

## Unique Christian Therapeutic Counseling: Maximizing Results and Shortening Time

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**Abstract:** This article describes Christian therapeutic counseling that can help make the counseling process effective. The purpose of Christian therapeutic counseling is not only to want someone to experience recovery from the problem, but above all, the result of the counseling is that the counselee experiences the likeness of Christ who healed him. To get to that stage, one must start with a change in life because one has been freed, freed, recovered, and has personally met God and experienced the likeness of Christ. This can be called unique counseling, maximizing results and shortening time. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The study's results stated that Therapeutic counseling impacts the process of believers becoming in the image and likeness of God. Counselors must synergize with other fields with different gifts, including the local Church, discipleship team, mission, and pastoral because synergy helps perfect a counselee's recovery and shorten the time.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic, Christian counseling, Effectiveness

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## Introduction

Today, the phenomenon of the emergence of "Christian feelings" is rife in the Church. Everything is judged in terms of feelings. The sermon will be exciting and promising if it gives a feeling side, likewise in counseling (Johni Hardori, 2014). The counseling process is said to be successful if the council cries. The counseling process is said to have failed if it does not reach that stage. Feelings become the standard of success in human life. This concept comes from the trilogy of Christian faith maturity, namely orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy (Betakore, 2021). Orthodoxy talks about knowledge; orthopathy is a feeling in the human soul, while orthopraxy is a praxis dimension in the maturity of the Christian faith. It is the orthopathy part that is central to embracing orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

Oxford Dictionary defines feeling as objects highly susceptible to the senses (Hornby et al., 2015). A feeling Christian is a person whose life is not controlled by his understanding of God's word but by his feelings. The Christian life of these people will be effective when their feelings are strong, for example, when they are feeling spiritually euphoric so that their spiritual life becomes fiery. However, along with the times, humans are increasingly faced with various life problems such as fear, despair, loneliness, indecision, confusion, anger, pent-up hatred, and a sense of helplessness (Christi, 2012). So, when these people face problems, their spiritual activity also decreases. People like this tend to seek spiritual refreshment through God's words, whose truth is based on their inner feelings at that time (Setyobekti, 2017).

Many people think that conflict is an open controversy, but the actual definition is the loss of peace that can only be obtained entirely from God (Lestari, 2012). In general, we can work out minor differences. However, many people do not know what to do when significant conflicts arise. Individuals facing conflict should be able to get special counseling services to find the right solution to resolve the conflict in their lives. Many counseling services still accommodate conflict resolution in worldly and unbiblical ways, causing fatal and dangerous problems, such as divorce, drugs, or suicide.

Seeing the case, the author feels the need to describe a concept of Christian therapeutic counseling for counsees who have problems and need solutions to their problems. In Christian therapeutic counseling, applying any problem-solving must be based on the Bible, which is the word of God. Hopefully, this paper can be used in the learning process and valuable Christian counseling service, especially in the congregation's development.

## Method

The research method used is descriptive survey qualitative (Chandra, 2019). The data source comes from the meta-analysis of scientific journals and literature studies (Sumual et al., 2021). The reason for using a descriptive approach is because this article intends to propose the construction of Christian Therapeutic counseling. Construction is based on the analysis of general counseling with Christian counseling. The research begins by analyzing the "Christian feelings" phenomenon in the Bethel Church of Indonesia. The following analysis results become a method for implementing counseling at the church locus as part of the development of church members.

Furthermore, the phenomenon is synthesized into a single problem. That single problem is solved by the constructs arranged in this article. Where the research results found will be described in a naturalistic and normative manner. This literature study departed because of the counseling cases whose handling was incomplete. They only saw the changes in the counselee with naked eyes, and only the counselee's acknowledgment had recovered and changed. This case encourages the author to describe a concept of Christian therapeutic counseling for a counselee. The stages in this research are reviewing the source, then classifying it according to the problem.

## Results and Discussion

### Definition of Therapeutic Counseling

Counseling comes from the word counsel, which means advice. According to the division of counseling psychology, counseling is a process that aims to assist individuals in eliminating things that hinder the development of their abilities and potential optimally (Hasiholan et al., 2021). Counseling can also define as a reciprocal relationship between two individuals, namely the counselor who tries to help or guide and the counselee who needs the understanding to overcome his problems. In general, the purpose of counseling is to relieve the burden of suffering or find a solution to one's problems (Kathryn et al., 2021).

According to the complete dictionary of psychology, therapeutic comes from the word therapy which means a treatment or treatment to recover the patient from a pathological condition (Chaplin, 1972). This therapy refers to the treatment of the psychological aspects of a person who experiences a mental illness or disorder in adjustment (Gernaida Krisna R Pakpahan et al., 2021).

(Suryani, 2015) Susabda describes practical theology as pastoral therapeutic counseling, or pastoral psychotherapy, which helps return individuals to the orientation of religious values, in this case, Christianity

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(Susabda, 2014). Therapeutic counseling, one form of therapeutic communication, can help clients adapt to stress, overcome psychological disorders, and learn to interact with others (Suryani, 2015). In the following, we describe three aspects of Therapeutic Christian counseling in the counseling process:

### **Has unique value**

Pastoral care in the form of Christian therapeutic counseling is a unique form of service both in terms of the problems handled, the counselor who handles it, and the book used as the basis of reference and guidance for counselors, namely the Bible. Christian therapeutic counseling covers every problem in human life in general, including anger, envy, anxiety, inferiority, loneliness, guilt, and grief (Sumarno, 2012).

Therapeutic Christian counselors are unique in that they do not proceed the same way, use the same methods, or agree on the same explanations for why people behave the way they do. However, as followers of Jesus Christ, we all accept some fundamental Christian beliefs. This belief forms the core of the Christian worldview and underlies Christian counseling and other forms of people-helping: first, storytelling. In His counseling ministry, Jesus used many storytelling techniques (Christi, 2018). Jesus came not to convince God of anything but to convince us of who we are. This storytelling technique is a rich component of the rabbinic tradition in which Jesus appeared (Jesus was a master of storytelling). Spirit-centered counselors make the beauty of stories memorable and repeatable for listeners, and there are so many entry points that listeners can connect. Second, much to exhort and remind, John 16:13 says: But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will lead you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will tell you the things that are to come.

The involvement of God's word and the Holy Spirit is the center and main focus of Christian therapeutic counseling. As the Holy Spirit constantly reminds each of us, the counselor must also practice it because humans are full of limitations to convey all truth, but not so with the Holy Spirit. What the Holy Spirit wants to happen to the counselee and which will bring understanding to the counselee from one truth to another truth. While in Christian counseling, the counselor is an intermediary or tool in God's hands. The counselor sees the subject or leading actor. It can be said that the counselor is the secondary subject of the counseling process, while the main subject is the Holy Spirit, who works linearly with the truth of God's word.

Why is the Bible a unique guide for Christian counselors in applying Christian therapeutic counseling? To answer this, we can look at the following three types of evidence, (i) Manuscript proof. There are fewer Old Testament manuscripts, but there is consistency in content among the existing manuscripts, including the Dead Sea scrolls, which were discovered in 1947. Because the Hebrew scribes had great respect for the scriptures, they were carefully preserved. Hearts and scholars consider these documents to be of better quality than other ancient manuscripts; (ii) internal evidence. The Bible was written for about 1,500 to 1,800 years by 40 wildly diverse authors who used various literary forms (prose, poetry, biographies, letters, parables, prophecies, recorded sermons, etc.) but still produced a harmonious message (Gernaida Krisna R. Pakpahan, 2015). The central theme is the person and work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. More than a quarter of the Bible is predictive prophecy at the time of writing, and an astonishing number of these prophecies have come true; (iii) External evidence.

Entire books have been written on geographic, historical, and archaeological data that confirm the accuracy of the Bible. Take, for example, the work of Nelson Glueck, a non-Christian archaeologist who spent most of his life studying biblical archeology. He concluded that no archaeological finds contradict or refute biblical statements and that an impressive body of literature supports the accuracy of the biblical statements. The unique testimony of two scholars, servants of God, relates to errors in the Bible. The first came from B. H. Carroll and the second from R. A. Torrey (Sirait, 2016). Carroll said he had seen so many contradictions and errors in the Bible that he had lost all faith in its existence. As a child, he thought he had discovered over a thousand contradictions, just still saw when he was an adult.

Carroll admits that there may be half a dozen difficulties in the Bible that he cannot explain to himself satisfactorily. However, since he saw 944 out of 1,000 harmonize with God's truth, he is inclined to think that if he had a better understanding of the facts in the Bible, it could harmonize the remaining 6. R. A. Torrey said more or less the same (Bird & Carroll, 2016). Torrey said that he realized that all his difficulties disappeared when he studied the Bible more deeply or intimately. First, he admits that the difficulties disappeared one by one, and then they disappeared. Therefore, what they call errors are visible difficulties. The more we research it, the more these difficulties disappear. As we draw closer to God, the Bible becomes increasingly indisputable as heavenly truth guaranteed to be true. Although some apparent contradictions

and minor errors still exist, being unresolved, there is no reason to throw them out of the Bible. To do so would expose us to the need to replace Scripture with some other basis that would be far less coherent, internally consistent, comprehensive, supported by external data, and capable of explaining human behavior.

### **Synergize to Maximize Results and Shorten Time**

The counselor's job in doing what God has entrusted to the counselee to completion is a service. This service is an honor, not a burden or work, based on a work contract and pay (Engel, 2016). This means that the counselor must be a bridge for the counselee to meet personally with God, make decisions to live a righteous and better life (Galatians 4:8-9), be committed, and lead to the likeness of God. The polemic that occurs among Christian counselors is that sometimes a counselor does not realize that he must also synergize with other fields with different gifts, including the local Church, discipleship team, mission, and pastoral. Synergies between these areas help perfect a counselee's recovery, shortening time and maximizing the results. A counselor who first handles the counselee may not handle it until the problem is resolved, but the counselor will continue to oversee the counselee in the recovery stages (Hasiholan & Marbun, 2021).

### **Has Supernatural Powers**

As it is written in 1 John 4:4, "You are from God, my children, and you have overcome the false prophets; for the Spirit who is in you is greater than the Spirit who is in the world." John 16:13 also says: But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will lead you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will tell you the things that are to come. The basis of Christian therapeutic counseling is the Bible, carried out under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, and adopts the mind of Jesus (Gernaída Krisna R. Pakpahan et al., 2022). The policies taken by a Christian counselor must also be similar to Christ's way of understanding what is missing from the counselee's life and how to do it. Restore it. There are similarities between Spirit-centered and Jesus-centered counselors in that both try to change the client's perception or mindset with new values, mentalities, and lifestyles. 2 Tim 3:16-17 All writings that God inspires are helpful for teaching, reproofing error, correcting behavior, and for educating people in righteousness. Thus, every human being who belongs to Allah is equipped for every good deed.

### **Stages of handling the counselee in Christian therapeutic counseling**

The stages of Christian counseling ministry refer to the ministry of Jesus Christ. The counseling process begins with building a relationship between the counselee and the counselor and fostering mutual trust. Thus, an agreement will be reached for the counselee to be open to the counselor. So that the counselor can explore, clarify the problem, and determine what has been done in the past. That can overcome the problem because openness is the beginning of recovery. This stage is followed by the process of releasing mental problems contained in thoughts, feelings, and wills. At this stage, the counselor provides concrete support in decision-making and encourages the counselee to take concrete actions per the function of the Church (Collins, 2017).

First, Enter the counselee into the discipleship community (koinonia), so they do not return to their old community. Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ. Discipleship means believing in what Jesus believed, living as Jesus lived, loving as Jesus loved, serving as Jesus served, and leading as Jesus led. George Barna said people are no longer excited to take discipleship classes. Two-thirds say they are too busy, a quarter because they lack interest or motivation to grow (Barna, 2013). A tenth said they were suffering from emotional or financial problems. Another tenth has health problems. Second, testify (martyria). He witnessed the power of personal encounters, the touch of God, and the changes in his life after going through discipleship in the right community.

Third, Engage in ministry according to gifts and talents (Diakonia). As many as 85% of believers have heard of spiritual gifts and are aware of their existence. However, a quarter of them does not believe that God is faithful to His promises and personally gives spiritual gifts to them personally. When a person feels loved and accepted, he begins to develop a positive self-concept (feeling), feeling loved and accepted. Fourth, Towards Christlikeness. All believers have the same goal of becoming like Christ, but each of us's spiritual journeys tends to be unique, guided by the Holy Spirit, so no life of fellowship with God is the same. The meaning of Christlikeness is to believe in what Jesus believed, to live as Jesus lived, to love as Jesus loved, to serve as Jesus served, and to lead as Jesus led, called Tselem. Counselors in the secular world may have the same interests as Christian counselors. However, the difference is to be like Christ, be holy, imitate Him (1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:6), and become increasingly conformed to God's image of God (Rom. 8:29) (Hasiholan, 2020).

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### **Christian Therapeutic Counseling from a Pentecostal Perspective**

The Pentecostal perspective does not agree that only therapy can change what is related to a person's behavior and character. Because a personal encounter with God and through the truth of the gospel leads real life to complete restoration, this should be by cooperating with the Church and other institutions, guided by the Holy Spirit, and subject to the teachings of God's word (Gernaída Krisna R. Pakpahan, 2019). The Bible in Christian counseling can have a powerful impact that God uses to change a person's behavior and character, to help meet real needs, and to work from the outside in and from the inside out to help people grow toward Christlikeness. The solution to our problems is not enlightenment (Hasiholan & Sihotang, 2022). The Bible teaches that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the only way out. Sometimes pragmatism can be a helpful guide. It may be true if counseling techniques work to bring about change, but not consistently. Alcohol or drugs can relieve pain from anxiety or depression for some time, but they are not a wise or effective long-term solution. Christian counselors cannot rely on the prevailing philosophy of pragmatism.

Christian therapeutic counseling is a unique approach because it is biblical and based on a relationship with a counselor that is not transactional but emphasizes agape love and compassion that adopts the ministry of Jesus Christ. Counseling cannot consider Christian unless built on a clearly stated Christian worldview. To understand the worldview that underlies Christian counseling, we must carefully look at theology.

The first responsibility of a counselor is not to give advice and answers to complex problems from the counselee. However, the counseling process must begin with listening, the first to listen to God's voice for answers to the counselee and the second to listen to what the counselee has to share. Listening involves more than passively hearing the words from another person's lips. Effective listening is an active process that involves using your ears and eyes (Gernaída K. R. Pakpahan & Taneo, 2020). The counselor listens to words but is also aware of what the counselee is saying through tone of voice, gestures, posture, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues. We get to know our clients to understand them better when we hear what they have to say and see what they do. This learning is not limited to counseling. It applies to all human relationships. We learn about others by listening to their words and observing their behavior. When couples are in love, for example, they express their feelings verbally and through acts of love. God has chosen to reveal Himself in the same two ways.

In resolving family conflicts, husband and wife couples prioritize the truth of their individual opinions without involving a third person to mediate the conflicts that occur (Gernaída Krisna R Pakpahan, 2020). So that what happens is that the problem is not entirely resolved as a result. If the same conflict reappears, it is like a ticking time bomb.

The solution does not get to the grassroots so that it only piles up and piles up problems, which in the end becomes a mountain of problems or problems that have no end. Therefore, people who are facing problems should be able to get special counseling services so that they can find the right solution in solving it. The counselor is a mediator for those in trouble and can help provide education, coaching, and supervision for those in trouble. In Christian counseling services, the counselee is guided and assisted to see aspects of his life in a Christian and broader way, in his relationship and responsibility to God.

In this postmodern era, humans face many problems, including Christians, namely families, youth, men, and women, plus cases of a prolonged pandemic, job loss, and an unclear economy (Tambunan & Setyobekti, 2021). This adds to the complexity of a person's life, family, including servants (Abdillah & Hasiholan, 2021). It is undeniable that psychologically it can affect the quality of work, services, and emotions and trigger household disputes. Therefore, there is an excellent need for integrated counseling between psychology and theology. No less critical, a counselor whose life is already qualified according to God's word must be a counselee's role model. Because a psychiatrist may not have a relationship with a client, a Christian counselor and counselee must start from a relationship and agreement. They only then can achieve maximum results. Namely, a life change that liberates, restores, and liberates, meets personally with God, and experiences the likeness of Christ. Christian counseling is the uniqueness that a secular psychologist cannot do. Why is that so? Because the Lord Jesus exists and involves the counselor and the counselee.

#### **Guidance through teaching God's Word**

When the counselor with the counselee can see the problems experienced by the counselee, then the counselee needs guidance through teaching God's word. False feelings must replace with Biblical feelings.

Likewise, the behavior problem contrary to the Bible must replace with biblical behavior. The wrong thoughts that often cause stress and depression need to replace with Biblical ones. They need to see the love he receives from those who love him based on who he is, not what he does. His value is not based on his material and what people say. He needs to surrender his life entirely to Christ and the word of God, which should reject the standards and guidelines for everything he does.

The following method in cognitive counseling is behavior modification or behavior therapy. Behavioral therapy emphasizes changes in innate behavior (overt behavior). Direct behavior modification before giving counseling, counselors need to know what problems occur in the counselee's life. It can lead to changes in feelings and attitudes. This method involves modifying behavior by changing the consequences of the behavior's predecessors (things that happened before the action) (Wariki, 2020). One of the ways used by behavioral therapists is a contract, in which the counselor and the client carry out specific plans and goals between counseling sessions.

Stages to help and bring the counselee in the direction of recovery. First is a common way. This method does not solve the real problem because it is "problem oriented." Orientation only on the "disturbing symptoms" or those perceived as "problems" at the time. The second is a Special way. As Christians, we should be "solution-oriented." The orientation is on solving real problems. We believe that the problem is mainly a problem of "distorted thinking" (chaos in the way of thinking), where the person concerned always tends to think about negative things in others and even himself.

Furthermore, we believe that thoughts affect emotions or feelings and that feelings affect actions (thinking-feeling-reaction). Therefore, we believe that most problems have been solved by updating and practicing thinking. The Bible reminds us of this, written in Romans 12:2 and Colossians 3:2, and Philippians 4:8.

## Conclusion

Today, the phenomenon of the emergence of "Christian feelings" is rife among the Church, influenced by the senses. A feeling Christian is a person whose life is not controlled by his understanding of God's word but by his feelings. People like this tend to seek spiritual refreshment through God's words, whose truth is based on their inner feelings at that time. They think that conflict is an open controversy, but the true definition of conflict is the loss of peace that can fully recover from God. Therefore, Christian therapeutic counseling, oriented towards Christian spirituality, is expected to be the answer for counselees. In addition to being unique, this Christian therapeutic counseling is also extreme in its handling. However, it remains in the corridor of love (depending on the counselee's problem) because it offers the truth that involves the Holy Spirit with God's word as the foundation and basis so that the counselee can meet personally with God. Thus maximizing results and shortening the counselee's recovery time to become productive people in life and work and can be involved in fulfilling the three functions of the Church. Namely koinonia (fellowship), marturia (witnessing), and Diakonia (serving), even though they are not decision-makers in ministry. Precisely when a counselee is involved in the community, testifies, and serves. These three things also become therapy for experiencing the second level of change (renewal of mind, Romans 12:1-2) because three basic human needs must be met: feeling owned, belonging, and helpful. When a person feels loved and accepted, he begins to develop a positive self-concept (feeling), feeling loved and accepted. The Church's weakness is that new people will sometimes be involved in small and large communities after the problem is perfect and the problem is solved first. Therefore, many souls are lost because they feel unaccepted and loved (having negative feelings). Counselors must synergize with other fields with different gifts, including the local Church, discipleship team, mission, and pastoral because synergy helps perfect a counselee's recovery and shorten the time. Moreover, it can maximize the results achieved. The counselee finds a new identity based on relational values in the transformative wisdom of Jesus, which is centered on the Spirit, the process of redemption, and the birth of new creation in His image (Tselem).

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#### Article Information (Supplementary)

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