 Q17: Who do you approach in Need and Crisis?

In times of need and crisis, most participants, 83%, approach the pastor. The post-survey/questionnaire indicates an increase in all categories except for the “no response,” which is zero.<sup>12</sup> The increments noted are related to the training received by the participants, resulting in participants indicating a willingness to seek help from others. This increase was noted in Q16, and the tendency is evident in Q17 that the participants have changed their perception of seeking help from friends, family members, and church members. In Q16, there was a decrease in the number of those seeking assistance from the pastor as participants indicated they would seek help from others. In Q17, all categories increased, including those approaching the pastor when in need and crisis. This change is attributed to the training given to participants in Session 8, “The Priesthood of All.”

<sup>12</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Friend = 4 = 17.4%, Family Member = 2 = 8.7%, Church Member = 6 = 26.1%, Pastor = 18 = 78.3%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Friend = 5 = 21.7%, Family Member = 6 = 26.1%, Church Member = 7 = 30.4%, Pastor = 19 = 82.6%

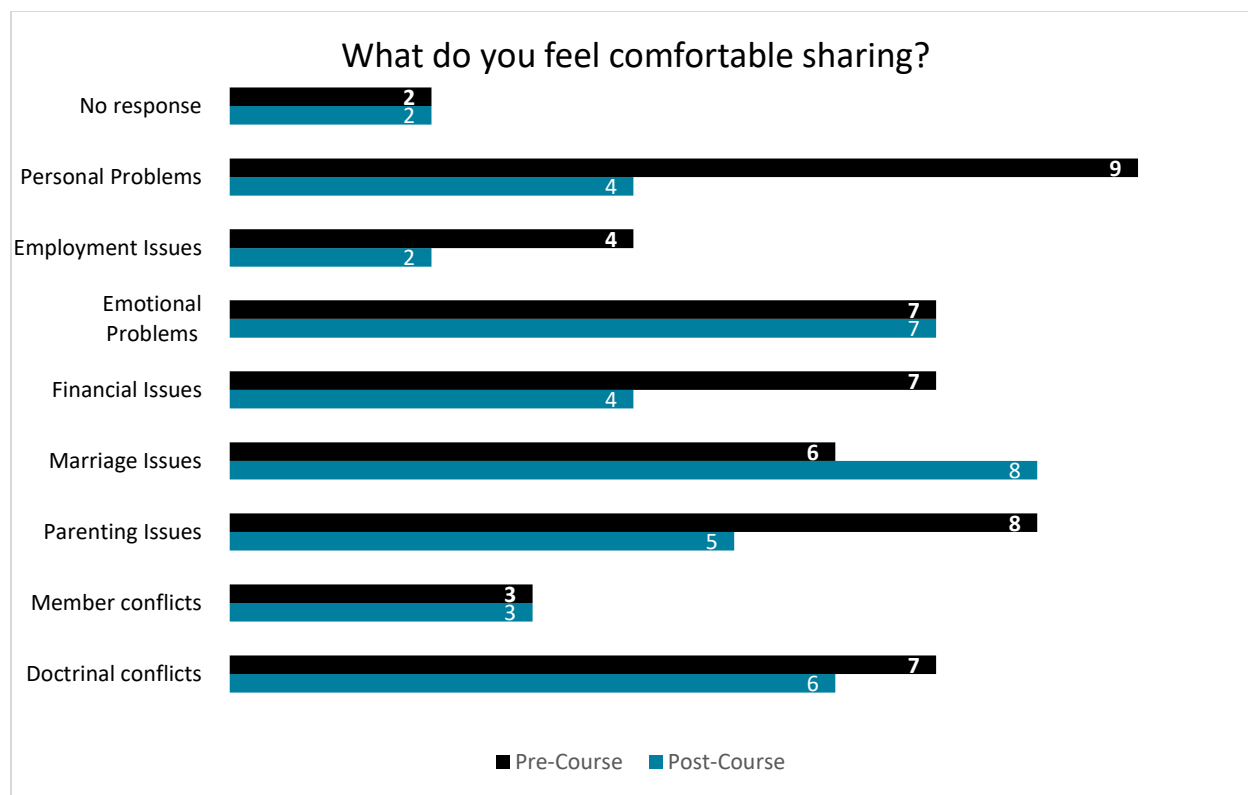


Figure 4.14. Q18: What do you feel comfortable sharing?

The selections made by participants are from a list provided in the survey/questionnaire.<sup>13</sup> The post-survey/questionnaire indicates that sharing emotional problems, member conflicts, and the no-response categories remained the same as in the pre-survey/questionnaire, and marriage issues increased from six pre-course to eight post-course. It reflects decreased categories: personal problems from nine pre-course to four post-course, employment issues from four pre-course to two post-course, financial issues from seven pre-

<sup>13</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Doctrinal conflicts = 7 = 30.4%, Member conflicts = 3 = 13.0%, Parenting Issues = 8 = 34.8%, Marriage Issues = 6 = 26.1%, Financial Issues = 7 = 30.4%, Emotional Problems = 7 = 30.4%, Employment Issues = 4 = 17.4%, Personal Problems = 9 = 39.1%, No response = 2 = 8.7%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Doctrinal conflicts = 6 = 26.1%, Member conflicts = 3 = 13.0%, Parenting Issues = 5 = 21.7%, Marriage Issues = 8 = 34.8%, Financial Issues = 4 = 17.4%, Emotional Problems = 7 = 30.4%, Employment Issues = 2 = 8.7%, Personal Problems = 4 = 17.4%, No response = 2 = 8.7%

course to four posts, parenting issues from eight pre-course to five post-course, doctrinal conflicts from seven pre-course to six post-course.

A decrease in the type of issues participants are comfortable sharing seems contradictory compared to an increase in seeking help Q16 and approaching others in need and crisis Q17. This indicates that though more are open to ministering to each other, in Q25, the sharing of personal problems, employment issues, financial issues, and parenting issues decreased by fifty-three percent.

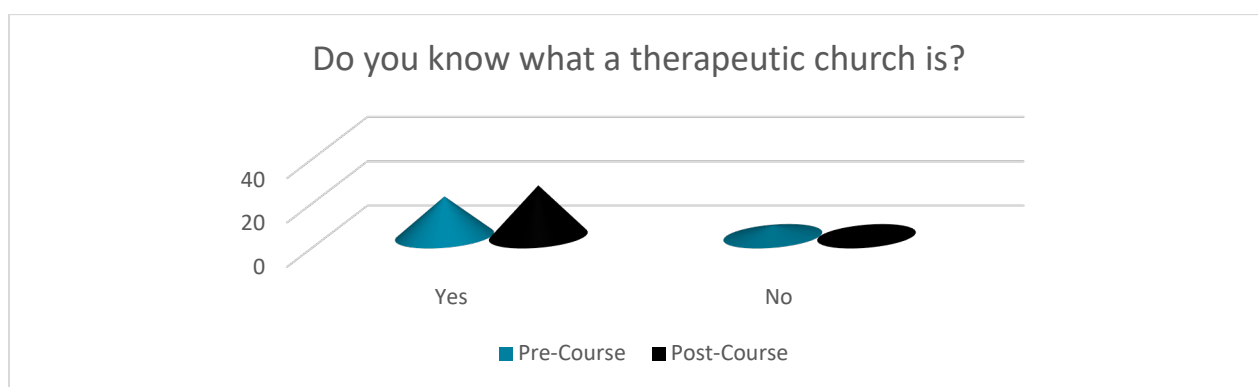


Figure 4.15. Q19: Do you know what a Therapeutic Church is?

There is a significant increase in the participants' knowledge of what a Therapeutic Church is. An increase of twenty-two percent where is  $N = 23$ . The pre-survey/questionnaire indicates Yes = 18 = 78% and No = 5 = 22%. The post-survey/questionnaire indicates Yes = 23 = 100% and No = 0%,<sup>14</sup> a percentage increase due to training received via the 8-Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church.

<sup>14</sup>  $N = 23$ . The **pre-survey/questionnaire**: Yes = 18 = 78% and No = 5 = 22%. The **post-survey/questionnaire**: Yes = 23 = 100% and No = 0 = 0%

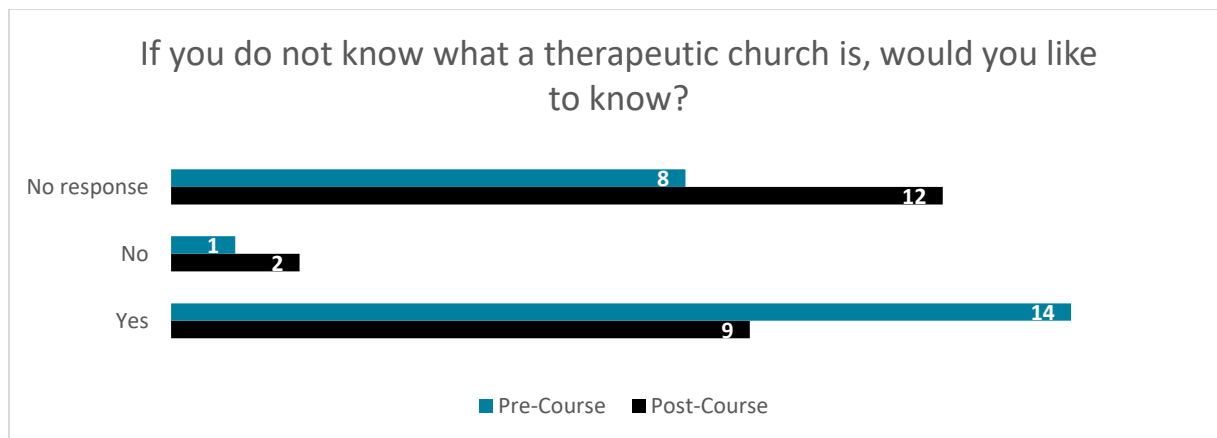


Figure 4.16. Q20: If you do not know what a Therapeutic Church is, would you like to know?

The post-survey/questionnaire response to the first part of question Q20 decreased from 14 (61%) to 9 (39%), denoting a decrease of 22%. The second part of the question increased from 1 (4%) to 2 (9%), and there was an increase of no responses from 8 (35%) to 12 (44%). N = 23 where the “Yes” is nine, “No” is two, and the “No responses” are twelve.<sup>15</sup> The post-survey/questionnaire “Yes” is nine indicates that fourteen participants know what a Therapeutic Church is.

The post-survey/questionnaire data reflects that though all twenty-three participants answered “Yes” to knowing what a Therapeutic Church is, post-training is necessary. The results indicate that nine of the twenty-three responded “Yes” to wanting to know; there is knowledge but not a complete understanding of a Therapeutic Church and, therefore, a need for more training among the participants. For this reason, follow-up and continual training are necessary to establish a Therapeutic Church environment.

<sup>15</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 14 = 60.9, No = 1 = 4.0, No response = 8 = 34.8; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 9 = 39.1, No = 2 = 8.7, No response = 12 = 43.5



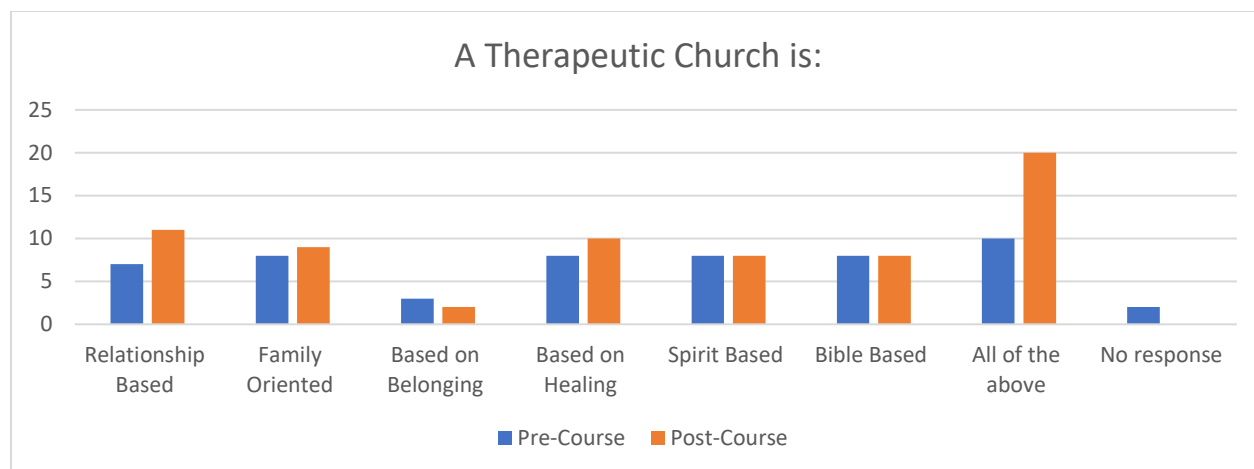


Figure 4.17. Q21: Select all that apply to a Therapeutic Church

Participants selected from a list provided in Q21 to indicate what a Therapeutic Church is.<sup>16</sup> The data denotes an overall increase. The post-survey/questionnaire indicates that all twenty-three participants responded. In the pre-survey/questionnaire, there were two no responses. Two categories remained unchanged in the post-survey/questionnaire the “Spirit Based” and “Bible Based” at 35%. The “Based on Belonging” category decreased slightly from 13% to 9%. However, all other categories increased: relationship based increased from 30% to 48%, family oriented from 35% to 39%, based on healing from 35% to 44%, and all of the above from 44% to 87%.

Eighty-seven percent is a significant increase directly related to the teachings of Sessions One and Two of the “8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church,” in which healing is defined as integrative healing in all dimensions of humanity, spirit, mind, body, and relationship. The impact is significant and is at the center of this project. A therapeutic environment begins

<sup>16</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Relationship Based = 7 = 30.4%, Family Oriented = 8 = 34.8%, Based on Belonging = 3 = 13.0%, Based on Healing = 8 = 34.8%, Spirit Based = 8 = 34.8%, Bible Based = 8 = 34.8%, All of the above = 10 = 43.5%, No response = 2 = 8.7%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Relationship Based = 11 = 47.8%, Family Oriented = 9 = 39.1%, Based on Belonging = 2 = 8.7%, Based on Healing = 10 = 43.5%, Spirit Based = 8 = 34.8%, Bible Based = 8 = 34.8%, All of the above = 20 = 87.0%, No response = 0

with the understanding that healing is multidimensional for a multidimensional being, the person created in God's image.

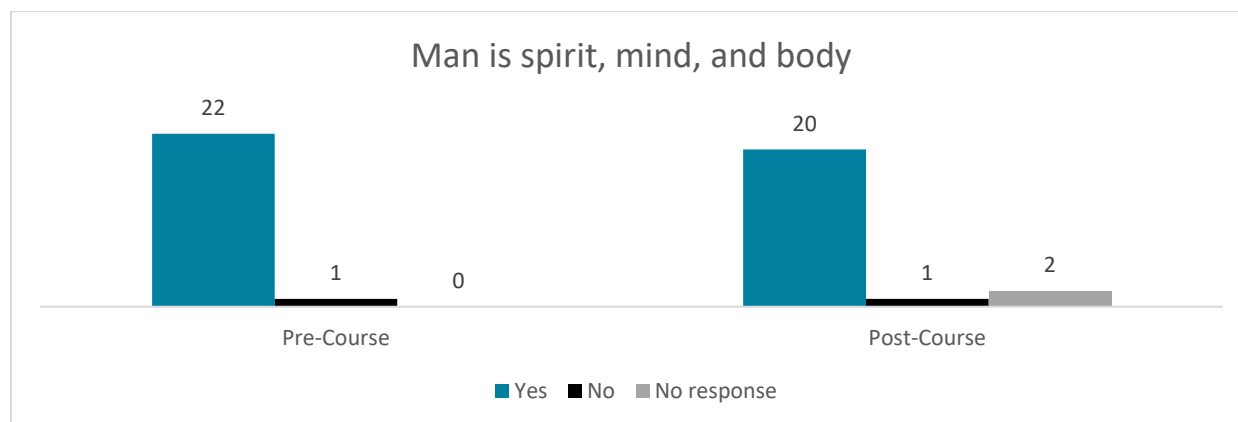


Figure 4.18. Q22: Man is spirit, mind, and body

Human beings are an indivisible trichotomy in their earthly existence. Understanding this is important for the church to be integrative and interactively therapeutic. A Therapeutic Church environment must consider all of the person's dimensions, spirit, mind, and body, including their relationship to God and each other. Twenty participants answered "Yes," one answered "No," and two did not respond. Eighty-seven percent agree with the three-dimensional composition of human beings.<sup>17</sup> The pre-survey/questionnaire data indicated that ninety-six percent of participants agreed that man is spirit, mind, and body; however, the post-survey/questionnaire agreement decreased to eighty-seven percent. The decrease is attributed to two no-responses. "Yes" is 95% in both pre-and post-survey/questionnaires, not considering the post "no responses" pre-twenty-two of twenty-three and post-twenty-one of twenty-two.

<sup>17</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 22 = 96.0% No = 1 (body, soul y spirit) = 4.0%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 20 = 87.0%, No = 1 (body, soul y spirit) = 4.3%, No response = 2 = 8.7%

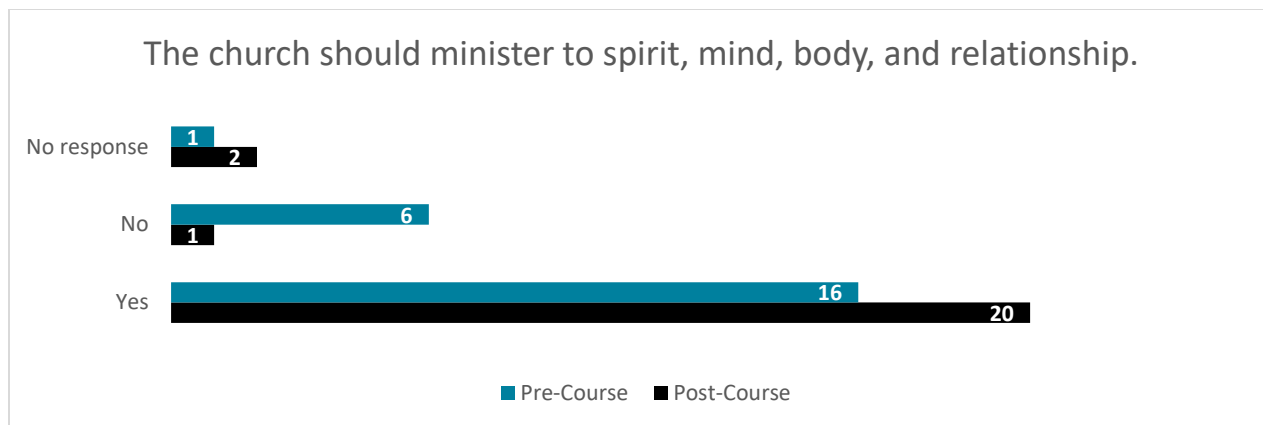


Figure 4.19. Q23: The church should minister to spirit, mind, body, and relationship.

In question Q23, the element of *relationships* is inclusive but not included in Q22, referring to the compositional and dimensional trichotomy of the human being. In the post-survey/questionnaire, “Yes” increased from sixteen (70%) to twenty (87%), a direct influence of training received via the 8-Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church.<sup>18</sup> Session 5 relates explicitly to establishing relationships with those defined as pew neighbors within the “The Therapeutic Church” project context. Identifying who the pew neighbor is is the first step in understanding that relationship is fundamental to ministering/serving each other multi-dimensionally.

<sup>18</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 16 = 69.6%, No = 6 = 26.1%, No response = 1 = 4.3%; **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 20 = 87.0%, No = 1 = 4.3%, No response = 2 = 8.7%

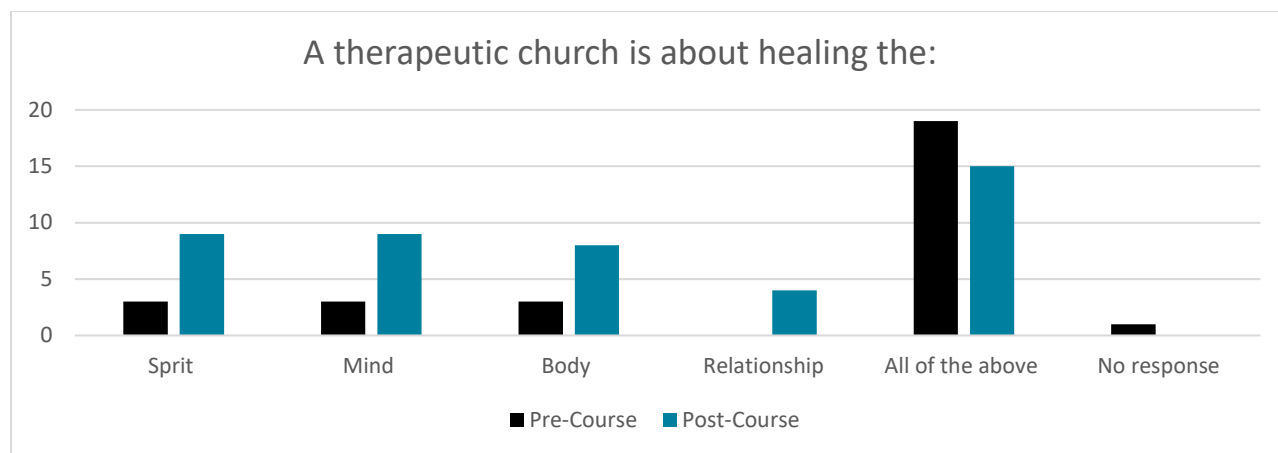


Figure 4.20. Q24: A Therapeutic Church is about healing; select all that apply:

Question Q24 post-survey/questionnaire responses appear to differ in the relationship category. All categories increased, and the relationship category is unchanged. However, the pre-survey/questionnaire relationship category was zero, and all of the above selection was nineteen, which includes the relationship category. In the post-survey/questionnaire, four participants selected relationships, and fifteen selected “All of the above,” a total of nineteen participants selected relationships. The relationship category remained the same at eighty-three percent.<sup>19</sup> At first glance, there seems to be an increment in the relationship category, but it is just an appearance of change in the Q24 content. Fifteen chose “All of the above,” and four “Relationship,” the equivalent of the nineteen of “All of the above” in the pre-survey/questionnaire. The “Relationship” category increment from zero to four does not represent a significant change from the pre-and post-survey/questionnaires.

<sup>19</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Sprit = 3 = 13.04%, Mind = 3 = 13.04%, Body = 3 = 13.04% Relationship = 0 = 0%, All of the above = 19 = 82.6 No response = 1 = 4.0 **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Sprit = 9 = 39.1%, Mind = 9 = 39.1%, Body = 8 = 34.8%, Relationship = 4 = 17.4%, All of the above = 15 = 65.2%, No response = 0 = 0%

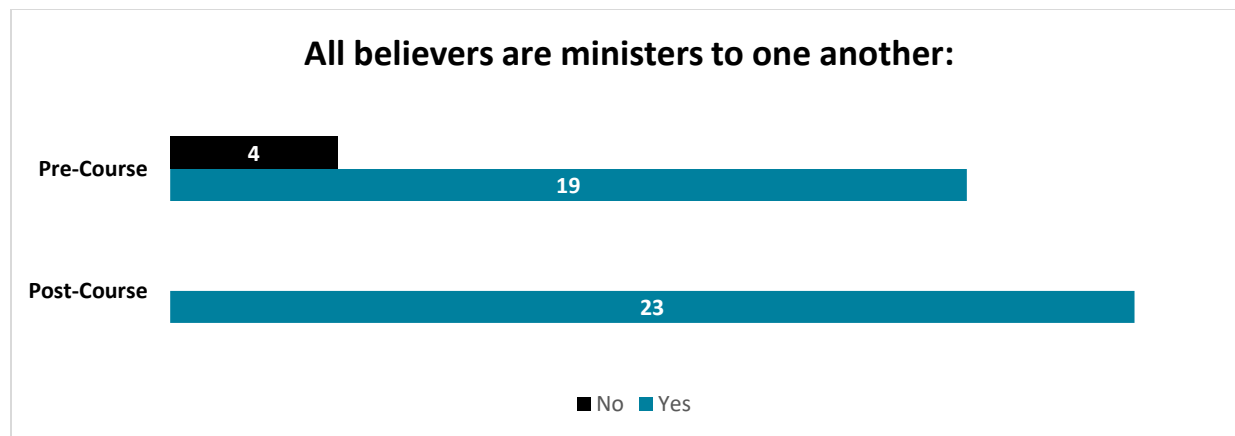


Figure 4.21. Q25: All believers are ministers to one another:

The participants' understanding that all church members are ministers to each other increased from nineteen participants eighty-three percent to twenty-three participants—one hundred percent per post-course survey/questionnaire.<sup>20</sup> The “Priesthood of All” is fundamental in the Therapeutic Church; it is defined in Q25 as “all believers are ministers to one another.” Believing and understanding that as part of the Kingdom of God, the children of heaven are, by calling and conviction, “My brother’s Keeper.” To be present and supportive, “Being a Facilitator” via Session 7 of this research project’s course “Elements of a Therapeutic Church.” The participants who are all members of Nexus Point Church and participated in the course reveal that all understand and believe they are ministers to one another. The increase in understanding of participants results from the project’s ability to influence through training the participants to commit to the purpose of this project, developing and establishing a Therapeutic Church environment. The participants are more willing to train in ministering to each other and be part of the goal of a church that can heal integratively in all the dimensionality of the human sphere.

<sup>20</sup> N = 23: **Pre-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 19 = 82.6%, No = 4 = 17.4%, **Post-Survey/Questionnaire:** Yes = 23 = 100% No = 0%

## Conclusion

The results of this thesis project, The Therapeutic Church, through participants with different demographics, ages, gender, civil statuses, and education, reveal the memberships' beliefs, perceptions, and convictions. Questions Q5 through Q13 indicate the participant's religious affiliation and relationship to Nexus Point Church: 65% have not completed High School, 13% are High School graduates, and 22% are College graduates; 26% are single, 70% married, 4% one in a relationship, no divorcees; 44% males and 56% females, most participants are between ages 31 to 44 years 57%, 18 to 21 17%, 22 to 30 9%, 45 to 59 9%, and 60+ 9%. Data indicates that per age category, gender is 50% male and 50% female, except for the 60+ category, both participants are females. All participants are of the Christian Faith and members of Nexus Point Church, representing 25% of Nexus Point, a substantial sample for the project. Ninety-one percent of participants have been members for over three years, thirty percent over three years, and sixty-one percent over six years, indicating commitment. The requirements for this study are Christian faith and membership in Nexus Point Church. All participants met this criterion.

The project focuses on identifying the participant's knowledge of a Therapeutic Church environment for developing a Therapeutic Church. The results and analysis demonstrate that understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment increased, and the project is viable to expand and include all of Nexus Point Church. The researcher's motivation is to continue discipleship in the integrative healing environment and develop Nexus Point Church into a Therapeutic Church. Data denotes that 100% of participants indicated they know "what a Therapeutic Church is" upon completing the 8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church.

All participants learned, know, and acknowledged that all believers are ministers to one another. Eighty-three percent know a Therapeutic Church is an integrative multidimensional healing environment that includes relationships. A therapeutic environment begins with the understanding that healing is multifaceted for a multidimensional being, the person created in God's image. Eighty-seven percent reported that the church should minister to spirit, mind, body, and relationship. Indicating an increase in the participants' willingness to serve each other relationally in times of need. Response to these three questions<sup>21</sup> indicates the participants' willingness to assist one another in the church: Do you seek advice and help from? Who do you approach in Need and Crisis? What do you feel comfortable sharing? The answers to these questions provide a path to establishing a therapeutic environment to begin the Therapeutic Church. The plausibility of success is predictable because eighty-seven percent of participants are active in ministry and attend church two or more times a week with their families.<sup>22</sup> Success is viable considering and implementing the following areas of continuum need. The need for continual discipleship defines and reinforces what a Therapeutic Church is; it is not a provider of services but an integrative healing environment. Teaching reinforces what is learned. Participants must practice supportive ministering in real time via mentoring in the therapeutic setting. Members must understand the importance of referring and their limitations, knowing when and how to refer.

Identifying the participant's knowledge of the Therapeutic Church environment provides a path to determine the discipleship tools needed to prepare Nexus Point Church to become a Therapeutic Church. The "8 Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church" highlighted the

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<sup>21</sup> Questions: Q16, Q17, and Q18

<sup>22</sup> Questions: Q9, Q10, and Q12

importance of continually training the participants to discover and develop the tools needed to facilitate therapeutic, supportive help by the pew neighbor such as:

- A training manual for reference and training tool for supportive facilitators
- Awareness training of the pew neighbor's behavioral changes is significant; do not ignore the signs.
- Training that provides the pew neighbor with good listening skills.
- Provide a listing of whom and where to refer, such as pastoral counselors and members who can evaluate, provide professional service, or professionally refer when needed.

The church should establish a mentoring group to receive, share experiences, and receive assistance to ensure that an integrative healing environment is perpetuated through serving one another.



## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The research project aims to strengthen the Nexus Point congregation. The study design in Chapter 3 strategically creates an awareness, need, and development plan for building a Therapeutic Church. The priority was defining a Therapeutic Church environment. Initially, the researcher needed to evaluate the participants' knowledge, teach them what a Therapeutic Church is, and prepare them to embrace change and implementation.

### Research Implications

#### Concerns Put to the Test

The implications of this study address the researcher's concerns and understanding that a church should be a therapeutic environment that heals in spirit, mind, body, and relationship. The relationship begins with the Creator and those made in His image. He calls these His children and presents Himself as a Father. Jesus is not just the Savior; He is God and "our brother" (Psalm 22:22, NASB). The project's purpose is to create change that transforms the church into a therapeutic environment. A change that is effective via the understanding and faith of the members and the researcher to pursue the establishment of integrative and continual all-dimensional healing. Implications of the research and study done in this project are the pursuit of the researcher to affect change and long-term sustainability in Nexus Point Church. Comparing the results obtained in this study with the current situation of Nexus Point Church establishes the plausibility of establishing a Therapeutic Church environment.

### Personal Significance

This study strengthened the researcher's understanding of what a Therapeutic Church is and the significance of the "priesthood of all" defined in this project as God's calling to serve one another as pew neighbors and abiding with each other weekly as God's family. Upon completing the research for this project and laying the foundation for a church-wide implementation of the study, members embraced the need for the church to be therapeutic and emulate Jesus' integrative and complete "όλοτελής"<sup>1</sup> healing. Όλοτελής means "complete in every part," translated in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NASB as "entirely," emphasizing the totality of the person "spirit, soul and body." Healing that focuses on the complete healing of the individual that restores all aspects of life. It is healing purposefully complete. Jesus not only delineated His mission as preaching the gospel but rather a gospel that included healing in all dimensions of humanity, spirit, mind, body, and relationship. In addition, the researcher is convinced that the church as a therapeutic environment can effectively and efficiently save the lost and propagate wellness holistically, bettering the individual's quality of life. A Therapeutic Church provides an excellent place for the restoration of the broken in all dimensions of life.

However, searching and examining the literature created a difficulty due to the limited amount that addresses the issue of integrative healing within the global church. Much literature applies to individual healing but not from an environment's perspective. Therefore, not focusing on the fact that all members can be an instrument of healing is not taught to the congregants; the member is the instrument in this project, the pew neighbor.

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<sup>1</sup> 3651. όλοτελής *holotelés*; gen. *holotelouís*, pl. *holoteleís*, masc.–fem., neut. *holotelés*, adj. from *hólos* (3650), all, the whole, and *télos* (5056), completion. All or the whole, completely or entirely (1 Thess. 5:23). Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000.)

The researcher's perception is that members, via participation, have seen the importance and reason for church members and leaders to understand that those who come to church bring their spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational afflictions. Churches' attendees' members, or visitors are suffering. The pew neighbor can begin to heal via leadership, reinforcing the need to return to a biblical model of ministering within the church and serving one another through love.

### Is It Sustainable?

Ultimately, this study's perceived success or failure depends on the survey's effectiveness and sustainability in creating significant and lasting change in the congregation. The major hurdle in this study's sustainability is the congregation's mindset. In conversations with the participants, there is a general understanding that the Therapeutic Church environment is beyond a concept or theory but a continuum of ministering integratively by all Nexus Point members. However, this study impacted the participant members across the spectrum of age groups and gender. The unambiguous test of time and sustainability and its result shall demonstrate its effectiveness via implementation and evaluation through practice.

There is always resistance to change. Putting the project in motion will effect change in most, though some may become believers when they see it, and in some situations, some will abandon the goal of the Therapeutic Church project. Still, the project must continue, and commitment must be sought continually, especially in difficult situations. Some will observe to find defects instead of seeking to improve the implementation of the project. The results are the plausibility of the project goal is attainable; faith in the results must continue. Even though some will protest, Why change? "Everything is good the way it is," obstructing the path of success influenced by their lack of motivation, more readily defined as lack of faith.

The best follow-up to this project is implementing the church's vision for Nexus Point Church, where God and people connect and healing for all and through all is available. If the project is not implemented, this study is nonproductive and cannot be established as a bonified effort to develop a Therapeutic Church environment. Nexus Point Church is ready for its relaunching as a Therapeutic Church. Pastor, leadership, and research project participants are committed to the transition. All twenty-three participants now know more about what a Therapeutic Church should be and will continue to receive instruction and be part of the development of Nexus Point Church's therapeutic environment. They are motivated, and their expectation of change is contagious. There is a mindset change that is continually evolving. The evidence is the members' expectations that grow via the participants sharing the study results and emphasizing what they learned. Members are asking when the transition begins; however, it has already started as a mindset change has begun. Therefore, there is motivation to do things differently.

#### Necessary Next Steps

The researcher will continue with an implementation follow-up to address the necessary steps for project continuance in the congregation:

- First, return to the biblical doctrine of healing as delineated in Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (NASB) to create salvation based, spiritual, mental, physical, and relational change.

- It is implementing a process that would facilitate and persuade the congregation's commitment to a new biblical paradigm of healing that would include integrating the church standards in a therapeutic environment.
- Implementing The 8-Session Course: Elements of a Therapeutic Church as part of Nexus Point Church's ongoing discipleship efforts
- Complete the 8-session Course as the requirement for all leaders and those who aspire to leadership in Nexus Point Church.
- The implementation of the research initiates the project teachings as part of the ministry vision of Nexus Point Church.
- Establish a new member class to explain the NPC's vision and inform new members of their commitment as part of the NPC.

These "Necessary Next Steps" are a starting point for implementing a transition to a therapeutic environment focus in Nexus Point Church; however, the adjustments will be continual as the church grows in a new paradigm of serving and healing integratively. Learning to be integrative in serving and healing begins with the existing membership, and its continuity is ensured through the new members' class discipleship of the newcomer. The membership class will teach NPC's history, the church's doctrinal standards, the church vision, and an explanation of the structure and ministries of the church. Upon completing the New Members Class, the person will understand and commit to joining Nexus Point Church as an active participant, if desired, via a profession of faith in the Father as God, Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit as the ever-present Counselor, and agreement with the church's teachings.

### **Research Applications**

Ultimately, the research is designed around the belief that the need for a therapeutic environment is fundamental in Nexus Point Church. There is a need for a supportive population for the religious and cultural Christians that migrate to the US to pursue well-being and happiness, though temporarily earthly. Their cultural religiousness is inconsistent with the new culture, producing culture shock and resistance to change. It is stressful and results in three extremes: a religious legalism attachment to their traditional beliefs, falling away from them into the prosperity movements that offer a nonbiblical path of healing and prosperity, or simply breaking their relationship with the church.

As a result of this study, the researcher strongly believes that participant mindset is the primary factor affecting the outcome. These research results are easily reproducible in any church context. However, there are two primary service paths needed. The first path would involve modifying the church's and members' mindsets about traditional understanding and beliefs. The therapeutic course material used for this project is based on biblical and integrative documentation widely used by pastors, pastoral counselors, and workers of the behavioral sciences in integrative Christian counseling. Therefore, this information is directly applicable to any church organization. This data is straightforwardly adapted in churches that focus on members as "pew neighbors" serving in and out of the church. The second path involves the environment and situation in which the information is taught. For example, the instruction can be part of a new members' class instead of an isolated four-week eight-session series. The course will benefit the participant more when taught through group discussion via dynamic question-and-answer sessions.

Though the project was researched in a Hispanic congregation, the concepts can be extrapolated to churches of other languages and cultural backgrounds.

### **Research Limitations**

Several limitations of this study's research are:

- The researcher is the church pastor and can influence the members' response. Just because he is the pastor, members tend to want to please their pastor and agree with his plan. These results could differ if an independent researcher performed the study.
- The researcher was influenced due to his relationship with the church members, for example, by providing a Zoom connection for those who could not attend all the lesson sessions.
- The research limits this project's focus to members of Nexus Point Church. The sample size is N=23; on average, twenty-one percent of the congregation's attendance is between 110 and 125.

A significant limitation of this study was the inability to locate abundant information directly related to the scope of the research via diverse search methods: libraries, theological journals, articles, websites, and blogs. There are Therapeutic Church journals and articles that indirectly relate to the project's focus. There is not much research done in the theological or secular writing on the specific theme of one another support therapeutic environment addressed in this thesis project. Support and group counseling use peer support methods that are somewhat compatible with the "pew neighbor" concept in this thesis project. However, no projects were directly consistent with this thesis project's design; none are directly similar to this project's research. Hopefully, this thesis project can motivate others to visualize the benefit of a Therapeutic Church environment, encouraging further research.

The second limitation of this thesis project is related to the participants' unpredictable involvement, which was beyond the researcher's control. Twenty-three participants had signed up, but other members attended the course sessions; they began aggregating in session two. They were allowed to participate in the training but not included in the research statistical study.

Third, the researcher provided a Zoom connection to the course sessions, over which participants shared with other members who connected though not participants. Neither the proctor nor the researcher had considered this situation and the increased number of participants in the course sessions. However, it did not affect the data collected from the original recruited research participants. No data was collected from the additional participants connected to Zoom course sessions. The research data was not compromised.

The final limitation in this project thesis revolved around the accuracy of the data received from the participants, not due to participants but to the data collectors not connecting the pre- and post-survey/questionnaire per individual. Data results are group-centered; this thesis project's end analysis is group-measured, not individualized.

The researcher sought to increase the participant's understanding of a Therapeutic Church environment via course participation measured by comparing the group participants' pre- and post-survey/questionnaires. The results measured an overall change in the knowledge of the participants. According to the data collected, all twenty-three participants learned the conceptual definition of a Therapeutic Church.

If the researcher were to repeat this study, he would ensure that the data would be analyzed individually, paired individually, and then globalized as a group, giving individual demographic data and group results. The researcher would accomplish that by prioritizing unique



measurements by identifying the before and after course survey/questionnaires per individual to measure individualized results.

Some questions would be restructured for clarity; this was discovered as survey/questionnaire data was evaluated and interpreted. Some questions required assistance from the proctor for participants to better understand what was asked during the completion of the survey/questionnaire. The proctor asserted the need to restructure questions as the results were analyzed and recorded in the document “What is a Therapeutic Church? Survey Comparative Data” (Appendix H).

A discussion component needs to be included as part of the training sessions, question and answer sessions, perhaps dividing sessions into two parts because one session of ninety minutes does not provide enough time for the lesson. The recommendation is to restructure the course to provide more sessions with a shorter time per lesson. Instead of eight ninety-minute sessions, it would be sixteen one-hour sessions. This adjustment in time and number of sessions will eliminate this limitation. However, this is feasible in the implementation of the church’s future development as a Therapeutic Church discipleship program, not as a new study but as a continuum of training and preparedness of those members who did not participate in the research but are part of the relaunching of Nexus Point Church and those newcomers that are part of the future growth of the congregation. This limitation allowed the researcher to see where and how the project can become sustainable in its purpose, establishing and solidifying the foundation of a Therapeutic Church environment.

The researcher conducted this study two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, enabling a question-and-answer dictated by whether time was allowed upon completion of the lecture. The questions and answers segments emerged as needed from individual or group concerns. The

questions sometimes turned into a discussion session, creating a better understanding and enhancing the lecture's meaning, giving a deeper understanding of the lesson.

### **Further Research**

Though this study concluded the thesis project, it has not ended in its implementation; it is the foundation of the new vision for Nexus Point Church. The research begins a practicum and continuum addressing the need to be therapeutic as a church. The researcher will continue to gather information and implement necessary adjustments in developing Nexus Point as a Therapeutic Church.

First, the researcher believes there is a need for further research and study of (Luke 4:18–19) on the applicability of Jesus' ministry and emulating integrative healing biblically as Jesus to ensure commitment and service via the pew neighbors, identified as the Priesthood of All in this project. Hispanic churches in the US seem to have generally neglected and disregarded instruction that the church needs a multifaceted, multidimensional therapeutic environment.

Additional research could examine if the therapeutic environment teaching of integrative healing is limited to just Hispanic cultural churches due to cultural Christianity and religion or if it is a systemic problem within Christian churches worldwide. Observing the problem's source more closely will help overcome the need for an integrative healing environment in the cultural Hispanic church. Is this a cultural issue, or is it a global church issue? The church worldwide needs an answer to improve its members' quality of life.

Additional research is needed on churches that target healing as service providers and why or what makes them remain services providing via specialized professionals such as Christian Counselors and Therapist (psychological, sociological, etcetera), Pastoral Counselors, Biblical Counselors (Nouthetic), Marriage Mentors, Drug and Alcohol Addiction, Child Abuse,

Domestic Violence, etcetera, and not pew neighbor supportive ministering in an integrative healing environment. These services are needed in the church but are often not readily identified as the stigma to seek help that still exists in the church. A pew neighbor's awareness of support in a therapeutic environment identifies his pew neighbor's signs of unwellness, be it spiritual, emotional, physical, or relational. As a priest, the pew neighbor is present to assist the afflicted pew neighbor within his limitations and is ready to refer if needed.

The need to activate the church as a "priesthood of all" is fundamental in effecting change in the church if the church is to become an integrative healing environment. There is still a divide within the church on integrating the sciences that study behavior and the biblical thought that all that is needed is Scripture. Paul advises, "Examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21–22, NASB). The researcher concludes that Nexus Point Church and other churches will benefit from additional research on the relationship between the sciences of behavior and Scripture.

### **Final Words**

This research project sought to answer the question, "Does knowing and understanding what a Therapeutic Church is and its implementation make a difference in the effort to revitalize a church in continual need of healing intervention integratively, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally?" Though the study was as successful as the researcher had hoped, much has been learned from the process, specifically, to proceed to and establish a biblical and research-informed integrative ministry. In addition, the researcher feels that there has been substantial personal growth through researching and developing this thesis project.

For those who would duplicate this research, a thesis about the Therapeutic Church environment is available. The Therapeutic Church research with noted deficiencies is available

for others to compare and improve. The researcher hopes that other researchers evaluate the findings though specific to Nexus Point Church and consider taking a closer look outside the Nexus Point Church context in their local churches. A duplicate study will enhance the knowledge acquired via this research, strengthening and demonstrating areas to improve.

Many pastors, like the pastor of Nexus Point Church, have traditionally led their churches and followed the dogmas inherited and studied to minister effectively according to the definition of preaching the gospel according to denominational guidelines and not stepping outside the predetermined lines. It is not to do away with tradition in its entirety. The church must pursue a better understanding of the gospel, avoiding ritualism that does not edify the body of Christ. It is not about what the church does but why it does what it does. To emulate Jesus is the greatest goal and object of our faith; “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:33–35, NASB). Too many have overlooked that according to Scripture, healing in all dimensions of humanity is prophesized by Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1–2), fulfilled in Jesus (Luke 4:14–21), and is the ministry given to the church, multidimensional healing spirit, mind, body, and relationship via the therapeutic environment of God, in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.

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## Appendix A

## Therapeutic Church Project Recruitment Flyer

# Research Participants Needed

## The Therapeutic Church Study

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Are you 18 years of age or older?

Are you a member or staff of Nexus Point Church?

If you answered **yes** to these questions, you are eligible to participate in this research study.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a pre-training in-person survey/questionnaire that will take no more than 1 hour.
2. Participate in an 8-session Training, 1.5 hours per session twice a week for 4 weeks
3. Participation in the after-training in-person survey/questionnaire will take no more than 1 hour.

The purpose of the study is to determine the need to develop and establish a therapeutic church environment that provides healing in spirit, mind, body, and relationship through all members of the church.

The study is being conducted at Nexus Point Church  
15930 Good Hope Road  
Spencerville, MD 20905

Isidro Morell, a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Ministry Department School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Please contact Isidro Morell at [REDACTED] for more information.**

# Se Necesitan Participantes

## Proyecto La Iglesia Terapéutica

¿Tienes 18 años o más?

¿Es usted miembro o miembro del personal de Nexus Point Church?

Si respondió **afirmativamente** a estas preguntas, es elegible para participar en este estudio del proyecto.

Si acepta participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que haga lo siguiente:

1. Participe en una encuesta/cuestionario en persona previo a la capacitación que no tomará más de 1 hora.
2. Participar en una capacitación de 8 sesiones, 1.5 horas por sesión dos veces por semana durante 4 semanas
3. La participación en la encuesta/cuestionario presencial posterior a la capacitación no tomará más de 1 hora.

El propósito del estudio es determinar la necesidad de desarrollar y establecer un ambiente terapéutico en la iglesia que proporcione sanidad en espíritu, mente, cuerpo y relación a través de todos los miembros de la iglesia.

El estudio se lleva a cabo en la Iglesia Nexus Point  
15930 Good Hope Road  
Spencerville, MD 20905

Isidro Morell, candidato a doctorado en la Escuela de Divinidad del Departamento de Doctorado en Ministerio de la Universidad Liberty, está llevando a cabo este estudio.

**Por favor, póngase en contacto con Isidro Morell en [REDACTED] para más información.**

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Salón Verde 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

## Appendix B

**Consent**

**Title of the Project:** The Therapeutic Church

**Principal Investigator:** Isidro Morell, Doctoral Candidate, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, and an active member or staff of Nexus Point Church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to determine the need to develop and establish a Therapeutic Church environment that provides healing in spirit, mind, body, and relationship through all members of the church.

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a pre-training in-person survey/questionnaire that will take no more than 1 hour.
2. Participate in an 8-Session Training, 1.5 hours per session twice a week for 4 weeks.
3. Participation in the after-training in-person survey/questionnaire will take no more than 1 hour.

**How could you or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include learning therapeutic skills that promote healing in spirit, mind, body, and relation to the individual and family, neighbors, church, and community. Becoming a supportive facilitator able to help others effectively and efficiently within the therapeutic environment of the church, community, and household. A facilitator that is part of the healing

environment via compassion, empathy, reflective listening, and the ability to refer appropriately insuring proper soul care.

Benefits to society include the Therapeutic Church becoming a place of healing refuge to the member and family, the congregant and family, the church environment, and the community.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Surveys/questionnaires will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. The results of surveys/questionnaires will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses are kept confidential and do not include personal identification.
- Surveys/questionnaires will be scanned as pdfs saved in an encrypted folder, and hard copies shredded.

#### **Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?**

The researcher serves as the Pastor at Nexus Point Church. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, data collection from the survey/questionnaire will be anonymous to the researcher, and the information submitted to the researcher will not disclose the identity of those who participate. No personal identification data will be requested on the survey/questionnaire. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

The researcher has no financial interest in the outcome of this study. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate or not participate in this study.

### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Nexus Point Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please retain the following statement if the survey will be on pen and paper inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Isidro Morell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Isidro Morell at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Steve Vandegriff, at [REDACTED]

### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any



questions about the study later, you can contact Isidro Morell using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

---

Printed Subject Name

---

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the person named below participating in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I agree for the person named below to take part in this study.*

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Printed LAR Name and Relationship to Subject

---

LAR Signature

Date

## Consentimiento

**Título del proyecto:** La Iglesia Terapéutica

**Investigador principal:** Isidro Morell, Candidato Doctoral, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

### Invitación a ser Parte de un Estudio de Investigación

Estás invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación. Para participar, debes tener 18 años o más, y un miembro activo o personal de Nexus Point Church Participar en este proyecto de investigación es voluntario.

Por favor, tómese el tiempo para leer todo este formulario y hacer preguntas antes de decidir si participar en esta investigación.

### ¿De qué trata el estudio y por qué se está haciendo?

El propósito del estudio es determinar la necesidad de desarrollar y establecer un ambiente terapéutico de la iglesia que proporcione sanidad en espíritu, mente, cuerpo y relación a través de todos los miembros de la iglesia.

### ¿Qué sucederá si participa en este estudio?

Si está de acuerdo en participar en este estudio, le pediré que haga lo siguiente:

1. Participe en una encuesta/cuestionario en persona previo a la capacitación que no tomará más de 1 hora.
2. Participar en una capacitación de 8 sesiones, 1.5 horas por sesión dos veces por semana durante 4 semanas
3. La participación en la encuesta/cuestionario en persona después de la capacitación no tomará más de 1 hora.

### ¿Cómo podrían usted u otras personas beneficiarse de este estudio?

Los beneficios directos que los participantes deben esperar recibir al participar en este estudio incluyen el aprendizaje de habilidades terapéuticas que promueven la curación en espíritu, mente, cuerpo y relación con el individuo y la familia, los vecinos, la iglesia y la comunidad. Convertirse en un facilitador de apoyo capaz de ayudar a otros de manera efectiva y eficiente dentro del entorno terapéutico de la iglesia, la comunidad y el hogar. Un facilitador que es parte del entorno de curación a través de la compasión, la empatía, la

escucha reflexiva y la capacidad de referir adecuadamente asegurando el cuidado adecuado del alma.

Los beneficios para la sociedad incluyen que la Iglesia Terapéutica se convierta en un lugar de refugio de sanación para el miembro y la familia, el congregante y la familia, el entorno de la iglesia y la comunidad.

### **¿Qué riesgos podría experimentar al participar en este estudio?**

Los riesgos esperados de participar en este estudio son mínimos, lo que significa que son iguales a los riesgos que encontraría en la vida cotidiana.

### **¿Cómo se protegerá la información personal?**

Los registros de este estudio se mantendrán privados. Las encuestas/cuestionarios no incluirán ninguna información que permita identificar un sujeto. Los resultados de las encuestas / cuestionarios se almacenarán de forma segura, y solo el investigador tendrá acceso a los registros.

- Las respuestas de los participantes se mantienen confidenciales y no incluyen identificación personal.
- Las encuestas/cuestionarios se escanearán como archivos PDF guardados en una carpeta cifrada y se destruirán copias impresas.

### **¿Está el investigador en una posición de autoridad sobre los participantes, o el investigador tiene un conflicto de intereses financieros?**

El investigador sirve como pastor en la Iglesia Nexus Point. Para limitar los conflictos potenciales o percibidos, la recopilación de datos de la encuesta / cuestionario será anónima para el investigador, y la información enviada al investigador no revelará la identidad de quienes participan. No se solicitarán datos de identificación personal en la encuesta/cuestionario. Esta divulgación se hace para que usted pueda decidir si esta relación afectará su disposición a participar en este estudio. No se tomará ninguna medida contra un individuo basado en su decisión de participar o no participar en este estudio.

El investigador no tiene ningún interés financiero en el resultado de este estudio. Esta divulgación se hace para que usted pueda decidir si esta relación afectará su disposición a participar o no participar en este estudio.

### **¿La participación en el estudio es voluntaria?**

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Su decisión sobre si participar no afectará sus relaciones actuales o futuras con Liberty University o Nexus Point Church. Si decide participar, es libre de no responder a ninguna pregunta o retirarse en cualquier momento.

### ¿Qué debe hacer si decide retirarse del estudio?

Si decide retirarse del estudio, por favor escriba la siguiente declaración, si la encuesta será en lápiz y papel, informe al investigador que desea interrumpir su participación y no envíe sus materiales de estudio. Sus respuestas no serán registradas ni incluidas en el estudio.

### ¿Con quién se comunica si tiene preguntas o inquietudes sobre el estudio?

El investigador que realiza este estudio es Isidro Morell. Puede hacer cualquier pregunta que tenga ahora. Si tiene preguntas más adelante, **le recomendamos que** se comunique con Isidro Morell al [REDACTED]. También puede comunicarse con el patrocinador de la facultad del investigador, el Dr. Steve Vandegriff, en [REDACTED]

### ¿Con quién se comunica si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en la investigación?

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud con respecto a este estudio y desea hablar con alguien que no sea el investigador, **le recomendamos que** se comunique con el IRB. Nuestra dirección física es Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; nuestro número de teléfono es 434-592-5530, y nuestra dirección de correo electrónico es [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Descargo de responsabilidad: La Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) tiene la tarea de garantizar que la investigación con sujetos humanos se lleve a cabo de manera ética según lo definido y requerido por las regulaciones federales. Los temas cubiertos y los puntos de vista expresados o aludidos por los estudiantes y profesores investigadores son los de los investigadores y no reflejan necesariamente las políticas o posiciones oficiales de Liberty University.*

### Su Consentimiento

Antes de aceptar ser parte de la investigación, asegúrese de entender de qué se trata el estudio. Se le dará una copia de este documento para sus registros. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio más adelante, puede ponerse en contacto con Isidro Morell utilizando la información proporcionada anteriormente.

Al firmar este documento, usted acepta participar en este estudio. Asegúrese de entender de qué se trata el estudio antes de firmar. Se le dará una copia de este documento para sus registros. El investigador guardará una copia con los registros del estudio. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio después de firmar este documento, puede comunicarse con el equipo del estudio utilizando la información proporcionada anteriormente.

*He leído y entendido la información anterior. He hecho preguntas y he recibido respuestas. Doy mi consentimiento para participar en el estudio.*

---

Nombre del sujeto impreso

---

Firma y fecha

Al firmar este documento, usted acepta que la persona nombrada a continuación participe en este estudio. Asegúrese de entender de qué se trata el estudio antes de firmar. Se le dará una copia de este documento para sus registros. El investigador guardará una copia con los registros del estudio. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio después de firmar este documento, puede comunicarse con el equipo del estudio utilizando la información proporcionada anteriormente.

*He leído y entendido la información anterior. He hecho preguntas y he recibido respuestas. Estoy de acuerdo en que la persona nombrada a continuación participe en este estudio.*

---

Nombre del sujeto impreso

---

Nombre LAR impreso y relación con el sujeto

---

Fecha de Firma LAR

## Appendix C

**English Version Survey/Questionnaire: What is a Therapeutic Church?**

1. Age:  
 18-21  22-30  31-45  45-59  60+
2. Gender:  
 Male  Female  Other  Prefer not to answer.
3. Civil Status:  
 Single  Married  Divorced  In a Relationship
4. Education:  
 High School  G.E.D.  College degree  Graduate degree
5. Are you a Christian?  
 Yes  No  Other
6. Are you a church member?  
 Yes  No
7. Are you a member of Nexus Point Church?  
 Yes  No
8. Years of Membership in Nexus?  
 1-2 yrs.  3-5 yrs.  6-9 yrs.
9. How often do you attend church services?  
 Once a week  Twice or More weekly  Once a Month  Special Occasions
10. My family attends with me:  
 Yes  No  Sometimes  Rarely
11. Why did you start coming to Nexus Point Church?  
 Invited by Family  
 Invited by Friend  
 other describe briefly:
12. Are you active in a church ministry?  
 Yes  No

13. Do you believe in supporting the church financially?

Yes  No

If yes, how?

Tithing

Offering

Tithing and offering

None of the above

If not, why? \_\_\_\_\_

14. A Therapeutic Church should have the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Family Focus	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Retreats	<input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral visits
<input type="checkbox"/> Biblical Preaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee break	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Meetings
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study	<input type="checkbox"/> Women's Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Men's Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	<input type="checkbox"/> Edifying Focus	<input type="checkbox"/> Healing Focus

15. What do you dislike about church?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

16. When seeking advice, I ask:

Friend  Family member  church member  pastor

17. When faced with a need or a crisis, who do you or would you approach for assistance?

Friend  Family member  Church member  Pastor

18. What do you feel comfortable sharing?

<input type="checkbox"/> Church Doctrinal Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> Member Conflict
<input type="checkbox"/> Parenting Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage Issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Issues

19. Do you know what a Therapeutic Church is?

Yes  No

20. If you do not know what a Therapeutic Church is, would you like to know?

Yes  No

21. If you know what a Therapeutic Church is, select all that apply:

Relationship Based

Family Oriented

Belonging Based

Healing Based

Spirit Based

Biblical Based

All of the Above

22. Do you believe people are spirit, mind, and body?

Yes  No

23. The church should minister to spirit, mind, body, and relationships.

Yes  No

24. The Therapeutic Church is about healing; select all that apply:

Spirit

Mind

Body

Relationships

All of the above

25. All believers are ministers to each other:

Yes  No



## Appendix D

**Spanish Version Survey/Questionnaire: What is a Therapeutic Church?****Encuesta/Cuestionario: ¿Qué es una Iglesia Terapéutica?**

1. Edad:  
 18-21  22-30  31-45  45-59  60+
2. Género:  
 Masculino  Femenino  Otros  Prefiero no responder
3. Estado civil:  
 Soltero  Casado  Divorciado  En una relación
4. Educación:  
 Escuela Secundaria  G.E.D.  Título Universitario  Título de Posgrado
5. ¿Eres cristiano?  
 Sí  No  Otro
6. ¿Eres miembro de la iglesia?  
 Sí  No
7. ¿Eres miembro de Nexus Point Church?  
 Sí  No
8. ¿Años de membresía en Nexus?  
 1-2 años  3-5 años  6-9 años.
9. ¿Con qué frecuencia asiste a los servicios de la iglesia?  
 Una vez a la semana  Dos veces o más veces por semana  Una vez al mes  
 Ocasiones especiales
10. Mi familia atiende conmigo:  
 Sí  No  A veces  Raramente
11. ¿Por qué empezaste a venir a la Iglesia Nexus Point?  
 Invitado por la familia  
 Invitado por un amigo  
 Otra razón, describa brevemente:

12. ¿Estás activo en un ministerio de la iglesia?

Sí  No

13. ¿Crees en apoyar financieramente a la iglesia?

Sí  No

En caso afirmativo, ¿cómo?

Diezmo

Ofrenda

Diezmo y ofrenda

Ninguna de las anteriores

Si no es así, ¿por qué? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Una iglesia terapéutica debe tener:

Enfoque familiar

Retiros familiares

Visitas pastorales

Predicación Bíblica

Pausa para el café

Reuniones de oración

Estudio Bíblico

Grupo de Mujeres

Grupo de Hombres

Adoración

Enfoque edificante

Enfoque sanador

15. ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta de la Iglesia?

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

16. Cuando busco consejo, le pido a:

Amigo  Miembro de la familia  Miembro de la Iglesia  Pastor

17. Cuando te enfrentas a una necesidad o una crisis, ¿a quién te acercas o te acercarías en busca de ayuda?

Amigo  Miembro de la familia  Miembro de la Iglesia  Pastor

18. ¿Qué te sientes cómodo compartiendo?

Conflicto doctrinal de la Iglesia

Conflicto de miembros

Problemas de Crianza de Niños (as)

Asuntos matrimoniales

Cuestiones financieras

Problemas emocionales

\_\_\_ Cuestiones de empleo

\_\_\_ Problemas Personales

19. ¿Sabes lo que es una iglesia terapéutica?

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No

20. Si no sabes lo que es una iglesia terapéutica, ¿te gustaría saberlo?

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No

21. Si sabes lo que es una iglesia terapéutica, selecciona todas las que correspondan:

\_\_\_ Basado en Relaciones

\_\_\_ Orientado a la Familia

\_\_\_ Basado en Pertenencia

\_\_\_ Basado en la Sanidad

\_\_\_ Basado en el Espíritu

\_\_\_ Basado en la Biblia

\_\_\_ Todo lo Anterior

22. ¿El hombre es espíritu, mente y cuerpo?

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No

23. La iglesia debe ministrar al espíritu, la mente, el cuerpo y las relaciones.

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No

24. La Iglesia Terapéutica se trata de sanidad; seleccione todas las que correspondan:

\_\_\_ Espíritu

\_\_\_ Mente

\_\_\_ Cuerpo

\_\_\_ Relaciones

\_\_\_ Todo lo Anterior

25. Todos los creyentes son ministros unos a otros:

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No

## Appendix E

**English Outline Therapeutic Course Sessions****Session 1**

Introduction to Jesus' Ministry Luke 4

- Foundation the Word
  - Tempted
  - Anointed
  - Preaching
  - Healing in all dimensions of humanity
  - Spirit, mind, body, and relationship

**Session 2**

The Disciples' training (discipleship by Jesus)

- Foundation the Word
  - Faith in emulating Jesus
    - ✓ Anointing
    - ✓ Authority
    - ✓ Preaching Salvation
    - ✓ Healing

**Session 3**

Am I Compassionate?

- Defining Compassion
  - Jesus' Compassion
  - Emulating Jesus

- Understanding your Neighbor's Situation "In the Shoes of my Neighbor."

#### **Session 4**

Am I Motivated to "Love" Neighbor?

- The New Commandment
  - Discipleship Evidence
  - The Law fulfilled in One Commandment

#### **Session 5**

Am I a Pew Neighbor? Vs. Am I Ego Salvific?

- Who is my pew-neighbor?
  - Identifying the Who?
  - Establishing Relationships

#### **Session 6**

Am I Listening?

- Hearing vs. Listening
  - Physiological
  - Psychological
- Reflective Listening: understanding and letting the other understand that you understand by reaffirming what is said... paraphrasing, repeating, ...
- Soulful Listening

#### **Session 7**

Am I Present and Supportive? "My Brother's Keeper," "Being a Facilitator"

- I am here for You.
- You, Me, and God "A Safe Place."

- Supportive Guidance
- Referral “understanding our limitations as a facilitator.”

## **Session 8**

### The Priesthood of All

- Kingdom of Priests; nation of holy priest
- All called to minister to each other. How? Serving, forgiving, and being supportive; creating a safe environment (place) for each other
- All called to preach. How? “Great Commission”
- All called to heal through faith guided by the Holy Spirit in spirit, mind, body, and relationship. How? Emulating the Ministry of Jesus.

## Appendix F

**Spanish Outline Therapeutic Course Sessions****Sesiones de Curso Terapéutico****Sesión 1**

Introducción al ministerio de Jesús Lucas 4

- Fundamento La Palabra
  - Tentado
  - Ungido
  - Predicación
  - Sanidad en todas las dimensiones de la humanidad
  - Espíritu, mente, cuerpo y relación

**Sesión 2**

El entrenamiento de los discípulos (discipulado por Jesús)

- Fundamento La Palabra
  - Fe en emular a Jesús
    - ✓ Unción
    - ✓ Autoridad
    - ✓ Predicando la Salvación
    - ✓ Sanidad

**Sesión 3**

¿Soy compasivo?

- Definiendo Compasión
  - La compasión de Jesús

- Emulando a Jesús
- Entendiendo la Situación de tu Prójimo “En los Zapatos de mi Prójimo”

#### **Sesión 4**

¿Estoy motivado para “amar” al prójimo?

- El Nuevo Mandamiento
  - Evidencia de Discipulado
  - La Ley cumplida en Un Solo Mandamiento

#### **Sesión 5**

¿Soy Vecino de Banca? Vs. ¿Soy Ego salvífico?

- ¿Quién es mi vecino de banca?
  - ¿Identificando el quien?
  - Establecimiento de relaciones

#### **Sesión 6**

¿Estoy escuchando?

- Oír vs. Escuchar
  - Fisiológico
  - Psicológico
- Escuchar Reflectivamente
- Escuchar al Alma

#### **Sesión 7**

¿Estoy presente y apoyo? “Guardador de Mi hermano” “Siendo un Facilitador”

- Estoy aquí para ti
- Tú, Yo y Dios “Un Lugar Seguro”



- Orientación de Apoyo
- Referir “entendiendo nuestras limitaciones como facilitador”

## **Sesión 8**

### El Sacerdocio de Todos

- Reino de Sacerdotes
- Todos llamados a ministrarse unos a otros. ¿Cómo?
- Todos llamados a predicar. ¿Cómo?
- Todos llamados a sanar a través de la fe guiada por el Espíritu Santo en espíritu, mente, cuerpo y relación. ¿Cómo?

## Appendix G

## PowerPoint for Session 4

A background image of a pair of scales of justice, rendered in a dark brown color, set against a lighter brown background. The scales are positioned on the right side of the slide, with the pans hanging from a central beam.

## ***Identifying the Law in the Epistle of James***

**James 4:11-12**

## **Identifying the Law?**

***11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?***

***Do not speak against one another, brethren.***

**... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself...**

**Leviticus 19:18**

***...He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law;...***

**39 And He also spoke a parable to them: "A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will [y]be like his teacher. 41 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. Luke 6:39-42**

***...but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it....***

**“17 But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? 24 For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” just as it is written” *Romanos 2:17-24***

***...There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy;...***

***And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” *Hechos 4:12****

***...but who are you who judge  
your neighbor?...***

**"36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." Lucas 6:36-38**

***The Context is Discrimination  
James 2:8***

***If, however, you are fulfilling the  
royal law according to the Scripture,  
"You shall love your neighbor as  
yourself," you are doing well."***

## ***Sermon on the Mount /Love Without Borders Matthew 5:43 Context***

**38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

## ***Young Rich Man Matthew 19:19 Background***

**16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 Then he \*said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; 19 Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 20 The young man \*said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be [j]complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.**

## ***The Resurrection Question Matthew 22:39 Context***

***34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."***

## ***Mark 12:31***

**28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; 33 and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.**

## ***Romans 13:8-10***

**8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

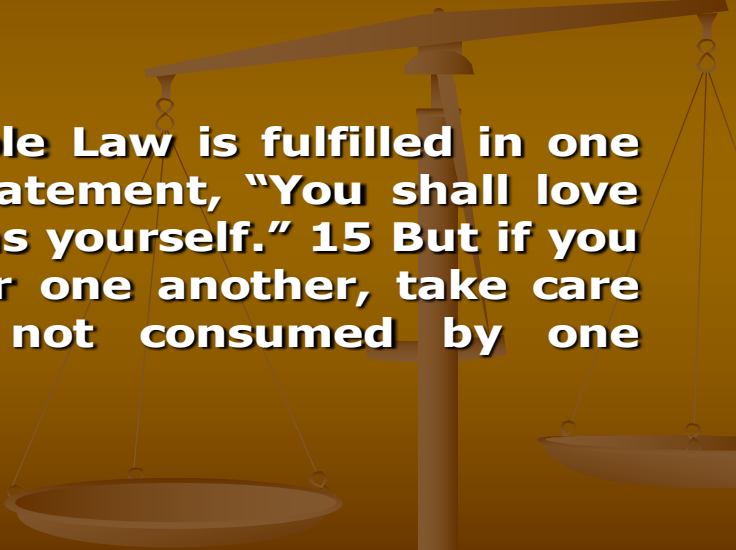
## **The Good Samaritan Luke 10:27**

**25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? [m]How does it read to you?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 On the next day he took out two denari and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."**



## **Galatians 5:14-15**

**14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.**



**This is my commandment:  
Love one another,  
as I have loved you.**



## John 13:34

**"34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

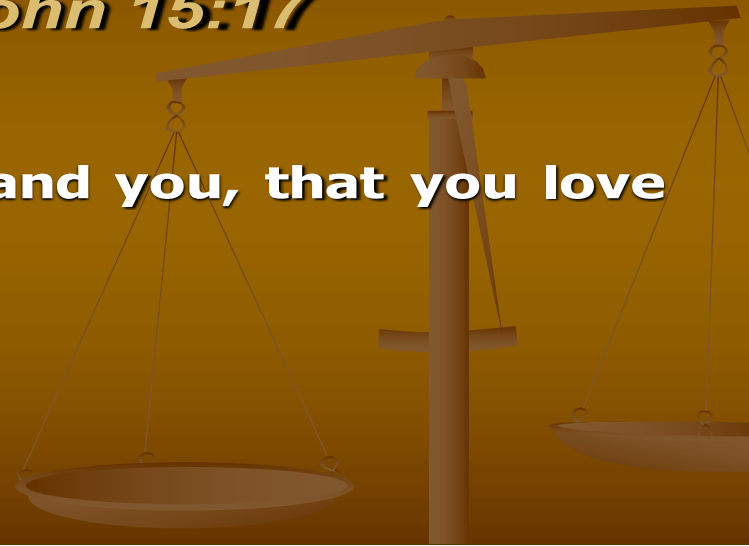
## 1 John 3:23

**18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence [k]before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**

**23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

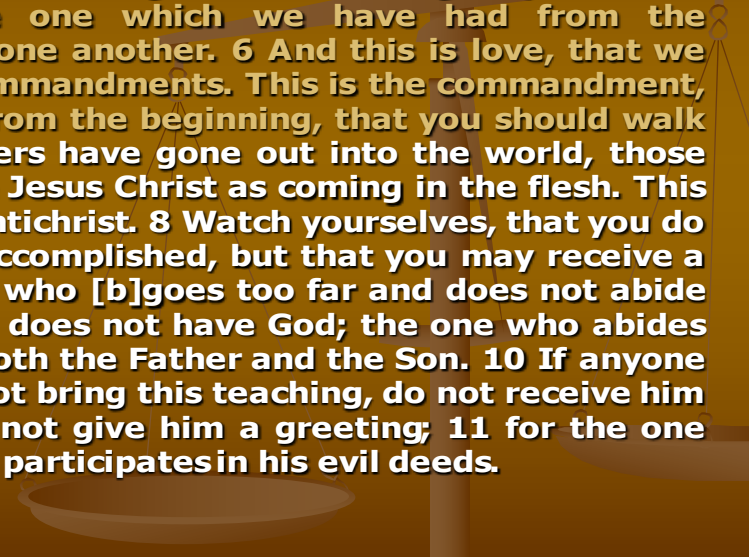
## *John 15:17*

**“This I command you, that you love one another.”**



## **2 John 5**

**4 I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. 5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. 9 [a]Anyone who [b]goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.**



## John 15:12-17

**12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17 This I command you, that you love one another.**

**"This I command you, that you love one another"**

## Appendix H

## SURVEY DATA

What is a Therapeutic Church? Survey Comparative Data		
Questions	January 11, 2023	March 8, 2023
1.	Age:  18-21 = 4 = 17.4 22-30 = 2 = 8.7 31-44 = 13 = 56.5 45-59 = 2 = 8.7 60+ = 2 = 8.7	18-21 = 4 = 17.4 22-30 = 2 = 8.7 31-45 = 13 = 56.5 45-59 = 2 = 8.7 60+ = 2 = 8.7
2.	Gender:  Male = 8 = 34.8 Female = 13 = 56.5 Other = 0 Prefer not to answer = 0 No response ___ = 2 = 8.7	Male = 10 = 43.47 Female = 13 = 56.5 Other = 0 Prefer not to answer = 0 No response ___ = 0
3.	Civil Status:  Single = 5 = 21.7 Married = 16 = 69.6 Divorced = 0 In a Relationship = 0 No response = 2 = 8.7	Single = 6 = 26.1 Married = 16 = 69.6 Divorced = 0 In a Relationship = 1 = 4.34 No response = 0
4.	Education:  No High School = 14 = 60.7 High School/ G.E.D. = 3 College Degree = 5 = 21.7 Graduate Degree = 0 No response = 0	No High School = 15 = 65.2 G.E.D. = 3 = 13.04 College Degree = 5 = 21.7 Graduate = 0 No response = 0

5.	<p>Are you Christian?</p> <p>Yes = 23 = 100 No = 0 Other = 0</p>	<p>Yes = 23 = 100 No = 0 Other = 0</p>
6.	<p>Are you a church member?</p> <p>Yes = 22 = 95.7 No = 1 = 4.3</p>	<p>Yes = 22 = 95.7 No = 1 = 4.3</p>
7.	<p>Are you a member of Nexus Point Church?</p> <p>Yes = 23 = 100 No = 0</p>	<p>Yes = 23 = 100 No = 0</p>
8.	<p>Years of membership at Nexus?</p> <p>1-2 years = 2 = 8.7 3-5 years = 7 = 30.4 6-9 years = 14 = 60.9</p>	<p>1-2 years = 2 = 8.7 3-5 years = 7 = 30.4 6-9 years = 14 = 60.9</p>
9.	<p>Frequency of attendance of church services?</p> <p>Once a week = 4 = 17.4 Two or times a week = 19 = 82.6 Once a Month = 0 Special Occasions = 0</p>	<p>Once a week = 4 = 17.4 Two or times a week = 19 = 82.60 Once a Month = 0 Special Occasions = 0</p>
10.	<p>My family attends with me:</p> <p>Yes = 20 = 87.0 No = 3 = 13.0 Sometimes = 0 Rarely = 0</p>	<p>Yes = 20 = 87.0 No = 2 = 8.7 Sometimes = 0 Rarely = 1 = 4.3</p>

11.	<p>Why did you come to Nexus Point Church?</p> <p>Invited by family = 9 = 39.1  Invited by friend = 13 = 56.5  Other, describe briefly:    No response = 1 = 4.3</p>	<p>Invited by family = 9 = 39.1  Invited by friend = 13 = 56.5  Other, describe briefly: = 1 = 4.3    No response = 0</p>
12.	<p>Are you active in ministry?</p> <p>Yes = 20 = 87.0  No = 3 = 13.0</p>	<p>Yes = 20 = 87.0  No = 3 = 13.0</p>
13.	<p>Do you believe in supporting the church financially?</p> <p>Yes = 23 = 100  No = 0</p> <p>If affirmative, how?</p> <p>Tithes = 4 = 17.4  Offerings = 8 = 34.8  Tithes and offerings = 11 = 47.8  None of the above = 0  If not, why?</p>	<p>Yes = 23 = 100  No = 0</p> <p>If affirmative, how?</p> <p>Tithes = 4 = 17.4  Offerings = 7 = 30.4  Tithes and offerings = 12 = 52.2  None of the above = 0  If not, why?</p>
14.	<p>A Therapeutic Church should have the following:</p> <p>Family Focus = 19 = 82.6  Family Retreats = 17 = 73.9  Pastoral Visits = 14 = 60.1  Biblical Preaching = 19 = 82.6  Coffee Break = 16 = 69.6  Prayer Meeting = 11 = 47.8  Bible Study = 21 = 91.3  Women's Groups = 14 = 60.1  Men's Groups = 12 = 52.2  Worship = 18 = 78.3  Edification Focus = 18 = 78.3  Healing Focus = 18 = 78.3  No response = 1 = 4.0</p>	<p>Family Focus = 12 = 52.2  Family Retreats = 18 = 78.3  Pastoral Visits = 10 = 43.5  Biblical Preaching = 15 = 65.2  Coffee Break = 14 = 60.9  Prayer Meeting = 11 = 47.8  Bible Study = 15 = 65.2  Women's Groups = 13 = 56.5  Men's Groups = 12 = 52.2  Worship = 10 = 43.5  Edification Focus = 12 = 52.2  Healing Focus = 15 = 65.2  No response = 9 = 39.1</p>

15.	<p>What do you not like about the church?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Informality</li> <li>2) Irresponsibility</li> <li>3) Lack of Commitment</li> <li>4) Children's Education</li> <li>5) Participation or development of Activities</li> <li>6) Conflicts among members</li> <li>7) All is Good = 3 = 14.3</li> <li>8) Youth Group</li> <li>9) Confusing Therapeutic Environment with Social Group</li> <li>10) Divisions</li> <li>11) Positions based on devotion and Preparation.</li> <li>12) Lateness "not always."</li> <li>13) I like everything = 1 = 4.8</li> <li>14) No response = 6 = 26.6</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Teaching</li> <li>8. No sufficient moral support</li> <li>9. No asking for forgiveness when offended.</li> <li>10. Non-punctuality</li> <li>11. Irresponsibility</li> <li>12. I like everything.</li> <li>13. We must leave in a hurry.</li> </ol> <p>No response = 16 = 69.6</p>
16.	<p>I Seek Advice from:</p> <p>Friend = 2 = 8.7  Family Member = 3 = 13.0  Church Member = 2 = 8.7  Pastor = 20 = 87</p>	<p>Friend = 3 = 13.0  Family Member = 4 = 17.4  Church Member = 6 = 26.1  Pastor = 15 = 65.2</p>
17.	<p>When you encounter a Need or Crisis, whom do you approach for help?</p> <p>Friend = 4 = 17.4  Family Member = 2 = 8.7  Church Member = 6 = 26.1  Pastor = 18 = 78.3  No response = 1 = 4.3</p>	<p>Friend = 5 = 21.7  Family Member = 6 = 26.1  Church Member = 7 = 30.4  Pastor = 19 = 82.6  No response = 1 = 4.3</p>



18.	<p>What do you feel comfortable sharing?</p> <p>Doctrinal conflicts = 7 = 30.4  Member conflicts = 3 = 13.0  Parenting Issues = 8 = 34.8  Marriage Issues = 6 = 26.1  Financial Issues = 7 = 30.4  Emotional Problems = 7 = 30.4  Employment Issues = 4 = 17.4  Personal Problems = 9 = 39.1  No response = 2 = 8.7</p>	<p>Doctrinal conflicts = 6 = 26.1  Member conflicts = 3 = 13.0  Parenting Issues = 5 = 21.7  Marriage Issues = 8 = 34.8  Financial Issues = 4 = 17.4  Emotional Problems = 7 = 30.4  Employment Issues = 2 = 8.7  Personal Problems = 4 = 17.4  No response = 2 = 8.7</p>
19.	<p>Do you know what a Therapeutic Church is?</p> <p>Yes = 18 = 78.2  No = 5 = 21.7</p>	<p>Yes = 23 = 100  No = 0</p>
20.	<p>If you do not know what a Therapeutic Church is, would you like to know?</p> <p>Yes = 14 = 60.9  No = 1 = 4.0  No response = 8 = 34.8</p>	<p>Yes = 9 = 39.1  No = 2 = 8.7  No response = 12 = 43.5</p>
21.	<p>Select all that apply to a Therapeutic Church is:</p> <p>Relationship Based = 7 = 30.4  Family Oriented = 8 = 34.8  Based on Belonging = 3 = 13.0  Based on Healing = 8 = 34.8  Spirit Based = 8 = 34.8  Bible Based = 8 = 34.8  All of the above = 10 = 43.5  No response = 2 = 8.7</p>	<p>Relationship Based = 11 = 47.8  Family Oriented = 9 = 39.1  Based on Belonging = 2 = 8.7  Based on Healing = 10 = 43.5  Spirit Based = 8 = 8.7  Bible Based = 8 = 8.7  All of the above = 20 = 87.0  No response = 0</p>

22.	<p>Man is spirit, mind, and body.</p> <p>Yes = 22 = 96.0 No = 1 (body, soul y spirit) = 4.0</p>	<p>Yes = 20 = 87.0 No = 1 (body, soul y spirit) = 4.3 No response = 2 = 8.7</p>
23.	<p>The church should minister to spirit, mind, body, and relationship.</p> <p>Yes = 16 = 69.6 No = 6 = 26.1</p> <p>No response = 1 = 4.3</p>	<p>Yes = 20 = 87.0 No = 1 = 4.3</p> <p>No response = 2 = 8.7</p>
24.	<p>A Therapeutic Church is about healing; select all that apply:</p> <p>Sprit = 3 Mind = 3 Body = 3 = 13.04 Relationship = 0 All of the above = 19 = 82.6 No response = 1 = 4.0</p>	<p>Sprit = 9 = 39.1 Mind = 9 = 39.1 Body = 8 = 34.8 Relationship = 4 = 17.4 All of the above = 15 = 65.2 No response = 0</p>
25.	<p>All believers are ministers to one another:</p> <p>Yes = 19 = 82.6 No = 4 = 17.4</p>	<p>Yes = 23 = 100 No =</p>

## Appendix I

**Covenant Ministry Chart**

## New Covenant Ministry vs. Old Covenant Ministry

2 Corinthians 3:3, 6-18

...written not with ink

but with the Spirit of the living God,

...not on tablets of stone

...but on tablets of human hearts

<sup>6</sup> who also made us adequate as servants of

a new covenant,

not of the letter

but of the Spirit;

for the letter kills,

but the Spirit gives life.

<sup>7</sup> But if the ministry of death, in letters

engraved on stones, came with glory

<sup>8</sup> how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be

even more with glory?

<sup>9</sup> For if the ministry of condemnation has

glory,

much more does the ministry of righteousness

abound in glory.

<sup>10</sup> For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.

<sup>11</sup> For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

<sup>13</sup> and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.

<sup>14</sup> But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

<sup>15</sup> But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

<sup>16</sup> but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as  
in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are  
being transformed into the same image from  
glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the  
Spirit.

## IRB Approval

12/28/22, 12:25 PM

Mail - Morell, Isidro - Outlook

[External] IRB-FY22-23-647 - Initial: Non-Human Subjects Research

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>

Wed 12/28/2022 10:29 AM

To: Morell, Isidro <imorell@liberty.edu>; Vandegriff, Steve (Rawlings School of Divinity Instr) <svandegriff@liberty.edu>

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## LIBERTY UNIVERSITY. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 28, 2022

Isidro Morell  
Stephen Vandegriff

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-647 The Therapeutic Church

Dear Isidro Morell and Stephen Vandegriff,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**