

**FOCUSING ON EMOTIONS IN PASTORAL MARITAL COUNSELLING:
AN EVANGELICAL ASSESSMENT**

by

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SUMMARY:

This dissertation evaluates the degree of “fit” in employing Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy [EFCT] within the context of congregational ministry and/or a Christian counselling center to counsel evangelical couples who have experienced an “attachment injury.” The present study introduces and examines the possibility that, given an appropriate level of theological reflection, EFCT is an appropriate counselling methodology for use by evangelical clergy and counselors. Beginning with an examination of the values, assumptions and practices of EFCT this study explores three dimensions of the interface between EFCT and ecclesiastical practice: a) a theological reflection on the values and assumptions that inform the practice of EFCT; b) a comparison of EFCT with the marital counselling theories of Howard Clinebell, Jr., Larry Crabb, Jr., H. Norman Wright, and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., noting how each of these theories conceptualizes and treats both the marital dyad and emotional experience; and, c) an examination of Christians’ perceptions of, and receptivity to, this model.

The research demonstrates that the pastoral adaptation of EFCT highlighted in this study was rated favorably but not superior to the other four models. Specifically, it is noted that those who had previously experienced marital counselling, pastoral or otherwise, appeared to be attracted to the EFCT model as it was presented, even though the exemplar did not explicitly incorporate either the use of scripture, prayer, religious homework, or spiritual themes such as forgiveness and mutuality in marriage. The fact that even in the absence of an explicitly spiritual emphasis EFCT received high ratings suggests there is something within the model that speaks to the committed evangelical

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believer. The study concludes that even though EFCT may not be known within the evangelical community the perspective it offers “fits” with the values of this part of the Christian community and seems to appeal to those who have previously experienced marital difficulties. As a result, it may be stated that EFCT offers a mode of intervention that is suitable for use with evangelical Christians.

Keywords: Pastoral Counselling, Pastoral Care, Marriage Counselling, Marital Counselling, Marital Therapy, Marital Relationships, Emotions, Imago Dei, Attachment Theory, Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy, Susan M. Johnson, Everett L. Worthington Jr., H. Norman Wright, Lawrence J. Crabb Jr., Howard Clinbell Jr., Integration of Psychology and Theology.

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I declare that *Focusing on emotions in pastoral marital counselling: An evangelical assessment* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Rev. K F MUTTER

DATE

Dedication

To:

My parents, who taught me men need not be afraid of their emotions.

My wife, Jan, who has taught me much about how to share my emotions.

My children, Joshua, Anna & Daniel, who have helped me learn how to live with my emotions.

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It has been said, “it takes a village to raise a child.” Over the past three years I have become convinced that no single individual can accomplish anything of note without the involvement of his or her community. To this end I would like to acknowledge the role my community has played in the process of completing this degree.

First and foremost, I thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through whom we have forgiveness of sin and access to the heavenly Father. By faith we have fellowship or community with Christ and are called into community with each other. It is through this fellowship we learn the joys and responsibilities of living in community.

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Kelvin F. Mutter
Cambridge, Ontario
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Chapter 1: The Problem and Its Setting

Odell (2000) identified three factors that contribute to a positive outcome in counselling. First of all, he observed that a positive therapeutic outcome is a function of the counselor's ability to match therapeutic interventions with the particular challenges presented by the client or couple. In this regard, the manualized treatment strategies of Worthington (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a) and Wright (Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a) serve to focus the work of the pastoral or Christian marital counselor by providing specific interventions designed for use with particular types of issues or at specific points in the therapeutic process. In addition to these strategies, the published empirical research on Christian marital therapy provides pastors and Christian marital therapists with important data supporting the effectiveness of specific interventions or strategies in specific contexts (c.f. Ripley, 1999; Ripley, Parrott, Parrott, Worthington, 2000; Ripley & Worthington, 2002a; Sandage, Worthington, Hight & Berry, 2000; Worthington, Hight, Ripley, Perrone, Kuru, & Jones, 1997; Worthington, Kuru, Collins, Berry, Ripley & Baier, 2000).

Second, Odell (2000) observed that a positive therapeutic outcome is a function of the counselor's ability to work with the values of the client or couple. This observation is supported by Worthington's research team who have noted that therapeutic outcomes with highly religious clients are improved when the therapist is able to employ those values in the therapeutic process (Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001; Worthington, 1988; Worthington, Dupont, Berry, & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Scott, 1985). One significant aspect of these findings is that, while the Christian counselling literature frequently focuses on the theoretical interface between theology and counselling theory, clients appear to be primarily concerned about the interface between their theological values and those of the counselor or therapist. Finally, Odell (2000) observed that a positive therapeutic outcome is a function of the counselor's ability to employ a therapeutic model that "fits" the client's understanding of the presenting problem.

A. Statement of the problem

If the issue of “values” arises from the interface between the worldviews of the counselor and client couple, the issue of “fit” speaks to whether the counselor and client couple can arrive at a common understanding of the nature and the treatment of the problem under discussion. Historically, the models of marital counselling used by Christian therapists tended to be Psychodynamic, Family Systems, Cognitive-Behavioural, or, Solution-Focused in orientation (Ripley and Worthington, 1998). A review of the literature pertaining to pastoral marital counselling indicates these counselling approaches have tended to be: Psychodynamically oriented (c.f. Stewart, 1961), Family Systems oriented (c.f. Sandholm, 1982; Luecke, 1991; Treat & Hof, 1987), or Experientially oriented (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). The literature also reveals a recent trend to incorporate within the work of pastoral and Christian marital counselling principles and insights drawn from Emotionally-Focused Therapy (c.f. Bailey, 2002; Benson, 2002a; Craig, 2000; Edwards, 2003; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Hart-Morris, 2000; Hart-Morris, 2002a; Hart-Morris, 2002b; Van Alstine, 2002; Worthington, 1994c; Worthington, 1996b, Worthington, 1999a). The fact that pastoral and Christian marital therapists employ a diverse range of theoretical orientations when counselling couples raises questions as to how these models are perceived and whether any of the models currently practiced is a better “fit” for those who self-identify as “Christians.” In this regard, the published research focusing on the degree of “fit” between the counsellee and selected pastoral and Christian models of therapy is limited to two studies focusing on models of individual therapy (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the degree of “fit” in employing Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy [EFCT] within the context of congregational ministry and/or a Christian counselling center while counselling couples who have experienced an “attachment injury.”

B. Statement of the subproblems

Subproblem 1. The first subproblem is to identify the theological-philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT and evaluate these values utilizing Evangelical-Christian criteria.

Subproblem 2. The second subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the marital relationship.

Subproblem 3. The third subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the experience of emotion.

Subproblem 4. The fourth subproblem is to assess whether self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling would prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy to any of the other approaches included within this study.

C. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. It is hypothesized that the therapeutic perspective, including interventions, offered by Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy is not necessarily dependent upon the philosophical assumptions of its founding writers. Stated positively, it is anticipated that an Evangelical theological appraisal of EFCT will conclude that the therapeutic perspective offered by this model may be incorporated into the practice of Christian counselling without violating the integrity of either the counselling model or a Christian worldview.

Hypothesis 2. It is hypothesized that Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy provides an integrated theory of marriage that reveals deficiencies in the way marriage is conceptualized and treated by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy. This hypothesis invites

theoretical and theological reflection both on the nature of the marital bond and the practice of counselling couples.

Hypothesis 3. It is hypothesized that the theory of emotions offered by Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy reveals a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy. As in the case of the second hypothesis, this hypothesis invites theoretical and theological reflection both on the nature of emotions and the role or use of emotions in marital counselling.

Hypothesis 4. It is hypothesized that self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling from a pastor or Christian counselor/therapist will not prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy over any of the other approaches included within this study.

D. Delimitations

1. This study will not compare Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy with pastoral/Christian models of couple counselling that are primarily focused on pre-marital preparation or supporting those who are newly married.
2. This study will not compare Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy with every existing model of pastoral/Christian marital counselling.
3. This study will compare Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy with models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling that (i) are supported by an appropriate body of literature, (ii) are known to have been taught to seminarians, and (iii) have been used widely by North American clergy.
4. This study will not evaluate the attractiveness of the selected models of pastoral or Christian marital counselling in the treatment of all types of marital difficulty.

5. This study will examine how the challenges posed by an attachment injury influences an individual's receptivity to the use of one of the selected models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling.
6. This study will not invite reflection on an individual's receptivity to treatment for attachment injuries resulting from the dissolution of a marriage.
7. This study will not evaluate the outcome or effectiveness of the selected approaches to pastoral/Christian marital counselling when used in the treatment of an attachment injury within the marital relationship.
8. This study will not examine the relationship between religious commitment and an individual's receptivity to the treatment methods employed by selected models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling.
9. This study will seek to examine the relationship between an individual's beliefs about the role of faith and religion in counselling with his or her perceptions of selected models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling.
10. This study will examine the relationship between an individual's prior experiences in marital counselling with his or her receptivity to the treatment methods employed by selected models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling for treating an attachment injury within the marital relationship.

E. Definitions of terms

For the purposes of this study the following definitions will apply.

Attachment injury. A condition of relational insecurity resulting from the inability of a couple to re-establish a secure attachment in the wake of a significant threat such as an affair, intimate partner abuse, or other trust eroding event.

Attachment Theory. A perspective on human relationships drawn from the writings of John Bowlby and others that views the creation and maintaining of contact with others and the desire to feel secure within these relationships to be a primary motivating principle for human beings. While individuals may differ in their attachment styles, all people respond to perceived or actual threats to the relationship by enacting behaviours intended to re-establish that relationship.

Biblical Counselling. a) Any approach to *counselling* that relies on the Christian scriptures and theological insight, rather than psychology or empirically derived insight, to guide both the counselor and the process in the treatment of the human condition. b) An approach to counselling developed by Jay Adams and his associates that emphasizes the work of spiritual guidance and addresses the “maladies of the soul” that prevent a person from a lifestyle that reflects the behavioural teaching of the Scriptures, also known as Nouthetic Counselling.

Christian Counselling. Any approach to counselling that draws insight with respect to the human condition from the Christian scriptures, theological insight, and empirically-based psychology and which seeks to integrate these sources of knowledge in the treatment of those who seek counselling.

Counselling. Any response to the human condition that assists an individual to discover and develop his or her psychological or relational potential through the use of case history data, interview techniques, and testing instruments.

Emotions. The affective aspect of consciousness, a state of feeling, a psychic and physical reaction such as fear that is subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involves changes that prepare the body for immediate vigorous action. Theories of emotion may be classified as being either biosocial or constructivist in nature. Biosocial theories assume that emotions are rooted in biological makeup while constructivist theories assume that emotions are cognitively constructed and derived from experience.

Evangelical. While in many parts of the globe the word Evangelical refers to Christians who are not members of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christian communions and is analogous to the word “Protestant,” the word is used in this study according to its British and North American usage. According to Bebbington (1989) the four chief characteristics of Evangelicalism are an emphasis on: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism. Within Evangelicalism the conversion of the soul is rooted in the conviction of sin and the confession of one’s need of God’s forgiveness and wholeness as mediated by the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the Evangelical, however, true conversion does not end here. Rather, conversion results in a changed life, a life that that gives evidence to the redemptive work of God’s Spirit as the person’s life is transformed (Bebbington, 1989). The quality of activism, as highlighted by Bebbington, refers to the fact that Evangelicals are characteristically concerned for the spiritual welfare of others and as a result apply themselves to the work of warning others of spiritual danger, encouraging people in the faith, and instructing fellow believers (Bebbington, 1989). Biblicism refers to the fact that Evangelicals have a high view of scripture, believing it to be the one source of spiritual truth (Bebbington, 1989). Finally, as implied above, crucicentrism refers to the conviction that the cross of Christ, and all that this event implies, is the foundation of the gospel (Bebbington, 1989).

Fit. For the purposes of this study the definition of “fit” enlarges upon Odell’s (2000) definition to include both the degree of congruence between a counselling model’s and the client couple’s understanding of the presenting problem as well as the degree of congruence between the implicit and explicit “values” of a counselling model and those of client couple.

Pastoral Counselling. a) Counselling that is done by a member of the clergy. b) Counselling that reflects the pastoral tradition of soul care, spiritual direction, and, guidance, thus focusing on the maladies of the soul, assisting individuals to gain a clearer understanding (experientially) of who they are in relationship to God, and, helping individuals to discern and understand how they should act as Christians. c) Counselling that reflects the methods and values of the Clinical Pastoral Education

(CPE) movement. Within this study the phrases “pastoral counselling” and “pastoral marital counselling” (without capital letters) will be used to refer to counselling that is done by clergy and is inclusive of the Biblical Counselling and Christian Counselling models. The phrase “Pastoral Counselling” (with capitals) is used to refer to those models of counselling that are associated with the Clinical Pastoral Education movement.

Reason. The faculty or process of drawing logical inferences based on available data and frequently understood to be in opposition to sensation, perception, feeling, and desire.

Therapy. Any response to the human condition that seeks to meet people in the midst of profound brokenness and is designed to foster healing, both in the individual and their relationships.

F. Assumptions

Given that a client’s expectation to benefit from counselling/therapy has been identified as a core factor in effective therapy (c.f. Bertolino, 2002; Hubble, Duncan & Miller, 1999), it is assumed that the degree of “fit” between a client and a particular treatment model is a contributing factor in his or her expectation to benefit from counselling/therapy.

Based on data derived from the General Social Survey (U.S.A.) that indicates people are very likely to seek help from a member of the clergy (Pescosolido, Martin, Link, Kikuzawa, Burgos, Swindle & Phelan, 1996), it is assumed clergy will continue to serve as front-line counselors and may be the only source of counsel accessed by many individuals and couples.

Given the importance placed on marriage by the religious community, as well as Worthington & McMurry’s (1994) observation “that over sixty percent of Americans prefer to see clergy about marital problems,” it is assumed that marital issues are, and will continue to be, a major reason why people seek pastoral counsel.

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed the published research on Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy provides sufficient documentation with respect to the validity and efficacy of this treatment modality (c.f. Denton, Burlison, Clark, Rodriguez & Hobbs, 2000; Johnson & Lebow, 2000; Kowal, Johnson & Lee, 2003; Vatcher & Bogo, 2001).

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that previously published research on the effect of religiosity on client perceptions and experience of counselling provides sufficient documentation with respect to the correlation of these two factors (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001; Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985; Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough & Sandage, 1996).

G. Importance of the study

The field of Practical Theology is so named not merely because it seeks to apply knowledge gained through the study of Biblical Theology or Systematic Theology to the praxis of ministry but because it is *grounded* in the experience of the individual, the church and society. The study of Practical Theology, therefore, invites the student, the pastor, and the theologian to be students of what the seventeenth century Puritans referred to as the Book of Scripture and the Book of Life (referring to the life situations of the people to whom they ministered). If the study of scripture involves the work of exegesis and theological reflection, then the study of the “book of life” involves the theologian in the work of empirical research. The present study seeks to engage these two texts, scripture and life, with a view to assessing and evaluating the “fit” between an empirically based model of marital therapy and communities of faith who seek to ground the practice of ministry through the work of biblical exegesis. Indeed, it is anticipated that the decision to focus on the issue of “fit” will result in two contributions to the field of pastoral marital therapy.

First, while clear advances have been made in the area of empirical research in pastoral marital therapy (c.f. Ripley & Worthington, 1998), two areas of empirical inquiry that continue to be

untouched are how potential clients perceive and respond to a particular model of pastoral marital counselling, and, how potential clients might compare or rate models of pastoral marital counselling. Indeed, whereas Dougherty and Worthington (1982) as well as Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) studied people's perceptions of Christian models of individual therapy, this researcher was unable to locate any comparable studies of people's perceptions of either pastoral or Christian models of marital therapy. Thus, the first contribution of this study lies in the fact it is grounded in the life of the community as it seeks to provide a measure of the public's perception of each of the models contained in the empirical research component.

The second contribution of this study will be found in the theological analysis that is given to Emotionally-Focused Therapy. The recent increase in the number of references to Emotionally-Focused Therapy within the pastoral counselling literature suggests this therapeutic model resonates with the experience of a growing number of pastoral counselors (c.f. Bailey, 2002; Benson, 2004; Craig, 2000; Edwards, 2003; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Hart-Morris, 2000; Hart-Morris, 2002a; Hart-Morris, 2002b; Van Alstine, 2002; Worthington, 1994c; Worthington, 1996b, Worthington, 1999a). A review of this literature suggests, however, that the practical application of EFCT has taken precedence over the work of theological reflection. As a result the work of theological reflection with a view to exploring the integration issues raised by the use of EFCT by evangelicals has been largely untouched. This oversight is significant in light of the fact that both Susan Johnson and Les Greenberg describe Emotionally-Focused Therapy as a humanistic therapeutic model. Thus, the chapter on theological reflection seeks to ground the present study in the disciplines of Biblical and Systematic Theology, filling a gap left by other writers.

H. Review of the related literature

In what may be the most succinct survey of the history of marital therapy, Gurman and Fraenkel (2002) suggest the development of the field of marital therapy can be divided into four distinct phases, each of which will be briefly described.

Phase I — Atheoretical Marriage Counseling Formation (1930-1963)

Phase II — Psychoanalytic Experimentation (1931-1966)

Phase III — Family Therapy Incorporation (1963-1985)

Phase IV — Refinement, Extension, Diversification, and Integration (1986-present).

Gurman and Fraenkel (2002)

For Gurman and Fraenkel the initiation of the first phase occurred when the practice of marriage counselling emerged as a distinct discipline, as opposed to being a subset of the work of clergy and doctors (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). What makes these beginnings “atheoretical” is the fact there were no formal theories of marital counselling giving shape to the counselling process (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). Despite this gap in theory, this phase resulted in the development of standards of practice, the first formal efforts to train marriage counselors, and, the creation of a body of professional, but not necessarily scientific, literature (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). In the absence of a formal theory of marital counselling, practitioners sought to ground their work within a theory or theories. Initially, practitioners looked to the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories to inform their work, and specifically to approaches to marital therapy that were emerging within these theories (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). As a result, the field built its understanding of the couple as well its methods of intervention on theories of individual adaptation (Johnson and Lebow, 2000). This move toward the psychoanalytic traditions marks what Gurman and Fraenkel describe as the second phase in the development of the field.

The third phase in the history of marital therapy is defined by attempts to incorporate ideas and concepts from the field of Family Therapy with the result that the theory and practice of marital counselling and marital therapy was eclipsed by Family Therapy theory (Gurman and Fraenkel,

2002). According to Johnson and Lebow (2000) the systemic perspective made therapists and researchers aware of the importance of working with the couple process as a distinct entity. Among the family therapists whose views on marriage and work with couples have played a significant role in the development of the field are, Don D. Jackson, Virginia Satir, Murray Bowen, and Jay Haley (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

The fourth, and most recent, phase in the history of marital therapy is characterized by four processes – refinement, extension, diversification, and integration (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). This phase marks the emergence of the field of marital therapy from the shadows of the psychoanalytic and Family Therapy traditions (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). Gurman and Fraenkel note the process of *refinement* is seen in the development of therapeutic theories and modalities that focus specifically on couples. These marital therapies include Behavioural Marital Therapy (BMT), Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFCT), Insight-Oriented Marital Therapy (IOMT), and, the reemergence of Psychodynamic Couple Therapy (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002, Johnson & Lebow, 2000). The process of *extension* is seen in the move, on the part of some, to utilize marital therapy in the treatment of psychiatric disorders (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). The process of *diversification* differs from that of extension in that while *extension* seeks to apply theory in new directions and to new sets of problems *diversification* refers to a broadening of the philosophical foundations of marital therapy to include Feminism, Multiculturalism and Postmodernism (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002, Johnson & Lebow, 2000). Finally, the authors identify that the process of *integration* may be observed along two fronts. On the one hand, there has been a move to develop integrative models that incorporate concepts from two, or more, theories or models (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002, Johnson & Lebow, 2000). Two examples of this type of integration are: Sager, who grounded his approach in psychoanalytic theory but used behavioural techniques, and W. C. Nichols, who built off developmental and object relations theories but employed behavioural techniques (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002). The second direction in which integration has been pursued has been that of making links outside the field. Two examples of

this process are the integration of couple therapy and brief therapy and the integration of marital therapy and sex therapy (Gurman and Fraenkel, 2002).

H.1. Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy [EFCT]

There exists a significant body of literature that describes the principles and practices of Emotionally Focused Couples' therapy (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Johnson, 1995; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1998b; Johnson, 1998c; Johnson, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Johnson & Denton, 2002; Johnson & Greenberg, 1987b; Johnson & Greenberg, 1994; Johnson & Sims, 2000). In addition this, the literature asserts that Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy is one of two models of marriage counselling supported by a strong research base, the other well researched model is Behavioural Marital Therapy (BMT) (Denton, Burleson, Clark, Rodriguez & Hobbs, 2000; Johnson & Lebow, 2000; Kowal, Johnson & Lee, 2003; Vatcher & Bogo, 2001). Finally, the literature suggests that EFCT is a particularly flexible and robust theory capable of helping individuals, couples and families resolve primary attachment emotions activated as a result of a variety of circumstances: life-cycle transitions (Dankoski, 2001), a chronically ill family member (Cloutier, Manion, Walker & Johnson, 2002; Kowal, Johnson & Lee, 2003; Walker, Johnson, Manion, Cloutier, 1996), experiences of trauma (Johnson & Williams-Keeler, 1998), and an emotionally withdrawn male spouse (Johnson & Talitman, 1997; Vatcher & Bogo, 2001). The literature also indicates that the creation of a safe haven within the relationship through increased empathy, a softening of "blame," and increased emotional awareness on the part of the emotionally withdrawn partner has sustained value that lasts well beyond the end of therapy (Cloutier, Manion, Walker & Johnson, 2002; Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994; Greenberg, James & Conry, 1988; Johnson & Talitman, 1997; Johnson & Williams-Keeler, 1998). Johnson and Talitman (1997) also note that the client's perception that the interventions used within EFT are relevant to his or her needs is an important determinant of outcome. Finally, just as Vatcher and Bogo (2001) have observed that EFT is a "hospitable host for the infusion of feminist family therapy principles," a number of articles relating to the practice of pastoral counselling suggest EFCT

may also serve as a hospitable host for the infusion of Christian values and counselling principles (c.f. Bailey, 2002; Benson, 2004; Craig, 2000; Edwards, 2003; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Hart-Morris, 2000; Hart-Morris, 2002a; Hart-Morris, 2002b; Van Alstine, 2002; Worthington, 1994c; Worthington, 1996b).

H.2. Pastoral marital counselling

The literature on pastoral marriage counselling reveals that the models employed by clergy who do marital counselling mirror those employed within the broader therapeutic community (Ripley & Worthington, 1998). Following Gurman and Fraenkel's (2002) developmental history of the field it is observed that the field of pastoral marriage counselling began in a state of atheoretical practice, as characterized by the work of Southard (1959), Adams (1983, 1996), Narramore (1961), and Tournier (1967), and moved through a period of psychoanalytic experimentation, as seen in the work of Stewart (1961), Crabb (1982), Compaan (1987), and Joy (1994, 1996). In the 1970's, the field of pastoral marital counselling began to develop models that drew upon methods developed by family therapists (c.f. Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Van den Blink, 1972). Within the field of Christian marriage counselling this phase, Family Therapy Incorporation, may be discerned in the influence of Bowen systems theory on Guernsey (1994, 1996), Butler & Harper (1994) and Parrott & Parrott (1996) as well as the influence of the Behavioural marital therapies on writers like Bustanoby (1976), Drakeford (1979), Friesen & Friesen (1989), Hunt (1994), Miller (Oliver & Miller, 1994), Stanley (Stanley & Trathen, 1994; Stanley, Trathen & McCain, 1996), Tweedie (1976), Worthington (1989a) and Wright (1995). The influence of systemic thinking on Worthington's early model is particularly evident when he identifies a need to develop theories of Christian marital therapy built on an integrated theory of marriage that considers three levels of analysis: a) individual constructs; b) the operation of the marriage as a unit or system; and c) the position of the married couple in the family cycle (Worthington, 1989a).

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A number of recent developments suggest the fourth stage of development reviewed by Gurman & Fraenkel (2002), Refinement, Extension, Diversification, and Integration, may also be observable within the field of pastoral marital counselling. *Refinement*, or the development of therapeutic theories and modalities that focus specifically on couples, may be seen in the work of Bailey (2002), Bradley & Furrow (2004), Edwards (2003), Giblin (1993), Hart-Morris (2002a), Treat & Hof (1987), and Van Alstine (2002). *Extension*, or the use of marital therapy in the treatment of non-marital or non-relational conditions may be seen in Sweatman's (1999) discussion of marital satisfaction, cross-cultural adjustment and psychological stress. Similarly, *Diversification*, or the broadening of the field of marital therapy such that it becomes inclusive of a different perspective is evident in the field's awareness of gender issues (c.f. Alsdurf & Alsdurf, 1989; Blue, 2001; Doehring, 1992; Neuger, 1992; Rinck, 1990), as well as the role of culture (c.f. Augsburg, 1986; Ghunney, 1993; Leslie, 1995; van Beek, 1996). Finally, *Integration* may be observed in the incorporation of brief therapy into the practice of pastoral marital counselling (Headrick, 1987; Thomas, 1999; Wright, 2002a; Worthington, 1994c; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a).

Further maturation of the field is evident in the efforts of researchers who have applied themselves to the empirical study of the efficacy of a select group of Christian marital and premarital counselling models.¹ This research suggests Crabb's *Marriage Builder* (Himes, 1990; Smith, 1992), Worthington's Hope-focused Marriage Counselling (Burchard, Yarhouse, Kilian, Worthington, Berry & Canter, 2003; Ripley, 1999; Ripley & Worthington, 2002a; Worthington, Hight, Ripley, Perrone, Kurusu, & Jones, 1997) and Worthington's work with forgiveness-based approaches (McCullough & Worthington, 1994a; McCullough & Worthington, 1994b; Ripley, 1999; Sandage, Worthington, Hight & Berry, 2000; Wade & Worthington, 2003; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley &

¹ Aside from a reference to two qualitative studies conducted by Clinebell, this writer is not aware of any outcomes-based research examining the efficacy of marital counseling models that would be representative of either the Pastoral Marital Counseling or Biblical Marital Counseling traditions.

Baier, 2000) have demonstrated positive effects when used with couples in treatment.² Taken as a whole, these studies provide a meager but growing body of research in support of the assumptions, values and methods employed by a select group of Christian marital therapies. The literature further suggests that attention to spiritual issues, as well as the manner in which spiritual issues are addressed, is an important factor in therapy (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; McCullough & Worthington, 1995; Morrow, Worthington & McCullough, 1993; Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001; Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985; Worthington & Scott, 1983).

Despite these advances, treatment protocols associated with different models of pastoral marital counselling remain largely unexamined. For example, aside from the studies of Worthington's models, there are no known factor studies that identify which elements within a particular pastoral marital counselling model are most effective. Similarly, aside from some of the studies associated with Worthington's models, there are no known studies that identify whether any particular approach to Christian marriage counselling is effective with a particular "problem type." Finally, there are no known differential outcome studies comparing the efficacy of two theories such as Worthington's Hope-Focused model and Clinebell's *Growth Counseling* model, Wright's brief counselling model, Crabb's *Marriage Builder* model or Hart-Morris' *Safe Haven* model.

H.3. References to EFCT in the pastoral counselling literature

References to EFCT in the pastoral counselling literature tend to be of four types. First of all, there is a body of literature that identifies EFCT as having influenced or changed the practice of the writer such that they now seek to balance the cognitive and affective dimensions in their work (Benson, 2002a; Edwards, 2003; Worthington, 1994c). Thus, Edwards writes:

The intervention framework I use draws heavily upon attachment theory. I have been greatly

² In addition to these studies it is noted that two Christian approaches to marriage preparation, SYMBIS (Ripley, Parrott, Worthington, & Parrott, 2000; Ripley, Parrott, Worthington, Parrott & Smith, 2001) and Christian PREP (Stanley & Trathen, 1994; Stanley, Trathen & McCain, 1996), have been demonstrated as effective.

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influenced in my clinical work by the Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) model of Susan Johnson and Leslie Greenberg... The EFT approach encourages both the expression of needs and vulnerabilities as well as responsiveness to the needs and vulnerabilities of the partner. I see EFT as fostering love, truth, and grace (Eph. 4:15) as the core dynamics of intimate relating... (Edwards, 2003:194).

This rather lengthy quotation, while not specifically addressing pastoral practices in marital therapy, reveals not only an appreciation for the effectiveness of the model but also a belief that Emotionally-Focused Therapy is capable of producing behaviours that are consistent with Christian values.

Benson's comments on EFT are similar to those of Edwards in that he describes EFT as focusing "on how partners organize and negotiate their interactions" (Benson, 2002a). In addition to this claim, Benson states that an awareness of EFT theory serves to "overcome a natural preoccupation with analysis and problem solving" (Benson, 2002a). Worthington likewise commented that he read and practiced "some of the techniques of emotionally-focused marital therapy," noting that he no longer "emphasized behaviour, cognition an structure as much as before" (Worthington, 1996b). In a later text, Worthington (1999a) provides specific indications as to how much EFCT based interventions have influenced his practice model (pp. 48, 55, 124, 214, 264).

Next, there is a body of literature that is generally descriptive of either attachment theory or the practice of EFCT (Bailey, 2002; Hart-Morris, 2002a; Van Alstine, 2002). Van Alstine (2002), for example, summarized and reviewed fifteen articles on Attachment Theory, noting that attention to the role of attachment is an important aspect of couples' therapy (Van Alstine, 2002). Similarly, Bailey summarizes the key elements or concepts that shape Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy, noting that this approach to therapy provides the couple with a mechanism by which they can "learn to trust and foster mutual empathy and supportive stances with one another" (Bailey, 2002). Finally, Sharon Hart-Morris (Hart-Morris, 2002a) describes the role of attachment in marital and emotional distress and summarizes, in step-by-step fashion, the nine-step process of change practiced by Emotionally Focused therapists. While these articles summarize the core elements of Emotionally-Focused

Therapy, the authors neglect to address the question as to how this approach to counselling interfaces with either the spiritual or communal concerns that generally inform the work of pastoral counselling. Third, there is a body of literature that seeks to make the insights of Attachment Theory and the principles underlying EFCT accessible to the Christian consumer. Hart-Morris (2002b), for example, outlines the role of attachment in marital and emotional distress and concludes with a five-step process couples can use to find connection within the marriage. Similarly, *Safe Haven Marriage* (Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003) utilizes Attachment Theory to help couples understand the nature of the marital bond and how the dynamics of marital interaction are shaped by both partner's attachment styles. Hart and Hart-Morris (2003) then draw on this foundation to help couples better understand the processes by which a couple's emotions can fuel negative interactions, thus keeping the couple emotionally disconnected. Hart and Hart-Morris (2003) also adapt Greenberg and Johnson's (1988) nine-step change process for use by the reader in a self-help program. As with the previous texts that were discussed, neither the article by Hart-Morris (2002b) nor the book by Hart and Hart-Morris (2003) address the spiritual-theological concerns of the evangelical community.

Finally, a small number of dissertations have been written by students at Fuller Theological Seminary. These studies have focused on three areas: attachment in marriage (Hart-Morris, 2000), the use of EFCT in the work of marriage preparation (Craig, 2000), and developing a fuller understanding of what EFCT refers to as "the blamer softening event" (Bradley, 2001). Unfortunately, only one of these three dissertations Craig (2000) is currently available outside of Fuller Seminary's McAlister library. Through personal correspondence with Brent Bradley (email dated November 17, 2004) this researcher was able to determine that subsequent to his dissertation defense Bradley had refined his research findings and published them in the *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy* (Bradley & Furrow, 2004). In his research Bradley analyzed audiotapes of sessions in which one marital partner, who was characterized as the "blamer," softened his or her responses to the other partner. His research confirms the claim by EFCT therapists that the facilitation of emotional experience and the

disclosing of affect related to attachment is indeed central to the EFCT “softening event” (Bradley & Furrow, 2004). Personal correspondence with Sharon Hart-Morris (email dated November 26, 2004) provided access to the 36-Item research instrument *Haven of Safety Relationship Scale* she developed in conjunction with her dissertation and a three-page *Theoretical and Statistical Review of Haven of Safety Relationship Scale*. Based on this correspondence and Hart-Morris’ other writings, it is apparent that the focus of her research was on the assessment and measurement of the quality of the marital attachment relationship. While it is evident that both of these studies have served to advance our understanding and implementation of EFCT, neither of these studies is specifically focused on the use or application of this model within the context of either pastoral or Christian counselling.

Craig’s dissertation, *Intimacy in marriage: Emotionally focused marital education within the Australian Seventh-Day Adventist Church* (2000), does, however, focus on the work of pastoral ministry and the application of EFCT within this context. Whereas Hart-Morris’ work utilized a quantitative research study involving a test group of 114 couples and Bradley’s work utilized a qualitative research study that involved the coding of four audio-taped interviews, Craig’s study draws exclusively from Christian and secular sources on the topics of marital health and emotions as well as selected theological sources. As a result, Craig’s study is more of a proposal as to how emotionally focused marital education may be used as an adjunct to the church’s ministry.

Furthermore, the focus of Craig’s work is on developing an educational guide to help couples enhance “their marital dynamics and emotional bonds” (Craig, 2000). To his credit, Craig (2000) seeks to develop a Biblically based theological apologetic for marriage that emphasizes the role, within the context of God’s acts of creation, of both human sexuality and the marital covenant. Unfortunately, the level of theological reflection provided by Craig is not sufficiently nuanced to clearly address either the integration issues relating to EFCT’s philosophical values, or the philosophical fit between EFCT and an evangelical worldview.

H.4. Research on the Question of “Fit” in Pastoral or Christian Counselling.

Historically, discussions in the literature relating to the “fit” between Christian clients and psychotherapy have tended to focus on either the interface between the values of the counsellee and those of the counselor (Keating & Fretz, 1990; McCullough & Worthington, 1995; McCullough, Worthington, Maxie & Rachal, 1997; Pecnik & Epperson, 1985; Worthington, 1988), client perceptions with respect to the treatment of religious issues (Morrow, Worthington & McCullough, 1993; Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Scott, 1983), client religiosity (Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001) and client preferences for a particular form of Christian therapy (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). A major point of interest in most of these studies was the extent to which either client religiosity, as measured by client beliefs, or client values impacted their perceptions of therapy offered either by Christian and non-Christian therapists or within a religious vs. secular context. In studies involving individual therapy religious values, rather than beliefs, were found to be predictive of participant preference for and anticipation of the efficacy of therapy. However, Ripley, Worthington and Berry (2001) found that both religious beliefs and religious values were predictive of participant preference for and anticipation of the efficacy of marital therapy. As a result of this finding they surmised that when a therapist explicitly identifies him or herself as a Christian therapist the therapist is likely to attract highly religious Christians (Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001). This finding appears to be supported by two studies in which the participants were invited to rate the attractiveness of selected Christian therapies (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). The results of these studies suggest that conservative Christian clients appear to base their preference for a particular counselling model based on their perception of similarities between their religious outlook and that of the counselor (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985).

I. The data, their treatment and their interpretation

I.1. The data

Four types of primary data are relevant to this study: a) textual data found in books and journal articles that describe the assumptions, values, goals and methods of the counselling models under discussion, b) responses to the survey tool that will be used, c) biblical and theological texts relevant to Christian anthropology and a theological understanding of the marital bond, and, d) journal articles describing previous research on the perceptions and preferences of clients with respect to the practice of Christian therapy. In addition to the primary data, two types of secondary data will be employed: a) published studies and unpublished dissertations and theses examining the assumptions, values, goals, methods and efficacy of Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy, and, b) commentaries, theological wordbooks, published studies and unpublished dissertations, theses and papers relevant to Christian anthropology and a theological understanding of the marital bond.

I.2. The criteria governing the admissibility of the data

There are three sets of data within this study for which it is necessary to establish the criteria by which the data will be included.

I.2.a Criteria Set 1 – Evaluating EFCT Using Different Philosophical Perspectives

Criterion 1a – Data relating to EFCT will be accepted on the basis that it informs the study concerning: this model's underlying theory base, including its perspectives on marriage and emotion, the counselor-therapist's behaviour, including strategies and techniques, the model's understanding of dysfunctional and normal behaviour, and, the model's effectiveness in treating couples.

Criterion 1b – Data relating to the four theories selected for comparison will be confined to information that speaks to the manner in which these theories conceptualize marriage and the

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experience of emotion. Thus the focus of comparison will consist in understanding “What does perspective “X” say about “Y”.” It is believed that by defining and comparing the data in this manner that a meaningful comparison can be made of the theories under discussion.

Criterion 1c – The process of theological and philosophical reflection will focus on three areas:

EFCT’s underlying philosophical perspective, EFCT’s conceptualization of the marital bond, and EFCT’s conceptualization of emotional experience.

I.2.b ***Criteria Set 2 – Criteria for the selection of comparator models***

The criteria for selecting a particular model of pastoral marital counselling for inclusion in this study as a comparator to Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy are listed below:

Criterion 2a – Is the model a “counselling model” as opposed to being a marriage enrichment model, a marital education model, or, a marriage preparation model?

Criterion 2b – Is the counselling model supported by empirical research? The importance of this criterion is supported by Worthington (1989a) who identified that one of the characteristics of an integrated Christian counselling theory is that its “theoretical underpinnings... should be rich and complex enough to stimulate research.”

Criterion 2c – Is the counselling model generally known as a pastoral counselling model?

Criterion 2d – Has the counselling model enjoyed use as a tool for training or educating pastors and Christian counselors?

Criterion 2e – No model of pastoral or Christian marital counselling that fails to satisfy the foregoing criteria will be selected for inclusion in this study.

I.2.c ***Criteria Set 3 – The criteria governing the admissibility of survey data are as follows.***

Criterion 3a - In keeping with Worthington & Gascoyne's (1985) earlier work, the minimum number of individuals participating in the survey is set at 50 respondents per counselling model included within the study.

Criterion 3b - In keeping with Worthington & Gascoyne's (1985) earlier work, each participant will only rate one counselling model, thus eliminating the possibility of comparison and contamination.

Criterion 3c - In keeping with the pastoral focus of this study participants will be recruited from a variety of Christian churches in which the researcher has a relationship permitting access to the field.

Criterion 3d - In keeping with Worthington & Gascoyne's (1985) earlier work, each participant will be invited to self-identify the nature of their religious identity. This data will be incorporated in the analysis of the data to determine if religious affiliation or self-identification as a Christian influences ratings. Whereas Worthington & Gascoyne (1985) were able to create a control group by screening participants as to whether they self-identified as Christians, it is hoped that a control group may be created for this study by inviting participation from those who attend mainline or traditional churches and screening participants based on their definition of what it means to be a Christian.

J. The research methodology

A major portion of this study will utilize the historical method of inquiry, and will devote an entire chapter to the analysis of Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy, identifying the theory base, values, and methodologies of this counselling model. The evaluation of EFCT will be accomplished by means of theoretical triangulation as well as empirical study.

This study will also utilize the descriptive survey method of inquiry. The survey instrument will utilize an introductory case study, a treatment plan, a sample dialogue illustrating the counsellor's

method, as well as a set of response questions. Given the importance EFCT places upon the concept of marital attachment and attachment styles, the case study contained within the survey instrument will focus on the treatment of a couple where the husband has previously had an affair and is now perceived by the wife as withdrawing from the relationship. This issue brings to the fore one type of attachment injury pastors are likely to encounter and provides a practical point of focus for comparing EFCT with the selected comparators. In addition to this, participants will be asked to provide some basic demographic information that will assist in the analysis of the obtained data.

K. Projected treatment of each subproblem

K.1. Subproblem 1

The first subproblem is to identify the theological-philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT and evaluate these values utilizing Evangelical Christian criteria. The required data for this problem is textual and may be found in books and journal articles that describe the assumptions, values, goals and methods of Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy, and, provide a theological perspective on marriage and emotions. With respect to the task of evaluation, Benson (2002b) has observed that EFCT is a postmodern therapy. As a result, the mode of theological reflection and integration should be one that has been developed to deal with the challenges of a postmodern worldview. For this reason the discussion and evaluation of EFCT's philosophical-theological assumptions will be guided by Ingram's (1995) model of theological integration in which he identifies five complementary grounds or dimensions for reflection and discussion: *Physikos* (the physical universe), *Bios* (the realm of biology), *Socius* (social conditioning), *Logos* (the realm of meaning making), and *Theos* (the realm of spirituality).

K.2. Subproblem 2

The second subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the

marital relationship. The required data for this problem is also textual and may be found in books and journal articles that describe the assumptions, values, goals and methods of the models under discussion. Utilizing Criterion 1a and 1b, the data relating to the conceptualization and treatment of marriage by EFCT and its comparators, the data will be evaluated in terms of the following questions derived from Worthington's (1989a) criteria for an integrated theory of Christian marital counselling:

- Does this theory of marriage consider individual constructs?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the operation of the marriage as a unit (or system)?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the position of the married couple in the family cycle?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the spiritual nature of the individual and of the marriage from a Christian perspective?
- Does this theory of marriage counselling employ techniques that are: related to the theory, prescribed and standardized so as to be easily usable, varied and individualized, and, clearly applicable at specified points in the therapy?

K.3. Subproblem 3

The third subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the experience of emotion. As noted above, the data for this problem is textual and may be found in books and journal articles that describe the assumptions, values, goals and methods of the counselling models under discussion. Utilizing Criterion 1a and 1b, data relating to the conceptualization and treatment of the experience of emotions by EFCT and its comparators will be evaluated through the methodology developed by Hillman (1992) in which he applied Aristotle's four causes (Aristotle, *Physics*) to the phenomena of emotion and to theories about emotional experience.

K.4. Subproblem 4

The fourth subproblem is to assess whether self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling would prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy to any of the other approaches included within this study. This task of assessment will require: the construction of a survey tool that will be given to

participants, deriving a means of inviting people to participate in the research, and, an analysis of the raw data.

The Survey Instrument. The intent of the survey instrument is to determine how self-identified Christians perceive and rate the selected counselling models in terms of each model's understanding of the presenting issue, the relevance of the treatment to the presenting issue, expected change, and use of scripture. In order to replicate the methodology of previous studies, the questions used in this survey will be based on the questions and findings of earlier studies (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). Due to the comparative nature of this study, and in keeping with Worthington and Gascoyne's (1985) methodology, five separate survey forms will be distributed randomly to participants. Each survey will include:

- An appropriate set of instructions orienting the participant to the research project.
- A brief demographic survey to obtain information relevant to the analysis of the obtained data.
- A case study describing a couple that has experienced an attachment injury (all versions of the survey will use the same initial case study) and a set of response questions (all versions of the survey will use the same questions).
- A model specific treatment plan for this case study that reflects the theory base and methodologies of one of models being studied and a set of response questions (all versions of the survey will use the same questions).
- A model specific sample dialogue illustrating how a counsellor employing that particular model of treatment might deal with this type of attachment injury and a set of response questions (all versions of the survey will use the same questions).

Access to the Field. In order to replicate the method used in Worthington & Gascoyne's (1985) study, a minimum of two hundred and fifty completed surveys (fifty surveys for each counselling model being studied) are required. The primary point of access to the field will be through the churches. Pastors and church boards will, therefore, be approached for permission to invite the members and adherents of their church to participate in this study. Secondary points of access to the field are through centers of Christian post-secondary education and informal networks. With respect to gaining access to centers of Christian post-secondary education, there are several Christian post-secondary institutions in the region where this researcher resides. The administrators of these

institutions will be approached for permission to invite the participation by members of their faculty and staff, as well as by graduate students studying in these institutions. Inclusion or exclusion of individuals will be a personal decision of the individual. Unless otherwise informed, the completion of a signed participant form constitutes permission to include any data obtained in this study. With respect to the use of informal networks, individuals with access to religious communities outside the researcher's zone of affiliation will be approached to invite friends within these communities to participate in this study.

Treatment and Interpretation of the Data. Confidentiality of the participants' answers will be ensured by physically separating the participant agreement forms from the survey forms and securely storing each in separate locations until the study has been completed. At the conclusion of the study the agreement forms and the raw survey data will be shredded before disposal. Electronic data will be maintained in a "password protected" file for the duration of the study and will be erased when it is no longer required. The raw survey data will be analyzed using standard statistical formulas aided by the use of a computer program (*SPSS 11.5*) and the interpretation of this data will be based on the information obtained.

L. The outline of the proposed study

Chapter two sets the stage for the remainder of this study by summarizing the key elements of Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy. The intent of this chapter is to: a) identify the theological-philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT, b) demonstrate how the practice of EFCT differs from that of other therapies, and, c) to determine the validity of the second and third hypotheses when they state that EFCT "provides an integrated theory of marriage/emotions." Drawing primarily from the works of Susan Johnson, this chapter begins with a description of EFCT's underlying theory base, including the theory's perspectives on marriage and emotion. This description is followed by descriptions of: the goals for therapy, the counsellor-therapist's behaviour,

strategies and techniques used in EFCT, and the theory's understanding of dysfunctional and normal behaviour. This discussion will conclude with an evaluation focusing on empirical studies related to the use of EFCT.

Chapter three presents an evangelical theological appraisal of the theological-philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT. The intent of this chapter is to address Subproblem 1 and to determine if there is any validity to the first hypothesis that "that the therapeutic perspective offered by this model may be incorporated into the practice of Christian counselling without violating the integrity of either the counselling model or a Christian worldview."

Chapter four compares the manner in which Clinebell, Crabb, Wright, and Worthington conceptualize the marital relationship and emotional experience. The intent of this chapter is to address the issues presented in Subproblems 2 & 3, and to determine if there is any validity in either the second hypothesis, "that EFCT ... reveals deficiencies in the way marriage is conceptualized and treated by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy," and/or the third hypothesis, "that the theory of emotions offered by EFCT reveals a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy."

Chapter five presents the findings of the field study component of this dissertation and represents the successful completion of the tasks outlined under Subproblems 4. The intent of this chapter is to determine if the data validates the fourth hypothesis which states "that self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling from a pastor or Christian counsellor/therapist will not prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy over any of the other approaches included within this study."

Chapter six returns to the original research question and provides a brief summation of the findings of this study, noting the extent to which the hypotheses are supported by the data. In addition to this, the

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chapter will seek to identify potential limitations posed by this study as well as further areas for exploration.

Chapter 2: An Introduction to Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy

Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy (EFCT) represents a significant development in the practice of psychotherapy in that it reconnects the field of marital therapy to the experiential tradition (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002). The pioneers of this approach are Dr. Les Greenberg, currently of York University, and Dr. Susan M. Johnson, currently of the University of Ottawa. The intent of this chapter is to: a) identify the philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT, b) demonstrate how the practice of EFCT may differ from that of other therapies, and, c) to determine the validity of the second and third hypotheses when they state that EFCT "provides an integrated theory of marriage." This chapter begins with a description of EFCT's underlying theory base, including the theory's perspectives on marriage and emotion. This description is followed by a description of: the goals for therapy, the counsellor-therapist's behaviour, strategies and techniques used in EFCT, the theory's understanding of dysfunctional and normal behaviour and a concluding evaluation focusing on empirical studies related to the use of EFCT.

Greenberg's contributions to the field are numerous and focus on articulating the basic theory for Emotionally-Focused Therapy (EFT), incorporating insights concerning emotions from the field of neurology, developing a methodology for working with emotions, and the empirical study of EFT (c.f. Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Greenberg, Ford, Alden & Johnson, 1993; Greenberg, James & Conry, 1988; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Johnson, 1995; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a). While Greenberg's work focuses first on the individual then the couple, Johnson's work refines the theory base of EFT as it applies to working with couples and families. Johnson's contribution to the field, like that of Greenberg, is substantial and includes articulating a theory base for Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy (EFCT), the development of a methodological approach to experientially based couple work, the incorporation of concepts drawn from the systemic therapies, and the empirical study of EFCT (c.f. Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994; Greenberg, Ford, Alden & Johnson, 1993; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg &

Johnson, 1995; Johnson, 1996; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a; Johnson & Greenberg, 1994; Johnson & Talitman, 1997; Johnson & Williams-Keeler, 1998).

A. Theory

Greenberg and Johnson (1988) described EFCT as an “Affective-Systemic Approach” to marital counselling (also: Greenberg & Johnson, 1995). The merging of these two streams of therapy, the systemic and the experiential, brings together the inner reality of the individual, i.e. the “within,” and the interpersonal, i.e. the “between,” creating a perspective that seeks to honor the fact that self and system are in constant interaction (Johnson, 1998a).

The “Affective” nature of this model does not rest simply in the fact that its major focus consists in identifying and working with the couple emotional system. Indeed, the “Affective” dimension of EFT and EFCT is rooted in the fact that Greenberg and Johnson consider their respective approaches to be grounded in the Humanistic-Experiential tradition, drawing on writers such as Buber, Perls, Rogers and Gendlin. As a result, EFT and EFCT focus on the clients’ here-and-now affective experience and views human beings as having an inherent tendency to grow and thrive (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996).

Briefly stated, EFT and EFCT assume that the affective, or emotional, system is critical both in understanding the individual and the process of change (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Basic to the theory and practice of EFT is the assumption that emotions not only represent a person’s response to their environment but also act as a source of information with respect to that individual’s perception of his or her environment and relationships (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). For this reason, EFT posits that emotions are both a type of cognition and intimately connected to the processes of meaning making and change (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Fundamental to Greenberg’s approach to therapy is a desire “to integrate a person’s basic affective experience and emotion into their existing organizations of their

experience” (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997:4). In this way, therapy becomes a process of accessing both the emotion and the meaning associated with the emotion with a view to relieving the sense of distress caused by that emotion (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). The key is not simply in the expression of the emotion but rather in learning to understand and use the message contained within the emotional experience in the process of creating a constructive response (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1998c).

The “Systemic” nature of EFCT is summarized by Greenberg and Johnson (1988) who state that it is informed by the fields of general systems theory and cybernetics. In particular, Greenberg and Johnson draw on these fields for the following concepts: a) the organization of the system determines how the system functions, b) systems utilize a homeostatic process to maintain stability, c) causality is a circular rather than linear process, and d) behaviour occurs within the context of interactional cycles with the context determining the meaning of the behaviour. Elsewhere, Johnson (1996) notes she draws on the systemic structural approach of Minuchin and Fishman (1981), and, in addition to the above noted concepts, she notes the importance of identifying the communicative aspects of behaviour, the role of the therapist in changing negative and rigid interactional cycles and the goal of fostering flexibility through restructuring interactions.

Finally, looking retrospectively across the body of literature associated with EFCT, the observer is able to identify what appears to be a discernable shift in the theory base that informs the practice of Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy. In contrast with the early literature associated with this model, Johnson’s recent writings clearly indicate that Bowlby’s Attachment Theory (c.f. Bowlby, 1988) serves as the theoretical “keystone” that serves to unify EFCT’s observations concerning both the marital bond and the client couple’s emotional system (Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1998c; Johnson, 2003b; Johnson, 2004; also: Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003, Hart-Morris 2002b).

A.1. Theory of Marriage

While systemic concepts shape both Greenberg's and Johnson's therapeutic interventions, it is clear to this reader their view of marriage draws from sources that range beyond Family Systems Theory. On the philosophical level, Greenberg and Johnson describe marriage in terms of Buber's (1970) I-Thou dialogue, noting "Buber's notion that healing occurs from the "meeting" in the I-thou (sic) dialogue points to the need for connectedness and the importance of the emotional bond" (1988:20). Thus, they identify that couples who engage in dialogue step outside of their limited perceptions of each other as they engage each other as a whole, and in the present (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Marques, 1998). As noted above, Attachment Theory, particularly the work of John Bowlby (Bowlby, 1971/1987; Bowlby, 1973; Bowlby, 1980/1985; Bowlby, 1988), is foundational to the manner in which EFCT understands the couple relationship (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1998c; Johnson, 2003b; Johnson, 2004; Hart-Morris, 2002b).

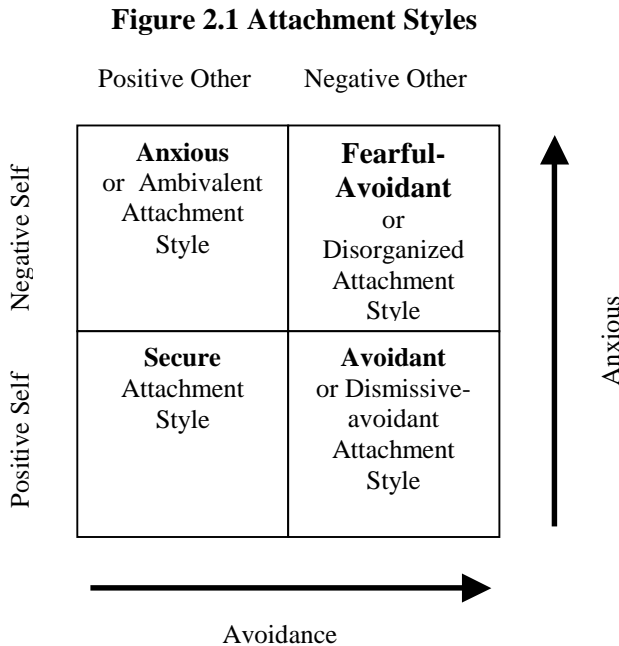
Bowlby observed that newborns and their caregivers form close enduring attachments with each other (Bowlby, 1988). On the physical level, this attachment is seen in the infant's dependence on another for food, shelter, etc., and is essential for the child's survival. This bond, however, does not merely serve the child's physical survival. Indeed, the child's relationship with its parent or caregiver has the power to provide the child with the psychological or emotional resources necessary to cope with the stresses of life, particularly those stresses that may result in a sense of anxiety. Based on his observations, Bowlby concluded the effect of a positive infant-caregiver attachment is such that it provides the child with a secure base that in turn enables the individual to effectively meet and handle stress, both in childhood and beyond (Bowlby, 1988). As a result, a major tenet of Attachment Theory is that a sense of security and connection are primary human needs and certain observed behaviours, both in infancy and later life, are a function of this need for connection (Bowlby, 1988). While security seeking is a primary need, Bowlby observed that, in the face of a perceived threat,

some children exhibited signs of anxiety, becoming hypervigilant, and others appeared to distance themselves both from the threat and any attachment-related cues (Bowlby, 1988). These observations led Bowlby to identify three patterns of attachment between children and their caregivers:

- *Secure Attachment*: a pattern of relationship fostered by another who is readily available, sensitive to the person's signals, and responsive when he or she seeks protection or comfort" (Bowlby, 1988).
- *Anxious Resistant Attachment*: a pattern of relationship fostered by another who is only erratically available and responsive to the person's signals for protection or comfort (Bowlby, 1988).
- *Anxious Avoidant Attachment*: a pattern of relationship fostered by another who repeatedly rejects or is unresponsive to the person's signals for protection or comfort, leaving the individual to become emotionally self-sufficient. (Bowlby, 1988).

A dominant feature of Bowlby's attachment schema is the fact it focuses on the person's experience of the "other," specifically, whether or not the "other" is found to be trustworthy. Attachment Theory, however, is not just about the "other" but rather the self in relationship to the other. In other words, Attachment Theory is about the relational self, the means whereby the individual develops a "coherent sense of self," that is to say an awareness of self in relation to another. As a result, the attachment system not only shapes an individual's perception of the trustworthiness of the other but also his or her perception of his or her capacity to exercise personal agency in the face of a perceived threat.

This perspective on attachment behaviour is reflected in Figure 2.1 and results in the creation of an additional attachment style. Viewed in terms of a person's view of self and other, the avoidant attachment style, characterized by increasing levels of avoidant behaviour without the presence of anxiety reflects an individual's negative appraisal of the "other" as capable of providing reassurance. This style also reflects the individual's positive view of his or her "self" as evidenced in a positive appraisal of his or her capacity to exercise personal agency in the midst of the present stress or crisis.



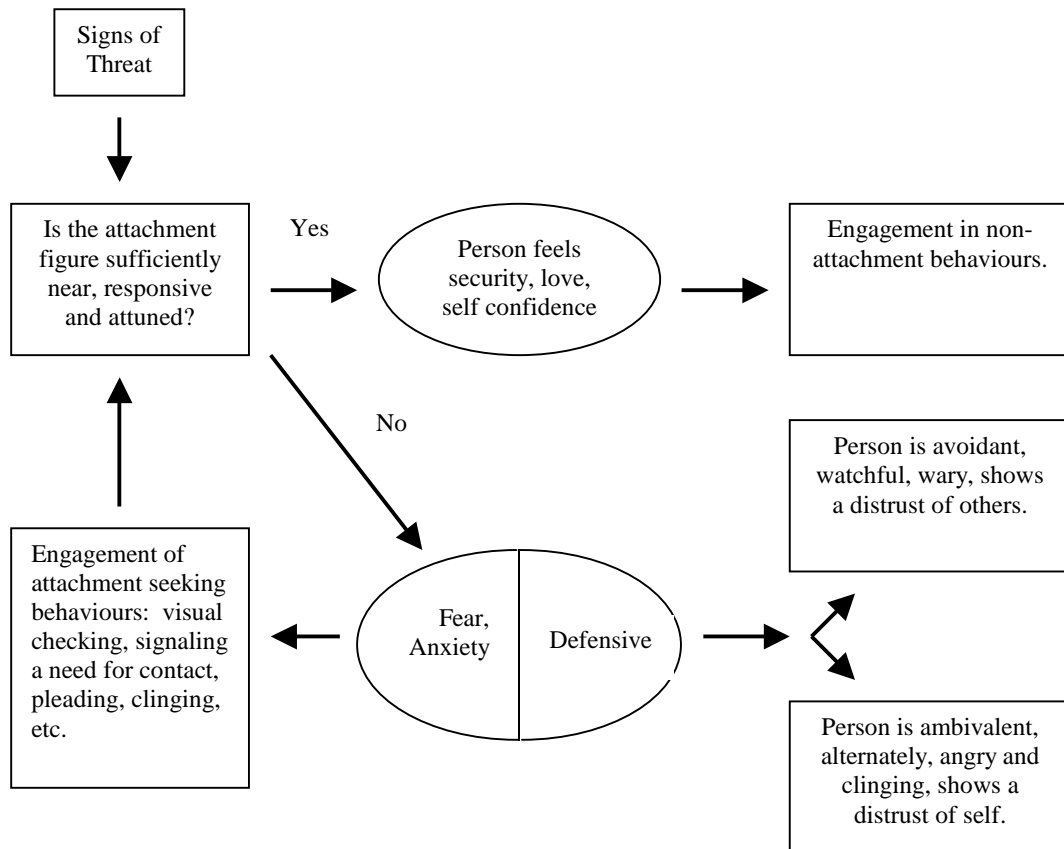
Adapted from Clinton & Sibcy (2002:24)

Similarly, the anxious attachment style, characterized by increasing levels of anxiety without avoidance behaviour not only reflects an individual’s need for reassurance from another person, it also reflects that individual’s negative view of his or her “self,” not to mention a negative appraisal of his or her capacity to exercise personal agency in the present situation. Finally, the fearful-avoidant or dismissive attachment style is characterized by increasing levels of anxiety combined with increased avoidance behaviour. This attachment style reflects the individual’s negative appraisal both of his or her self as well as that of the other. Each of these three attachment styles interfere with couple’s ability to engage each other in a genuine I-Thou dialogue and thus have a negative effect on the marital relationship. Conversely, a positive appraisal of self and other results in a secure marital attachment which is not only capable of withstanding the vicissitudes of life but also fosters emotional healing (c.f. Johnson, 2003b; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Hart-Morris, 2002b). While the significance of an individual’s attachment style is highlighted by writers like Karpel (1994) who suggest that adult attachment as experienced in marriage mirrors the earlier attachment relationship

between parent and child, it is equally important to understand the purpose of these behaviours and the processes by which attachment behaviours are shaped or activated.

In terms of the purpose of these behaviours, attachment behaviours are intended to accomplish three goals. First of all, the attachment behaviour seeks to protest emotional disconnection in the relationship. Next, attachment behaviours are designed to catch the attention of the “other” so that he or she will recognize a disconnection has occurred in the relationship. Lastly, and this is the more crucial goal, attachment behaviours seek to motivate the “other” to respond in a caring manner. This then suggests that attachment behaviours are a function of the quality and present experience of the (couple’s) relationship.

Figure 2.2 The Attachment Behavioural System



Adapted from Clinton & Sibcy (2002:20)


The process by which these attachment behaviours are shaped or activated provides further illustration of their functionality within the couple relationship. As noted in Figure 2.2, the attachment behaviour system is activated when the individual perceives the presence of a threat to his or her sense of well being, either physical or emotional. If, in these situations, the “other” is accessible, either through direct physical contact, conversation, or by accessing a memory of the “internalized other,” the individual is able to respond to the perceived threat without experiencing a high level of distress. If, however, the “other” is not immediately accessible then the person perceiving the threat is likely to initiate a form of seeking behaviour with a view to obtaining the reassurance he or she requires. If this reassurance is not forthcoming, or if the individual has learned he or she cannot depend on the other for security, then a pattern of avoidant behaviour is activated. Over time the cumulative experience of life predisposes the individual to respond to perceived threats in a predetermined fashion such that the individual develops a preferred style of attachment behaviour.

In summary, Attachment Theory provides EFCT with a unifying perspective that not only defines the nature of the couple relationship, but also gives insight into both the pathological processes of marriage as well as those processes that contribute to personal and relational health. As such EFCT focuses on the internal or intrapsychic life of the couple. Thus, while the attachment styles of anxiety, avoidance and fear have the potential of destabilizing a relationship, the secure attachment style is not only capable of stabilizing a couple relationship, it can also have a salogenic effect on the relationship. In this way, Attachment Theory provides the EFCT practitioner with a perspective with which he or she can expand the client couple’s experience of each other, change their mode of interaction and create a secure base.

A.2. Theory of Emotions

Greenberg and Johnson approach the experience of emotions from slightly different perspectives. Greenberg (c.f. Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987) focuses on the broad experience of emotions in all of life. Johnson (1996), however, is particularly concerned with the experience of emotion within the context of the couple relationship. Both writers understand emotions as occurring within a continuum of awareness (Figure 2.3) in which affect is a bio-physical response to a situation (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988), while feelings and emotions are cognitively constructed experiences based on the individual’s appraisal of the situations (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996) and the quality of the individual’s significant, i.e. attachment, relationship(s) (Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson 1996).

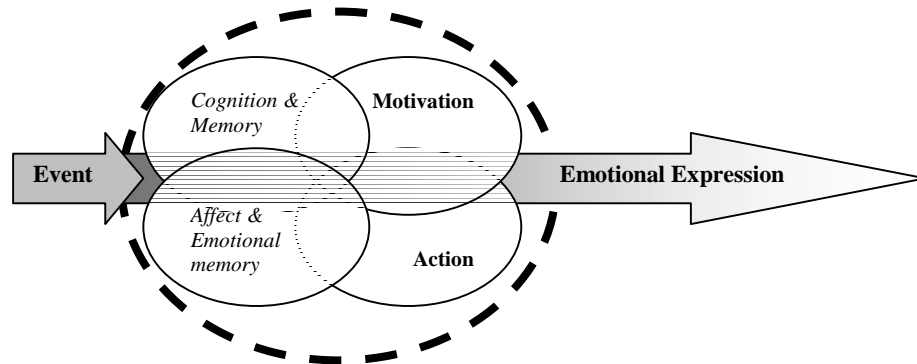
Figure 2.3 – The Affect-Emotion Continuum

|  | | |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Affect</i> | <i>Feeling</i> | <i>Emotions</i> |
| An unconscious biological response to stimulation | Involves awareness of the basic sensations of affect. | Experiences that arise when Affect and Feeling are joined with evoking situations and the person’s view of self. |
| Affects do not involve reflective evaluation. | These involve relating affect to one’s view of oneself. | Emotions are experiences that involve the integration of many levels of processing |
| Adapted from: Greenberg & Paivio (1997) | | |

Greenberg posits that emotional experience is an idiosyncratic and a complex construct he defines as a person’s “emotion scheme,” involving a “complex synthesis of affect, cognition, motivation, and action” (Figure 2.4) (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997:3; also, Greenberg & Johnson, 1986a: Greenberg & Johnson, 1995). In this model of emotional expression, the realms of emotion, cognition, previous experience, i.e. memory, motivation and action are understood to be complementary aspects of the person. These realms of experience interact in such a way that the present “in-the-moment” experience of emotion may be understood in terms of circular feedback processes, adaptation, and integrative information processing (Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Greenberg describes this process as

one in which the senses elicit simultaneous responses on both a physiological and cognitive level, both of which influence the affect which in turn feeds back to the cognition and physiology, thus modifying both the perception and experience of emotion (Greenberg & Safran, 1987).

Figure 2.4 The Emotion Scheme



In EFT and EFCT, emotions are considered to be both an adaptive and an integrative process. In terms of adaptation, emotion is understood to be a form of information processing that reflects a person's understanding or awareness of him or herself in relationship to his or her environment (Greenberg & Safran, 1987:147). In this way, emotions are viewed as providing essential information concerning a person's perceptions of their physical and relational context (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). In EFCT this view of emotions is refined such that emotions are understood to provide information concerning the individual's experience of the "other" within the marital relationship (Greenberg & Johnson, 1986a; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Marques, 1998; Johnson, 1996; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003). In other words, the emotions are understood to provide information concerning the emotional bond and the attachment styles of the couple.

Johnson (1998a) observes that "Emotions are the context for – and give meaning to – interactions, and interactions are context for emotional responses." Here she identifies there is a circular logic that applies to the experience of, as well as the practice of working with, emotions. What is critical about this observation, however, that it recognizes the role emotions play in shaping and organizing

behaviour. As a result, particular interest is paid to those emotions that reflect the couple’s experience of self and other in the intimate relationship (Johnson, 1988). Just as these emotions are themselves a reflection of each partner’s experience of the other in the relationship, reparation of the relationship requires that these emotions be processed within the context of the relationship.

As an integrative process, emotions obtain meaning in as much as they are the result of the integration of “the evoking stimulus with relevant memories, images, and expressive motor and autonomic behaviours” (Greenberg & Safran, 1987:147). In EFCT this integrative dimension is particularly important on two levels. On one level, the evoking stimulus may cause one partner to access memories and images that are reflective of experiences that precede the current relationship. At another level, the evoking stimulus may result in an individual accessing memories and images that are reflective of the current relationship. In both cases, the emotional bond of the couple relationship will either be strengthened or challenged, depending on the nature of the emotional memory and attachment style that is evoked.

Figure 2.5 Greenberg’s Typology of Emotion

| | Adaptive Emotions | Maladaptive Emotions | Other Emotions |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Primary Emotions | Discrete emotions: i.e. Sadness at loss, Anger at violation, Fear at threat Bodily felt sense: i.e. unsure, “on top of things” Emotional pain: i.e. Broken, wounded. | Emotions and feelings: i.e. Fear of heights, Fear of comfort Complex feelings: i.e. Feeling worthless (shame), feeling insecure (fear). | |
| Secondary or Reactive Emotions | | Bad feelings: i.e. Helpless, Hopeless, Rage, Despair | Complex feelings: i.e. Gloating, Humility |
| Instrumental Emotions | | Dysfunctional: i.e. Crocodile tears, Dominant anger | Social role: i.e. Moral indignation, feigned embarrassment |

Adapted from: Greenberg & Paivio (1997:36)

Greenberg identifies three categories of emotions (primary, secondary and instrumental emotions) along with two different response types per category, for a total of six types of emotion (see Figure

2.5). The primary emotions are understood to be the initial emotion responses that are felt in response to an event or stimulus (Greenberg & Johnson, 1998; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). These emotions are understood to be primal, or bodily felt emotions, and may be classed as either adaptive or maladaptive. These primary emotions are also understood to possess an “action orientation” in that they serve to motivate an individual to act in a manner that is consistent with the felt emotion and may be harnessed to facilitate problem solving (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Greenberg argues that “the greater people’s ability to access and become aware of primary emotions, the greater their capacity to solve life problems adaptively” (Greenberg & Safran, 1987:188). This problem-solving capacity of emotions extends beyond the ability to find solutions to the specific situation eliciting the emotion in that the adaptive primary emotions also have the capacity to modify secondary, instrumental and maladaptive emotions (Greenberg & Safran, 1987).

In contrast, secondary or reactive emotions are understood to be a reaction to either a primary emotion, i.e. fear, sadness, anger, or a cognitive process, i.e. the feeling a person has when thinking about a painful event (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). These emotions are considered to be secondary in that they result from the interaction of cognition and affect as these operations of the mind seek to construct meaning based upon the perceived stimulus and the primary or bodily felt emotions. These secondary emotions also fall into two classes, maladaptive emotions, i.e. bad emotions, and other emotions (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987).

Instrumental emotions differ from the other two categories of emotion in that they are learned responses the individual believes will have an effect on others (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). That is to say, the individual has learned that the expression of these emotions is likely to produce an effect that is beneficial for his or her self. These instrumental emotions, like secondary emotions, are also classified as either maladaptive emotions or other emotions.

Johnson incorporates this typology in EFCT, noting, “it is the primary emotional responses that are unattended to, undifferentiated, or disowned that the EFT therapist focuses upon” (Johnson, 1996:41). While Johnson acknowledges the importance of reflecting and validating the couple’s secondary emotional responses, her interest in the couple’s primary emotions is shaped by a belief that these emotions convey particular, and rich, information concerning the couple bond (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 2003b). In terms of the couple’s experience and expression of maladaptive and secondary affect, Johnson seeks to utilize the relationship to regulate and restructure these emotions.

In summary, for the EFT and EFCT therapist emotions are a form of cognition that possess a rationality and meaning that is understood in terms of the individual’s experience of themselves and others “in relationship.” As such, emotion is not viewed as either “irrational” or a form of cognition that is less reliable than other modes of knowing. Rather, it is a mode of cognition that provides both the counsellee and the counsellor with valuable information concerning the self and other. In this way, the EFCT therapist, recognizing the role emotions play in organizing and constructing behaviour, attends to affect with a view to using it in the change process.

B. Goals

Marital therapy is about healing relationships and the restructuring of the relationship so that both partners can once again benefit from being in relationship with each other. Johnson (1996), therefore, defines the goal of EFCT as that of “addressing attachment concerns, reducing attachment insecurities, and fostering the creation of a secure bond.” If the goal of EFCT is to effect a positive or salogenic change within the couple’s emotional or attachment bond, then the purpose or goal of accessing emotion within this model is that of fostering a new kind of contact with the partner (Johnson, 1996). In other words, the exploration of emotions is not merely, as Gurman and Fraenkel (2002) suggest, for the purpose of “accessing previously unacknowledged (often to oneself, as well

as to one's mate) feelings and expressing these emotions directly in the moment of the therapeutic session.” Rather, the EFCT therapist, while working with “hot cognitions” as they occur within the therapeutic process, is interested in utilizing emotion, especially primary emotion, to foster a new kind of contact with the self and other with a view to restructuring interpersonal relationships and facilitating the client’s need for a secure attachment (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996).

C. Therapist Behaviour

In terms of the overall process of therapy, Johnson (1996) identifies three key tasks, ten basic therapeutic interventions, three change events, and nine steps to effective therapy. In addition to this, Johnson identifies the following seven behaviours as essential practice skills in EFCT (Johnson, 1996):

- Offering acceptance and empathy to both partners.
- Creating an atmosphere that conveys a sense of safety to both partners.
- Focusing on and reflecting each partner's emotional experience.
- Validating and accepting each partner’s experience, rather than trying to replace it.
- Becoming attuned to, and empathetically exploring, each partner’s experience with a view to focusing on what is most alive and poignant.
- Expanding the client couple's experience by asking process-oriented questions.
- Directing the client couple to engage in a task that fosters a new kind of contact and processing of experience.

These seven behaviours serve the goal of therapy by creating, first, an emotionally safe context for the therapeutic work, and secondly, a context for the implementation of specific therapeutic strategies.

C.1. Behaviour/Strategies

If the goal of EFCT is that of fostering a new kind of contact with the self and others by reprocessing emotional experience, then the overarching strategy of the therapist is that of facilitating the client couple’s awareness of their emotional experience, helping them to identify primary affect, modifying

dysfunctional appraisals and responses, and creating a new sense of meaning from their experience (Greenberg, James & Conry, 1988; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996). Through experience and research Johnson has identified nine steps (Table 2.1) for achieving this goal. While Greenberg and Johnson each offer specific strategies for accomplishing this outcome, the basic building block underlying the entire process is empathy (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Johnson, 1996; Johnson 2003b). Indeed, successful application of the model is dependent first on the counsellor or therapist's ability to demonstrate empathy for the client even as the client experiences and expresses their emotions in the here-and-now of the therapy session.

Table 2.1 – The Nine Steps of Therapy

| Greenberg & Johnson, 1988 | Johnson, 1996 |
|--|---|
| Delineate conflict issues in the struggle between the partners. | Assessment: creating an alliance and delineating conflict issues in the core struggle |
| Identify the negative interaction cycle. | Identify the negative interactional cycle |
| Access unacknowledged feelings underlying interactional positions. | Accessing the unacknowledged emotions underlying interactional positions |
| Redefining the problem(s) in terms of underlying feelings. | Reframing the problem in terms of underlying emotions and attachment needs |
| Promote identification with disowned needs and aspects of self. | Promoting identification with disowned needs and aspects of self and integrating these into relationship interactions |
| Promote acceptance by each partner of the other partner's experience. | Promoting acceptance of the partner's experience and interaction patterns. |
| Facilitate the expression of needs and wants to restructure the interaction. | Facilitating the expression of needs and wants and creating emotional engagement |
| Establish the emergence of new solutions. | Facilitating the emergence of new solutions to old relationship problems |
| Consolidate new positions. | Consolidating new positions and new cycles of attachment behaviours |

In addition to this emphasis, the therapist, as he or she facilitates the expression and reprocessing of emotion within the therapy session, creates a context in which each spouse not only gets in touch with his or her own primary emotions but also those of the other spouse. In this way the couple is given an opportunity to develop empathy for each other. Viewed from this perspective the counsellor or

therapist functions as a process consultant whose role it is to guide the individual or couple through the uncharted waters of their personal and relational emotional systems (Johnson, 1996).

Table 2.2 – Therapeutic Tasks

| Key Therapeutic Tasks (EFCT) Johnson, 1996 | Therapeutic Framework (EFT) Greenberg & Paivio, 1997 |
|---|---|
| Task 1: The creation and maintenance of a consistent positive therapeutic alliance with both partners | Phase I: Bonding |
| Task 2: The accessing and reprocessing of emotional experience | Phase II: Evoking & Exploring |
| Task 3: The restructuring of interactions | Phase III: Emotion Restructuring |

The three therapeutic tasks identified by Johnson correspond with the three phases of Emotionally-Focused Therapy identified by Greenberg & Paivio (1997) (see: Table 2.2) and are analogous to what is normally understood to be the “engagement” and “intervention” phases of marital therapy. In her description of these tasks Johnson identifies specific techniques, interventions, or activities the therapist may employ in conjunction with the task under discussion (c.f. Johnson, 1996). In this way, Johnson provides the reader with a manualized approach to the practice of EFCT. Studied reflection on Johnson’s (1996) discussion in chapter 3 of her text, including the summary of therapeutic activities that appears on pages 70-71 of her text, suggests that the relationship between the three tasks of EFCT and the therapeutic behaviours she describes may be summarized as in Table 2.3. This table confirms the claim made by EFCT practitioners that the model is both a present-oriented and a process-oriented approach that utilizes the therapeutic relationship to focus on the here-and-now experience of the client couple. Indeed, it is the safe-haven context of the therapeutic relationship that provides the client couple with a secure base from which they can not only explore their own emotions but also experience and reprocess each other’s emotions. Thus, the “bond” of the therapeutic relationship serves to provide transitional stability while the couple re-experience each other and rework their own emotional bond.

Table 2.3 – Key Therapeutic Tasks x Therapeutic Behaviour

| | Therapeutic Intervention / Behaviour | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| | Monitoring the Alliance | Reflecting Emotion: Primary & Secondary (i.e. Empathy) | Validating: Responses & underlying emotion | Evocative Responding | Heightening | Empathic conjecture / interpretation | Tracking & Reflecting Interactions | Reframing | Self-disclosure | Restructuring Interactions (i.e. Directing) |
| Task 1: The creation and maintenance of a consistent positive therapeutic alliance with both partners | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| Task 2: The accessing and reprocessing of emotional experience | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Task 3: The restructuring of interactions | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |

Adapted from: Johnson, 1996:34-71, Johnson, 2003b

In order for a couple to effectively restructure their interactions and their relationship three change events must occur. Johnson refers to the first of these change events, “Cycle De-escalation,” as a type of first order change in as much as all that has changed is the outward behaviour (Johnson, 1996). What Johnson describes as “Cycle De-escalation” is similar to what Greenberg & Johnson (1988) referred to as “Restructuring the Emotional Bond” in that both interventions understand that long-term change requires a de-escalation of the present conflict. Johnson’s description of steps three and four not only reveals it is vital that this change occur during the early stages of couples’ therapy but also that any future change or restructuring is dependent on a de-escalation of the conflict. At this point the structure of EFCT begins to come clear. Specifically, the first two tasks, i.e. “creating and maintaining a positive therapeutic alliance” and “accessing and reprocessing emotional experience,” are the means whereby the counsellor or therapist engages with the couple so as to de-escalate the conflict.

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The third task, restructuring of interactions with both partners, relates to the two remaining change events, “Withdrawer Engagement” and “Blamer Softening.” Johnson (1996) refers to these as second-order change events in that both partners take on new roles so as to promote relational health, rather than merely prevent further relational dysfunction. “Withdrawer engagement” begins in step five when the withdrawing spouse experiences his or her fear of contact, processes this fear with the counsellor or therapist, accesses a specific hurt he or she can share with the other, and, supported by the therapist, stays engaged as the non-withdrawing spouse begins to understand the withdrawer’s experience of the relationship (Johnson, 1996). In other words, the withdrawer accepts the counsellor or therapist’s invitation to engage his or her attachment needs and emotional experience, particularly those elements of the self which are unacknowledged Johnson (1996). What is clear from the literature is that “withdrawer engagement” moves beyond the cessation of the withdrawing action to include the decision to meaningfully engage both with his or her self and the other. As the withdrawer begins to engage his or her own emotional process he or she becomes accessible to the “other,” engaging with the “other” while giving expression to his or her needs and feelings. Understandably, the key to this process is the withdrawer’s ability to access his or her disowned needs and self the therapist acting as a facilitator in the process.

As with the “Withdrawer engagement,” the “Blamer softening” event begins in step five and is made possible when the withdrawing partner becomes more accessible (Johnson, 1996). At this point in the process, “accessibility” simply refers to the fact the one partner decides he or she will no longer withdraw and thus escalate the cycle of negativity. When this occurs each partner is able to shift his or her focus to him or her self rather than the faults of the other (Johnson, 1996). At this point the blamer becomes aware of his or her attachment fears and in experiencing them, with the therapist’s help, shares these fears with the other. This, in turn, permits the withdrawer to see the blamer in a different light and become responsive to the blamer’s hitherto unacknowledged vulnerability

(Johnson, 1996). It is this expression of vulnerability, rather than anger, bitterness and blaming, that Johnson refers to as the “blamer softening event.”

Table 2.4 – The Structure of EFCT

| Key Therapeutic Tasks | Nine Step Change Process | Phases in treatment |
|---|--|--|
| Task 1: The creation and maintenance of a consistent positive therapeutic alliance with both partners | 1. Assessment: creating an alliance and delineating conflict issues in the core struggle | Cycle De-escalation |
| | 2. Identify the negative interactional cycle | |
| Task 2: The accessing and reprocessing of emotional experience | 3. Accessing the unacknowledged emotions underlying interactional positions | |
| | 4. Reframing the problem in terms of underlying emotions and attachment needs | |
| Task 3: The restructuring of interactions | 5. Promoting identification with disowned needs and aspects of self and integrating these into relationship interactions | Changing Interactional Patterns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawer Engagement • Blamer Softening |
| | 6. Promoting acceptance of the partner’s experience and interaction patterns. | |
| | 7. Facilitating the expression of needs and wants and creating emotional engagement | |
| | 8. Facilitating the emergence of new solutions to old relationship problems | Consolidation / Integration |
| | 9. Consolidating new positions and new cycles of attachment behaviours | |

Adapted from: Johnson, 1996; Johnson 1999

Table 2.4 provides a map of the territory that integrates the EFCT’s key therapeutic tasks with EFCT’s process of change and the three phases treatment that characterize EFCT. This integrative perspective highlights key transition points in the therapeutic process and demonstrates that, while EFCT is a process-oriented therapy, there is a clear plan or logic when the model is utilized in clinical practice. In particular, the change process outlined by Johnson clearly identifies that the couple, not the individual, is the focus of attention in EFCT. It is further evident that the real work in EFCT lies in the restructuring of the client couple’s interactions and relationship and not just the work of accessing and reprocessing emotions.

EFCT, like other therapies, begins with an assessment phase that serves to identify the specific focus of treatment as well as to facilitate the process of therapy and the identification of therapeutic goals. For this reason, effective assessment ultimately focuses the therapeutic work on the couple's attachment system and their primary emotional process. Assessment, therefore, seeks to identify "how each partner experiences the relationship and views the self in relation to the other" (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). The intent of this process is to understand how each partner's emotional schema constructs the emotions that are expressed (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996), identify negative interactional cycles (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996), and begin to reframe the problem in terms of the couple's underlying emotions and attachment needs (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996).

Given the here-and-now focus of EFCT it is important to note that the process of assessment is ongoing and is responsive to shifts both in client affect and client interaction as they occur in the here-and-now of therapy. What this means is that the primary assessment tool employed by the counsellor is the counsellor's "use of self." This does not mean, however, that practitioners of EFCT are averse to using measures of clinical practice either at the beginning of their work with clients or as a means of assessing and measuring progress. In fact, the literature reveals that EFCT practitioners and researchers use a variety of tools both to assess the client system and demonstrate the efficacy of their work. Among the various tools identified in the literature, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) is the measurement tool most frequently referred to (Croyle & Waltz, 2002; Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994; Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Greenberg, Ford, Alden & Johnson, 1993; Horak, 2002; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985b; Johnson & Talitman, 1997; Millikin, 2000; Walker, Johnson, Manion & Cloutier, 1996; Walsh, 2002). It is therefore noted that assessment tools used by EFCT practitioners tend to focus primarily on the quality relationship as experienced by the couple. This suggests that, for the EFCT therapist, the salient, accessible and measurable elements of

the couple relationship are the effects both of maladaptive emotional expression and the reprocessing of these emotions in therapy.

It is the role of the therapist in this phase of assessment, while gathering information about the phenomenological world of the clients, to communicate acceptance and empathy concerning the couple's experience (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). This expression of acceptance and empathy accomplishes two key tasks: the validation of the client's emotions and the encouragement of self-exploration rather than blaming the other (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). Just as EFT seeks to assess the client emotional system as it is expressed within the session, the EFCT practitioner observes patterns in the couple's interactions as they occur in the session, particularly cycles of behaviour where the actions of each spouse function as both a response to their partner's behaviours as well as a stimulus for those same behaviours (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). These observations provide the therapist with valuable information concerning each partner's sense of self in relationship, enabling the counsellor to identify whether the emotions presented are primary, secondary, instrumental, adaptive or maladaptive in nature. Next, after having explored and validated the clients' experience and observed the couple's negative cycle, the therapist obtains a history of each partner and the relationship with a view to obtaining clues concerning the clients' vulnerabilities (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). It is worth noting that EFCT is contraindicated for couples where there is ongoing abuse and couples who are separating (Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1999). Finally, in order to proceed with contracting, the therapist needs to be able to gauge whether the couple is likely to engage with the therapist and respond openly to each other, as the therapist attempts to access the emotional system (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988).

Beginning with the assessment, there is a dual but complementary focus in EFCT. On the one hand, EFCT is focused on the couple bond, the relationship, and the creation of a working relationship that will facilitate an improvement in that bond. On the other hand, EFCT is focused on the "individual-in-relationship." As a result, one of the strategies employed during the engagement or assessment

phase by EFCT counsellors and therapists is that of conducting an individual session with each partner (Johnson, 1996). Johnson argues the use of these two individual sessions within the context of what is primarily relationship therapy accomplishes four purposes. First of all, it provides the counsellor or therapist with an opportunity to develop a therapeutic alliance with each partner (Johnson, 1996). Next, it offers the counsellor or therapist an opportunity to interact with each spouse apart from the other (Johnson, 1996). In this way, the individual session provides an opportunity for a differential assessment of each partner's behaviours, for example, the extent to which observed behaviours are in response to the presence of his or her partner. Another function of the individual session is that it provides a structured context for obtaining "information and checking hypotheses that are difficult to explore" in a couple session (Johnson, 1996). Johnson notes, for example, the individual session provides an opportunity: to explore each spouse's commitment to the relationship, to check for the presence of an extramarital relationship, to obtain information on any previous attachment traumas, and to obtain each spouse's uncensored perceptions concerning his or her partner (Johnson, 1996). Finally, Johnson notes these individual sessions provide the counsellor or therapist with an opportunity to refine his or her understanding of the couple, particularly the interactional patterns that are causing difficulty (Johnson, 1996).

C.2. **Techniques**

In keeping with the experiential character of this model, the techniques and interventions described by Johnson are those that invite the therapist and couple: to observe actions as they occur within the session, to become aware as to how each partner experiences the other (within the session), and to restructure the relationship. For this reason the primary interventions used in EFCT are the therapeutic behaviours identified in Tables 2.3.

Table 2.5 The Nine Steps of Therapy x Therapeutic Behaviour

| The Nine Steps of Therapy | Therapeutic Intervention / Behaviour | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| | Monitoring the Alliance | Reflecting Emotion: Primary & Secondary (i.e. Empathy) | Validating: Responses & underlying emotion | Evocative Responding | Heightening | Empathic conjecture / interpretation | Tracking & Reflecting Interactions | Reframing | Self-disclosure | Restructuring Interactions (i.e. Directing) |
| 1. Assessment: creating an alliance and delineating conflict issues in the core struggle. | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 2. Identifying the negative interactional cycle. | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 3. Accessing the unacknowledged emotions underlying interactional positions. | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 4. Reframing the problem in terms of underlying emotions and attachment needs. | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 5. Promoting identification with disowned need and aspects of self and integrating these into relationship interactions. | X | | | X | X | X | | | | X |
| 6. Promoting acceptance of the partner's experience and new interaction patterns. | X | | | X | X | X | | | | X |
| 7. Facilitating the expression of needs and wants and creating emotional engagement. | X | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| 8. Facilitating the emergence of new solutions to old relationship problems. | X | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| 9. Consolidating new positions and new cycles of attachment behaviours. | X | | X | X | | | | X | | X |

Adapted from: Johnson, 1996:73-154

When these therapeutic behaviours are correlated with the nine steps of therapy it is possible to discern the three core tasks of therapy, i.e. Steps 1&2, Steps 3&4, and Steps 5-9, as well as discernable shifts in emphasis that mark the transition from one task to another (see Table 2.5).

Whereas the first two steps of EFCT focus on engaging the client couple, creating a safe context for exploring and changing the couple's relational interactions and obtaining vital affective and relational

data relevant to the work of facilitating change, the transition to the step three (key task 2) is identifiable by the decision to engage the couple so as to “heighten” or intensify the emotions that are being experienced in the session. Similarly, whereas the third and fourth steps focus on accessing and reprocessing emotional experience, the transition to step five (key task 3) is identifiable by the decision to engage the couple so as to begin restructuring the relationship. Given the significance of these transitions within the process of EFCT, a fuller explanation of “heightening” and “restructuring” is merited.

C.2.a *Heightening*

Heightening, or “Intensification” (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Safran, 1987), describes efforts made by the therapist to intensify and crystallize key problematic emotions or interactions as well as any new or reprocessed responses (Johnson, 1996). Johnson notes that heightening serves to make emotional responses alive and present to the couple with a view to facilitating their ability to engage these responses (Johnson, 1996). In this way, heightening serves to engage the client couple with their emotions in ways that will change their interactions outside the session (Johnson, 1996). In EFCT there are four types of heightening: heightening emotion, heightening the present and changing positions, heightening the enactment of a present problematic position, and heightening the enactment of an emerging new position (Johnson, 1996). The first three types of heightening serve to highlight or emphasize an element of the problem situation with the goal of bringing that element into conscious awareness. The fourth type of heightening, however, serves as a means of reinforcing changes as they emerge and appears to be analogous with the behavioural response of reinforcing successive approximations of a desired behaviour.

C.2.b *Restructuring*

Restructuring is a directive intervention by which the counsellor invites or instructs the client couple to enact new responses that incorporate elements drawn from the integration of each partner’s

previously disowned needs and “self” into the present relationship (Johnson, 1996). Johnson states that restructuring may be used to accomplish one of the four following therapeutic goals:

1. To crystallize and enact present positions so that they may be expanded.
2. To turn new emotional experience into a specific new response to the partner that challenges old patterns of relating.
3. To heighten new or rarely occurring responses, which have the potential to modify a partner’s position.
4. To choreograph specific change events.

(Johnson, 1996:60)

In the first case, the restructuring event draws on the counsellor or therapist’s observations of the client couple’s interactional patterns. The rationale is that, by highlighting the mechanism by which these interactions are maintained, the couple not only gains awareness of these interactions but also the conscious ability to create changes in their relationship (Johnson, 1996). The next type of restructuring, “turning new emotional experience into a specific new response to the partner that challenges old patterns of relating,” builds on one partner’s new experiences and awareness of his or her spouse’s emotional experience, inviting them to respond in a way that differs from the old interactional pattern (Johnson, 1996). In this way, the therapist facilitates a synthesis of new experience into the relational system. When restructuring seeks to “heighten new or rarely occurring responses” the counsellor or therapist draws attention to behaviours that are inconsistent with the normal pattern of relating (Johnson, 1996). This mode of intervention reinforces the fact the client couple is capable of acting differently by drawing this information into conscious awareness. This process is similar to the process Greenberg and Johnson (1988) labeled as “supporting fluctuations” in that the intent of both interventions is to identify and support interactional processes that do not reinforce the negative cycle. As with the practice narrative Therapy (c.f. White & Epston, 1990), the process of highlighting these exceptions opens up new interactional possibilities for the couple. Finally, when restructuring focuses on “choreographing specific change events” the therapist seeks to build on newly emerged emotional experience and the client couple’s new awareness of their “self”, facilitating interactions that will create a secure couple bond (Johnson, 1996). Johnson characterizes

this type of intervention as choreography in as much as the therapist, being aware of the couple's interactional dance, provides "step-by-step direction and structure" as the couple reshapes their relationship (Johnson, 1996). However, just as the dance choreographer does not interfere with the creativity of the dancer, so too the therapist permits the client couple to creatively respond to his or her guidance in ways that serve to foster a secure bond (Johnson, 1996).

D. Dysfunctional-Normative Behaviour

D.1. Normative Behaviour

Much of what can be said concerning EFCT's definition of marital health has already been discussed. By way of summary, however, EFCT defines a "normal" or healthy marital relationship as one in which the couple experiences a secure attachment bond that is characterized by emotional engagement, awareness of the self-in-relationship, openness and vulnerability, flexibility, trust and connectedness (Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Johnson, 1996).

D.2. Dysfunctional Behaviour

First and foremost, EFCT assumes marital distress is the result of the interaction between distressed affect and destructive interactional patterns (Johnson, 1999). In other words, dysfunctional marital behaviours are a function of each partner's individual attachment style as well as the attachment style that characterizes the relationship. Indeed, the connection between a person's attachment experiences in early life and their attachment relationships in later life is well attested in the literature. Karpel (1994), for example, suggests that adult attachment, as experienced in marriage, mirrors the earlier attachment relationship between parent and child in that the experience of nearness in both relationships results in a sense of security while the experience of separation may result in feelings of anxiety and fear. Some recent studies have explored the connection between individual attachment patterns and marital attachment, specifically as it relates to marital satisfaction (Bagley, 1999; Cobb, 2002; Forness, 2002), couple formation (Gangi, 2002), trust (Korinek, 2001), communication

(Booher, 2000), and conflict resolution (O'Donnell, 1996) with the suggestion that there appears to be a positive correlation between individual and/or couple attachment styles and a couple's success in creating and maintaining a relationship. In light of what appears to be mounting evidence in support of the importance of childhood attachment to later life relationships, it is significant that Bowlby himself made this connection:

Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships. The formation of the bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone. Similarly, threat of loss arouses anxiety and actual loss gives rise to sorrow; while each of these situations is likely to arouse anger. The unchallenged maintenance of a bond is experienced as a source of security and the renewal of a bond as a source of joy... the psychology and psychopathology of emotion is ... in large part the psychology and psychopathology of affectional bonds. (Bowlby, 1980:40).

Bowlby's comments concerning the role of attachment both in the construction of emotional experience and adult intimate relationships invites the reader to adopt a perspective that views a person's emotions within the context of their attachment relationships, and understands the expression of (primary) emotion in terms of the person's felt needs within that relationship. Bowlby's reference to a psychopathology of affectional bonds alerts the counsellor or therapist to the reality that attachment style plays a significant role in marital dysfunction. On the basis of their review of the literature, Pietromonaco, Greenwood and Barrett (2004) offer support for Bowlby's observation when they note that individuals and couples with an insecure attachment style report poorer conflict management skills. Conversely, the literature also suggests that while a secure attachment style does not necessarily correlate with less relational conflict it does appear to predispose the couple to being able to arrive at a constructive resolution of the conflict (Pietromonaco, Greenwood & Barrett, 2004). Clinton and Sibcy's (2002) review of Attachment Theory, Hart and Hart-Morris' (2003) incorporation of the principles of EFCT in a book written for the general public, and Johnson's (2003b) brief application of Attachment Theory to couple's therapy clearly show that, even in adulthood, separation from an attachment figure results in distress. Furthermore, these writers indicate the patterns of

distress that are observable in couples reflect the distress they are feeling in the attachment relationship. In this way, the behaviour of the pursuer or blamer may be reframed as the behaviour of someone who is experiencing anxiety and seeking connection or reassurance from his or her partner. Likewise, the behaviour of the withdrawing spouse may be reframed as the behaviour of someone who responds to relational distress with an attempt to protect the “self” through enacting an avoidant attachment response. These observations are consistent with Bowlby’s comments and provide the practitioner with an elegantly simple frame of reference for working with couples.

One dimension of adult attachment behaviour that Johnson repeatedly highlights is the observation that problems arise when individuals and couples constrict, disown, and deny their attachment needs and/or emotions (Johnson, 1996:25-26). When this happens, an individual is aware of a sense of distress but is unable to put a name to this distress. This lack of conscious awareness of his or her needs and/or the emotions he or she is experiencing as a result of relational distress results in the enactment of old attachment behaviours rather than the revealing of vulnerability to his or her partner.

Two vital, and inter-related, aspects of adult attachment relevant to the present discussion are spousal violence and experiences of trauma. In the case of spousal violence, Dutton and Golant (1995), Stevens and Gardner (1994) and Stosny (1995) draw connections between the childhood experiences of men with their caregivers and the use of violence against women. This perspective suggests that the behaviours women experience and label as “Power and Control” are, at least in part, indicative of an attachment style in which the man perceives distance within the relationship as a personal threat.

In the case of experiences of trauma, Kobak, Cassidy and Zir’s (2004) review of the literature indicates that a failure to resolve traumatic events has a direct effect on an individual’s adult attachment relationships. Likewise, Alexander (2003) suggests that the long-term effects of abuse are “determined more by the nature of the initial attachment relationship than by the characteristics of the abuse itself.” It is, therefore, noteworthy that Alexander (2003), Kobak, Cassidy and Zir (2004), as well as Johnson and Williams-Keeler (1998) identify that the capacity of a traumatized individual’s

partner to provide a secure base is a significant factor in the outcome of the treatment process (Alexander, 2003).

E. Evaluation

E.1. Theoretical Coherence

As noted above, Johnson identifies that Attachment Theory enables the couple therapist to see into and through the many dimensions and layers of a close relationship (Johnson, 2003b). There is no question that Johnson's writings demonstrate theoretical coherence in that the priorities and interventions of the EFCT model are clearly shaped by her understanding of adult attachment. This raises the question, however, "Does Attachment Theory provide a suitable theory base for marital therapy?" While this is a germane question, one must first determine the criteria by which the question will be answered. The criteria provided by Worthington (1989a) will be used elsewhere in this study and is also appropriate for evaluating EFCT. Worthington (1989a) argued that an integrated theory of marriage would consider the relationship on three levels: (a) individual constructs; (b) the operation of the marriage as a unit (or system); and (c) the position of the married couple in the family cycle. Viewed from this perspective, there is no doubt that Attachment Theory is capable of considering the marriage in terms of individual functioning, i.e. individual attachment styles. Similarly, the application of Attachment Theory provides the clinician with a means of considering the marriage as an interactional system or unit, and not merely two individuals. Indeed, this is where Johnson devotes much of her attention and energy in her writings. What appears to be lacking both in Johnson's writings and most of the EFCT literature, however, is an acknowledgement and discussion of the impact of normative lifecycle changes, i.e. birth or adoption of children, school aged children, teens, etc., on the adult attachment bond. Dankoski (2001) addresses this oversight in a manner that suggests Attachment Theory is capable of embracing this third dimension of the couple relationship. While this article is seminal in nature, outlining a theoretical integration of Attachment

Theory and Family Life Cycle theory, the ideas conveyed are worthy of consideration both in clinical practice as well as research. Based, therefore, on the criteria set by Worthington, one may conclude that EFCT is not only “internally consistent” but that it offers a coherent theory of marriage and marital intervention that considers the individual, couple, and developmental dimensions of the marital relationship.

E.2. Efficacy

Sprenkle (2003) observes that up until the late 1980’s the field of marriage and family therapy was under researched, resulting in the fact that many practice models lack empirical support or verification. While Sprenkle finds encouragement in the efforts undertaken in some quarters to validate the theories and interventions currently in use, the fact is the field of marital therapy currently remains understudied and is generally lacking in empirical support (Johnson & Lebow, 2000; Sprenkle, 2003). One of the notable exceptions in this situation is EFCT which, as a result of twenty years of continuing research, can be said to be an empirically supported therapy (Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Lebow, 2000; Sprenkle, 2003). One of the significant factors in this research is that while Johnson, and to a lesser extent Greenberg, is the major contributor to this research base some of the research on EFCT has been conducted by others with an “arms-length” relationship to Johnson. The following discussion seeks to summarize the key findings of a representative portion of this research. Johnson and Greenberg (1985a) reported that couples who underwent EFT evidenced significant levels of improvement when compared to a control group. They further reported (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985b) that when the control group completed a course of EFT they demonstrated measurable improvement compared to the control condition. Of particular significance is the fact the second study used novice therapists whereas the first study used more experienced therapists, validating the role of clinical supervision. In a later study, Johnson and Greenberg (1988b) conducted a follow-up study of six couples who participated the two earlier studies. Their results indicated that

the couples who showed the greatest change in the previous study demonstrated a higher level of affiliation and acceptance in their interactions, as opposed to blaming, hostile and coercive behaviours (Johnson & Greenberg, 1988b). Similarly, couples who showed the least change in the previous study demonstrated lower levels of affiliation and acceptance (Johnson & Greenberg, 1988b). This study also identified that the “blamer softening” event was only discernable when couple’s therapy was successful (Johnson & Greenberg, 1988b).

Denton, Burleson, Clark, Rodriguez & Hobbs, (2000) reported on a study in which replicated Johnson and Greenberg’s (1985a, 1985b) initial study. This replication study confirmed the findings of the previous study, namely that EFCT was effective in improving marital satisfaction. As in the case of Johnson and Greenberg (1985b), Denton’s group used novice therapists, finding that the level of experience did not appear to have an adverse effect on the results. Unlike Johnson and Greenberg’s study, however, Denton’s study incorporated live supervision which the authors acknowledge was problematic for some participants.

Johnson and Talitman (1997) reported on a study involving 34 couples in which they sought to identify factors that might predict success in EFCT. Not surprisingly, their findings indicate that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is a predictor of success (Johnson & Talitman, 1997). What was significant, however, was that the quality of the therapeutic alliance was more important than the level of marital distress at the beginning of therapy (Johnson & Talitman, 1997). Their findings suggest that the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship is determined more by the perceived relevance of the tasks of therapy than either a positive bond or a sense of shared goals (Johnson & Talitman, 1997). Another significant finding to emerge from this study was the observation that the couples who reported they were satisfied at follow-up tended to be those couples where the female entered therapy indicating she had a high level of trust in her partner (Johnson & Talitman, 1997). Johnson and Talitman’s observations concerning the therapeutic relationship and spousal trust suggest that couples who benefit from EFT are those who retain an emotional commitment to the

relationship and who are able to view their problems in terms of an insecure attachment. In terms of treatment effect, one of the more significant finds of this study was that older men, and men who were rated by their partners as inexpressive, made the most gains in treatment (Johnson & Talitman, 1997).

A study by Greenberg, Ford, Alden & Johnson (1993) reported three observations with respect to an increase in affiliative behaviours. First, these researchers noted these behaviours tend to occur in the latter stages of therapy (Greenberg, Ford, Alden and Johnson, 1993). Next, it was observed that affiliative behaviours are more likely to occur when the couple views the session as being productive (Greenberg, Ford, Alden and Johnson, 1993). Finally, it was observed that affiliative behaviours tend to occur after the therapist facilitates self-disclosure on the part of the client couple (Greenberg, Ford, Alden and Johnson, 1993).

Bradley and Furrow (2004) examined one of the key processes whereby an EFCT counsellor or therapist effects self-disclosure and reconnection. Through the use of task analysis the authors identified that the “blamer-softening event” is characterized by a six-step process: processing blamer reaching, processing fears of relating, promoting actual blamer reaching, supporting blamer softening, processing with the engaged withdrawer, and promoting the engaged withdrawer to reach back with support (Bradley & Furrow, 2004). This analysis of the blamer softening event appears to support Johnson’s claim that emotional experiencing, especially attachment related affect and fears, is central to facilitating a shift in the blamer’s response to their partner. One possible limitation of this study, however, is the fact tapes from only four therapy sessions were analyzed (Bradley & Furrow, 2004). Balanced against this limitation, one of the significant contributions of the study, in addition to defining the process associated with the blamer-softener event, is the fact it provides “independent verification” of what has been identified as a key therapeutic moment in EFCT.

Millikin (2000) examined a third component of EFCT, the use of “attachment injury” as a construct to describe events that have been frequently observed to result in an entrenched pattern of painful behaviour. While the sample size used in this study is small ($n=3$) it not only defines the nature of an attachment injury, it also provides an initial model for resolving these injuries in therapy, thus addressing one identified reason why some couples do not benefit from EFCT (Johnson, Makinen & Millikin, 2001; Millikin, 2000). In another study ($n=25$ couples), also focusing on the couple’s experience of attachment, Sims (1999) identified that while EFT resulted in positive changes in the clients’ “model of self” there was no corresponding change in their “model of other.” Sims further observed there was substantial evidence indicating that EFT results in positive changes in a couple’s attachment style (Sims, 1999). Furthermore, it was determined that whereas either an increase in secure attachment or a decrease in avoidant-fearful ratings resulted in increased marital satisfaction for males, an increase in marital satisfaction among females was only positively correlated with an increase in secure attachment (Sims, 1999). Finally, Sims observed at the four-month follow-up that, relative to the control group ($n=10$ couples), the EFT treatment group ($n=15$ couples) appeared to lose the treatment effect with respect to their attachment style (Sims, 1999).

Three studies comparing EFT or EFCT with another approach to marital counselling confirm the effectiveness of EFCT. Given the fact each of these studies compares EFCT with a different model, and in the absence of any replication studies, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions with respect to these comparisons. James (1991) compared the efficacy of eight sessions of EFT and eight sessions of EFT combined with four sessions focusing on couple communication. While the researcher observed that both modalities resulted in an improved quality in the marital relationship, his results indicate that the addition of a communications component did not measurably improve the effectiveness of EFT (James, 1991). Goldman and Greenberg (1992) compared two marital therapy models, Integrated Systemic Therapy (IST) and Emotionally-Focused Therapy with a control group over a ten-week period. The results suggest that both models were effective in helping couples

alleviate marital distress but that IST appeared to be more self-sustaining at follow-up (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992). Dandeneau and Johnson (1994) reported on a study of 36 couples in which 12 couples received Cognitive Marital Therapy (CMT), 12 couples received Emotionally-Focused Therapy and 12 couples were placed in a control group. According to the authors, the initial post-test suggested that both treatment modalities were equally effective in promoting couple intimacy (Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994). However, a follow-up assessment at ten weeks post-treatment indicated the EFT group were able to maintain the gains made in therapy, and showed further improvement, while the gains made by the CMT group appeared to be lost (Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994).

At least three articles have been published with respect to the use of EFCT in situations involving chronic illness. Walker, Johnson, Manion & Cloutier (1996) studied the effect of EFT on couples with a chronically ill child. Their findings suggest that couples who received EFT exhibited higher levels of marital adjustment after treatment and were able to maintain these gains at the five-month follow-up. Cloutier, Manion, Walker & Johnson (2002) conducted a follow-up study of the couples who participated in the study by Walker, Johnson, Manion & Cloutier (1996). While thirteen of the sixteen couples who originally received treatment agreed to participate in the follow-up study, only three of the sixteen couples from the original wait-list control group agreed to participate. Cloutier, Manion, Walker & Johnson (2002) found that two years after the conclusion of the original study the couples who had received EFT were able to sustain, or improve upon, the gains made in the initial study. Furthermore, they noted there was a lower level of separation among the group of couples who had received EFCT (Cloutier, Manion, Walker & Johnson, 2002). A third article (Kowal, Johnson & Lee, 2003) considers a case wherein one spouse has a chronic illness and demonstrates EFCT to be an effective intervention in working with this couple. The authors conclude their study by inviting others to explore attachment behaviours in the context of chronic illness, stating their belief that

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EFCT can be demonstrated to be an effective form of treatment when one spouse has a chronic illness.

Johnson and Williams-Keeler (1998) discussed the use of EFCT in the treatment of a couple dealing with trauma and present a single-case study as an illustration of how EFCT provides both the traumatized partner and his or her spouse with the tools required to restructure their relationship.

What is particularly significant about their case-study is the manner in which it illustrates both the effect of one partner providing a secure base for exploring the trauma, and efforts to engage one partner who is in the habit of withdrawing.

Chapter 3: An Evangelical Theological Assessment of EFCT

Subproblem 1. Identify the theological-philosophical values that inform the practice of EFCT and evaluate these values utilizing Evangelical-Christian criteria.

The intent of this chapter is to reflect theologically on the values that inform the practice of EFCT with a view to addressing Subproblem 1 and determining if there is any validity to the hypothesis that “that the therapeutic perspective offered by this model can be incorporated into the practice of Christian counselling without violating the integrity of either the counselling model or a Christian worldview” (Hypothesis 1).

A. Ingram’s Model of Theological Reflection

Developments in the practice of pastoral and Christian marital therapy frequently reflect changes and developments that occur within the field of marital psychotherapy. It is, therefore, no surprise that just as the pastoral marital counselling literature of the 1970’s and 1980’s utilized material drawn from Family Systems Theory, some of the current literature in the field utilizes or reflects the influence of Emotionally Focused (Couples) Therapy (c.f. Bailey, 2002; Benson, 2004; Craig, 2000; Edwards, 2003; Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003; Hart-Morris, 2000; Hart-Morris, 2002a; Hart-Morris, 2002b; Van Alstine, 2002; Worthington, 1994c; Worthington, 1996b, Worthington, 1999a). At least two factors make Emotionally-Focused Therapy attractive to pastoral and Christian marital therapists. First, EFCT provides the counsellor with a viable theoretical model that explains the couple relationship. Secondly, EFCT provides the counsellor with a model and methodology that enables the practitioner to treat the whole person rather than, to use Worthington’s picture (1996b), “heads on sticks.”

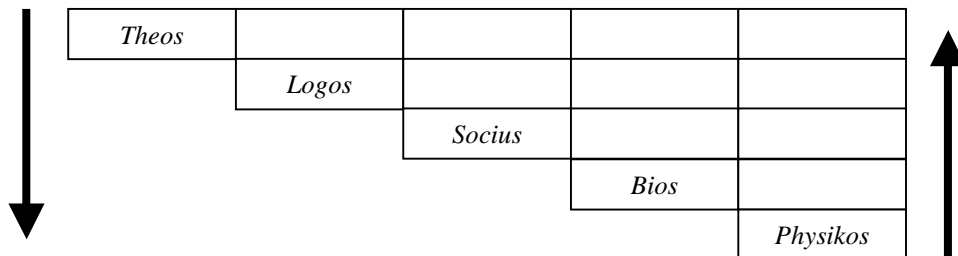
While EFCT is attractive to counsellors, the incorporation of this model into the practice of pastoral or Christian marital therapy invites the pastoral counsellor to engage in theological reflection on a

number of fronts. Indeed, the philosophical-theological values and assumptions concerning the human condition that inform the practice of EFCT merit particular consideration by the pastoral counsellor in three areas:

- The Experiential-Humanistic perspective on which EFCT is based invites reflection concerning the value of the “person,” the experience of the person-in-relationship and how this relates to a Christian perspective of the human condition.
- EFCT’s use of Attachment Theory invites reflection on the experiential realities of human relationships and how these relate to a Christian perspective on human nature, relationships and, specifically, the marital relationship.
- EFCT’s treatment of emotions invites reflection with respect to the nature of knowledge, the nature of emotion, the structures and movements of the mind and the nature of experience.

The following theological reflection on these philosophical-theological assumptions will be guided by Ingram’s (1995) complementarian model of theological integration. Drawing on Rychlak (1993) Ingram identifies five complementary grounds or dimensions on which psychology may be based: *Physikos* (the physical universe), *Bios* (the realm of biology), *Socius* (social conditioning), *Logos* (the realm of meaning-making), and *Theos* (the realm of spirituality). In his article, Ingram identifies two different schemas for understanding the relationship between these levels of analysis. In the first case he proposes a hierarchical schema with the *Physikos* at the lowest level and *Theos* at the uppermost level (Figure 3.1). In this schema *Theos* is understood as representing both a higher order of complexity as well as that which gives meaning to all other dimensions or groundings (Ingram, 1995).

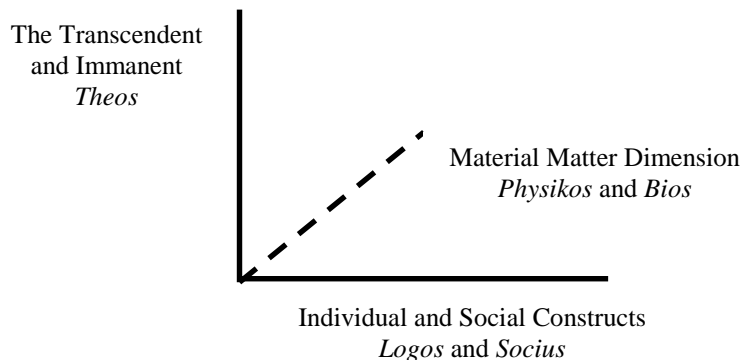
Figure 3.1 Hierarchical Representation of Ingram’s Complementarian Model



One strength of this bi-directional model is that it recognizes the contribution each dimension or grounding provides to the present discussion. For Evangelicals, a second strength is the fact this model affirms the logical precedence of theology (*Theos*) over all other dimensions or groundings (c.f. Hunsinger, 2001). One objection, however, that may be raised concerning this schema is that, by their very nature, hierarchical models are linear in nature and potentially reductionistic. While the bi-directionality, i.e. top-down and bottom-up, of Ingram's schema conveys both a sense of complementarity as well as interdependence between groundings and may serve both to minimize any tendency towards either reductionism or the blurring of the distinctions that exist between each these categories.

The second schema Ingram proposes for understanding the relationship between these five categories is a three dimensional model in which the physical or material dimensions of *Physikos* and *Bios* constitute one axis, the social and individual constructs of *Socius* and *Logos* constitute the second axis, and the transcendent and immanent aspects of *Theos* constitute the third axis (Figure 3.2) (Ingram, 1995). This three-dimensional schema not only avoids the problems of linearity and conceptual dependence noted above, but also it sets the *Theos* element apart from the other four categories, thus reinforcing its significance vis-à-vis the other groundings. Nevertheless, by representing the groundings in this manner, Ingram risks implying that all three axes are of equal value and that no single grounding holds logical precedence over any other grounding.

Figure 3.2 Three-Dimensional Representation of Ingram's Complementarian Model



While the Christian community tends to give primacy to that which Ingram refers to as *Theos*, Ingram's model of complementary integration does highlight two dimensions of the work of theological integration that are easily overlooked. First, that the greatest level of conflict or difference between Christian and secular worldviews, particularly in terms of counselling models, is encountered at the level of the *Socius* and *Logos* or constructed meaning. Yet, despite the fact there are differences in meaning, there are also points at which a Christian worldview provides a perspective that parallels the perspectives offered by other worldviews, i.e. "respect for others" is a value that is shared by virtually all people irrespective of worldview. Second, while explanations or worldviews may differ, Christian and secular models of counselling frequently agree with respect to the observed phenomena, i.e. the level of *Physikos*, *Bios*. For this reason there is the greatest possibility of agreement in the realm of phenomenology. In light of this reality, the following discussion will seek to evaluate the interface between EFCT and an evangelical Christian worldview in terms of the five groundings described by Ingram.

B. Applying Ingram's Model to EFCT's Experiential-Humanistic Assumptions

Humanistic psychologies, most notably the perspectives of Rogers, Maslow, Perls and May, have been criticized by evangelicals in the realm of *Logos* for: de-emphasizing the "fallenness of humanity," denying the supernatural, and, emphasizing the "self," particularly self-actualization and personal growth (c.f. Dodgen & McMinn, 1986; Fatis, 1979; Hammes, 1975a; Hunt & McMahon, 1986; Jones & Butman, 1991; Vitz, 1977). Balanced against this critique, however, is the fact that these approaches to counselling are also recognized for the way in which they focus on the dignity of humankind, social justice, personal responsibility and the importance of human experience (c.f. Dodgen & McMinn, 1986; Fatis, 1979; Hammes, 1975a; Jones & Butman, 1991). Indeed, one of the potentially positive characteristics of the experiential-humanistic therapies is the perspective that individuals are "free agents," with the ability to choose and therefore change their circumstances, rather than being the product of deterministic forces such as one's family of origin or behavioural

conditioning (Fatis, 1979; Jones & Butman, 1991). While there seems to be some disagreement as to the extent to which the core tenets of humanistic philosophy inform the humanistic therapies, what is clear is that an evangelical Christian evaluation of experiential therapy such as EFCT must focus on that therapy's perspective on the human condition (Dodgen & McMinn, 1986; Hammes, 1975a; Jones & Butman, 1991; Vitz, 1977).

Briefly stated, EFCT has four core anthropological assumptions:

- EFCT emphasizes the dignity and worth of human beings (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Johnson, 1996).
- EFCT focuses on human experience, valuing relationality and viewing humanity as “relational beings” (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996).
- EFCT applies the humanistic-psychological concepts of “growth” and “self-realization” not only to the individual but also to the couple relationship (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996).
- Consistent with all humanistic psychology, EFCT is non-theistic in orientation (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996).

B.1. Dignity and Worth

Dodgen and McMinn (1986) observe, “at the very heart of all humanism is its emphasis on the dignity and worth of human beings.” In EFCT this emphasis is seen in the high level of respect the therapist shows to the counsellee(s) (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996). The dignity and worth of human existence is also evident in the respect shown to the couple relationship and the value placed upon healthy relationships, both therapeutic and marital, as tools for healing attachment wounds (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 2001; Johnson, Makinen & Millikin, 2001; Johnson & Williams-Keeler, 1998). In this way, EFCT practitioners not only recognize the presence of suffering and pain in human experience but also convey a sense of hope in the power of a healthy relationship to alleviate the experience of suffering. Finally, this emphasis on the dignity and worth of humankind may be seen in the respect shown for both the couple's experience of self and other as well as the significance of their current emotional experience (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 2003b).

Fundamental to humanistic psychology's attribution of value and dignity to humankind are two assumptions: that the basic experience of "being" is the essence of what it means to be human, and, a belief in the innate goodness of humankind (c.f. Jones and Butman, 1991; Rogers, 1961; Vitz, 1977). Christians do not deny the significance of the experience of "being." Indeed, the Genesis creation account clearly emphasizes the existential dimension of human experience when it declares, "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; *and man became a living soul*" (Genesis 2:7, emphasis added). However, Christians do not view the mere fact of "beingness" as constituting a sufficient basis for treating others with dignity and respect. Neither are Christians content to merely affirm a vague notion of intrinsic worth to other humans based on the fact these individuals are fellow human beings.

A Christian perspective on the dignity of humankind recognizes that concepts such as "value," "dignity," and "worth" are attributions placed upon a person or object by another rather than the person or thing that is valued. It is, therefore, argued that the value of personhood is not intrinsic to the person because a person possesses a positive self-concept, nor is it determined by the values of a group because a set of skills or characteristics are deemed to be of value to a society, but rather value must be determined on the basis of an external referent that stands apart from and is unchanged by the context. It is only in the presence of this "other" who values all humans equally and irrespective of ethnicity, age, gender, attractiveness, health (mental, emotional, or physical), intellect, and skill (intellectual or physical) that the universal values of dignity, and worth of all humans can be truly affirmed.

Christians root their understanding of the dignity and value of human beings in the belief that the creator and redeemer God of the Judeo-Christian scriptures is the one immutable and impartial "other," who functions as the universal "Thou" to the created order in general and humankind in particular. For this reason a Christian view on human dignity and worth begins with the conviction that humankind has been created by God and in the image of God (c.f. Genesis 1:27, 5:1-2, 9:6; I

Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:9; James 3:9). The fact the scriptures speak of being “in the image of God” is significant in that it establishes that the human condition is not an accident of nature but rather a particular order of existence that has its being by virtue of the specific will and action of God. More importantly, when the Judeo-Christian scriptures state that humankind has been created “in the image of God” there is the clear inference that humanity, both as individuals as well as a group, reflects or demonstrates some element of the personhood of the creator God. While theologians may differ as to which element(s) of God’s personhood are included in the statement of Genesis 1:26-27, not to mention the extent to which the divine image may or may not have been marred by the fall from grace (c.f. Genesis 3), there is general agreement that the special relationship that exists between the creator God and humanity cannot be separated from the fact humankind is understood to have been created in *imago dei*. In other words, the *Physikos* and the *Bios* find their meaning in the activity of God (*Theos*).

In addition to these affirmations, that the origin of humankind was a purposeful and intentional act of the creator God and that humankind reflects some element of the personhood of God, Christians affirm the biblical view that human beings are the objects of God’s love and that God desires to relate on an intimate basis with humankind (c.f. Genesis 3:8-10; John 3:16-18; Romans 5:8). Indeed, just as the covenant community in the Old Testament included anyone who would enter into covenant with God whether they were ethnic Jews or non-Jews (c.f. Joshua 6:22-25; the story of Ruth) so too the *New Testament* reveals the ministry of Jesus extended to all, irrespective of ethnicity, gender or social status, (c.f. Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 17:11-19; 19:1-10) and that the covenant community of faith is similarly inclusive of all who express faith in Christ (c.f. Romans 10:12-13; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 5:11).

There is, however, an additional dimension of the dignity and worth of others that merits attention at this point. Namely, humanistic psychology not only affirms the dignity of human beings but also the innate goodness of humankind. While a Christian perspective on human existence affirms the dignity

of our creaturehood, the same perspective also recognizes the presence of what might be described as a drive toward evil, that which theologians refer to as the fallenness of humankind (c.f. Dodgen & McMinn, 1986; Tournier, 1978). This affirmation of human fallenness recognizes the apparent contradiction that exists between the intrinsic dignity of the human condition by virtue of God's work of creation and the ways in which humans not only devalue others but also act in ways that are destructive to themselves, their loved ones, their relationships and others within the broader community. In this way, human fallenness not only serves to explain the acts of selfishness, not to mention the evil, people commit against others it also establishes a basis for asserting the importance of individuals taking personal responsibility in the here and now for their actions, past and present (c.f. Vitz, 1977).

B.2. Relationality

The view of the "self" espoused by EFT and EFCT is best described as "intersubjective" in nature. That is to say, it is a view that sees the person in terms of his or her relatedness with one or more persons such that the interaction "between subjects" yields what a person knows or concludes about his or her self. Philosophically (*Logos*) this perspective draws on Buber's dialogical perspective on relationships, emphasizing the qualities of "presence," "inclusion" and "mutuality" in intimate relationships (Buber, 1970; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). In EFCT "presence" refers to the process by which a couple makes themselves present, rather than hidden or withdrawn, to the other while inclusion refers to the sharing of one's interior life, i.e. thoughts and feelings, with the other and mutuality refers to the fact both partners are present and inclusive of the other (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988).

Christians, likewise, affirm that relationality, characterized by presence, inclusion and mutuality, is a core characteristic of the human condition. These are seen, first of all, in the emphasis the creation accounts place on the complementarity of men and women (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25). In the first

creation account (Genesis 1), the author stresses that humankind was created “male and female,” highlighting the fact it is in the totality of both, as experienced in their interacting not merely their co-existence, we are to understand what it means to be human. Indeed, Bromiley (1980) suggests the deliberate differentiation of humankind in terms of gender evidences the *Imago* in that it is as a married couple experiences both their gendered difference and oneness they reflect the unity and diversity of the mystery of the Godhead. The second creation account (Genesis 2) brings the existential dimension of relationality into sharp focus inasmuch as the experience of “beingness” without an appropriate “other” results in a sense of incompleteness. Here the implication is clear, a full experience of one’s humanity requires being in relationship with an “other” such that each serves as “Thou” to the other person’s “I”.

The second creation account not only affirms relationality to be a core condition of human experience, it also intimates the man and woman were fully present with each other when it states: “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). Based on the immediate context of this verse, it can be postulated that the nakedness of which the writer speaks is of two types. On the one hand, this comment clearly refers to physical nakedness. On the other hand, however, the fact the author specifically notes that neither felt shame, i.e. there was neither the need to hide from each other nor was there a sense of self-protection or fear in the presence of the other, suggests that this nakedness involved both “presence” as well as “inclusion” through emotional and intellectual transparency. This second layer of interpretation seems to find support in the account of the fall from grace (Genesis 3) where we read that the existential result of eating the forbidden fruit was the experience of fear and shame coupled with a desire to hide, both from God and each other. Oglesby (1980) observes “sometimes hiding takes the form of physical flight; at other times it is evidenced in a lie that is designed to obscure the reality of the situation; again it may emerge in a hypocritical gesture such as a bribe or flattery; from still another perspective it may manifest itself in hostility or violence” (p.80). When this perspective is applied to marriage, as it is in Genesis 3, we

understand that sin, both the sin of the individual and the experience of being sinned against, creates a sense of fear that results in some form of hiding or withdrawal from the “other” which in turn prevents marital partners from being either fully present or transparent with each other.

If the fall from grace may be understood as a disruption in humanity’s capacity to be fully present with one another, then the creation of “presence” and “inclusion” within relationships begins by the removal of “fear” and ‘shame” through the extension of grace to the other. For the Christian, this ability to give grace arises from an appreciation of our co-humanity not only as the image-bearers of God but also as sinners who are the objects of God’s redeeming love and his grace-gift of forgiveness. Herein lies the theological foundation for experiencing “mutuality” within marriage, namely, that the Christian husband or wife becomes present, sharing his or her thoughts and feelings with his or her spouse as he or she experiences God’s grace-gift of forgiveness (c.f. Matthew 18:21-35; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 2:1-4). In so doing he or she has nothing to hide, or fear, from either God or mankind and is, therefore, in a position to embody the grace he or she has experienced within the marital relationship.

B.3. Growth and Self-realization

Dodgen and McMinn (1986) identify that the humanistic psychologies emphasize the qualities of choice, creativity, valuation, and self-realization. This perspective on the human condition suggests that humans both desire to transcend their present experience and possess the ability to exercise agency and self-efficacy to make this happen. This view of humankind presents two challenges to Christian counsellors.

Writers such as Fatis (1979), Vitz (1977) and Watson, Morris and Hood (1989) have identified the danger of selfism where the self becomes focused inward resulting in an inability to give of oneself to others. This writer has observed that, in clinical practice, selfism is frequently characterized by a preoccupation with personal injury, care or protection of the self, and doing “what is right for me.”

While it may be true that “self-realization” may be interpreted in terms of egocentricity, the fact is that the growth of the self cannot be separated from becoming involved and invested in the lives of others (c.f. Buber, 1970; Dodgen & McMinn, 1986; Watson, Morris & Hood, 1989). In EFCT this is clearly seen in the restructuring phase of therapy in which the “blamer” is brought to the point where, instead of feeling anger and contempt for their partner, they begin to feel and express compassion and understanding. Similarly, the withdrawer is invited to engage his or her partner, rather than focusing on the hurt he or she has experienced. As the “dialogue” of the couple’s relatedness is engaged the couple encounters each other anew, with the result that each experiences personal growth as well as growth within the relationship. Thus, EFCT views the corrective for selfishness and competing personal interests in marriage to be the development, on the part of both partners, of the capacity to relate to each other with compassion and understanding.

This perspective resonates well with the Christian view on human relationships that calls people to be compassionate towards one another, slow to anger and quick to forgive (c.f. Romans 12:10, 13:8; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:1-4; Colossians 3:13-14; 1 Peter 3:8-11). Indeed, a proper reading of the major *New Testament* text on the marital relationship, Ephesians 5:21-32, suggests that the central truth of this passage is not so much the affirmation of a particular family structure but rather the application of the Biblical value of mutual concern for one another to family relationships (Beck, 1978; Mutter, 1993). Viewed in this light, the significance of the Ephesians passage rests in the fact it challenges men to give of themselves to, rather than take from, their wives. As the church father John Chrysostom (*Ephesians* Homily XX) points out, the theological basis for exercising mutual concern and compassion within marriage is the recognition of the co-humanity of men and women as the image bearers of God and the fact that the husband and wife are both co-recipients of God’s gift of forgiveness.

If the first challenge posed by a humanistic view on growth and self-realization is the danger of selfishness or individualism, the second challenge lies in its assumption of “self-efficacy.” This

assumption is grounded both in a belief in the innate goodness of all people and a conviction that individuals possess the ability to effect positive change in their lives. In EFCT individuals are encouraged to employ this ability to effect change in ways that will have a beneficial impact on their intimate relationships. This is accomplished first by interrupting the blame-withdraw cycle and secondly by inviting each partner to experience the relationship differently by acting differently. It is important to note that the process of EFCT mediates the change process, first through the actions of the therapist/counsellor and secondly as each spouse encounters his or her partner in a new way. In practical terms, growth and self-realization are allogenic, resulting from the actions of others, rather than autogenic, self-originating, processes inasmuch as they are the outgrowth of a person's interactions with others.

Christian opinions on the ability of humankind to break destructive patterns vary. Historically, the Reformed and Lutheran traditions have held that the ability to change and effect personal growth is not possible apart from God's enablement (c.f. Calvin, *Institutes*; Luther, *Bondage of the Will*). According to this view of human nature, the presence of original sin limits the individual's ability to effect change, apart from the person first experiencing the enabling of God's spirit which draws the believer to faith in Jesus Christ and frees the believer from bondage to sin. Balanced against this, however, is the fact that beginning with the scriptures many Christian writers have taught that each individual is required to bear personal responsibility for his or her decisions and actions (c.f. Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:1-32). This emphasis on personal responsibility suggests that the condition of human depravity as described in passages like Romans 3:1-23 does not exclude recognition of the fact humans exercise the ability to choose and exercise self-agency both in the committing of sin and the decision not to sin. Significantly, this ability to choose is made possible by the fact that humans possess an awareness of right and wrong, an awareness of the effect of their actions on others, as well as self-awareness (Genesis 3:1-13; Romans 2:14-15). In other words, the operation of the mind referred to as the conscience serves to inform the decision making process (c.f.

Oden, 1989). Experience, the Genesis account of the fall from grace, Paul's comments in Romans 2:14-15, and the witness of the pastoral tradition (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.xxxvii.1; Oden, 1989) all indicate people have the ability to override the witness of their conscience, bringing harm to themselves, others and their relationships. In this way, the biblical and theological traditions affirm that human beings possess the capacity to choose both how they will act and whether their actions are motivated primarily for self or for the benefit of others. What is also clear from the scriptures is that unless a person's actions are mediated by his or her conscience, love for another, or the witness of scripture, another person, and/or the Holy Spirit, the human capacity for self-efficacy results in selfishness and broken relationships. Thus, a Christian approach to change, like that of EFCT, views change as a mediated process.

B.4. Non-theistic orientation

At its core, EFCT is a non-theistic approach to counselling that is neither dependent on theistic assumptions nor explicitly incorporates spirituality or spiritual practices within the process of treatment (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996). Nevertheless, Sharon Hart-Morris (Hart & Hart-Morris, 2003) has attempted to adapt EFCT to incorporate Christian concepts, suggesting that any lack of a specific spiritual or theistic focus may not necessarily result in an approach that is antagonistic to Christian values.

While EFCT may be a model that is capable of hosting Christian values, there is at least one non-theistic assumption in EFT that would be viewed as problematic for many theologically conservative Christians. Specifically, Greenberg utilizes the evolutionary paradigm as the foundational biological framework that organizes his understanding of the brain and the role of emotions in human experience (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). In particular, he argues that emotions, particularly the adaptive emotions, exist because they contribute to human survival (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987). While it is beyond the scope of this study to

review the literature pertaining to Christian views on science and/or the evolutionary paradigm, it is prudent to locate the present “complementarian” argument within the context of the broader intellectual dialogue on this subject. The range of views on the relationship between science and theology includes: Creationism, which rejects Darwinism and evolution, Independence, which views science and theology as occupying distinct and independent domains, Qualified Agreement, which holds that empirical or scientific evidence provides epistemological support but not proof for a theistic worldview, and Partnership, which affirms that authentic knowledge is a valuable partner along with faith in the quest to understand what is real.³ In keeping with the complementarian orientation of this study, the approach taken in the following discussion is best characterized as being most similar to the “Partnership” argument. In taking this approach, this writer is of the opinion that the fields of science and theology both seek to honestly grapple with understanding what it means for human beings to be truly human, a fact that may be observed by comparing what each field of study has to say about each of two key phenomena, the phenomenon of attachment and the phenomenon of emotions.

With respect to the phenomenon of attachment, it is noted that while philosophers, theologians and psychologists acknowledge the significance of the bond that exists between parents and children, not to mention husbands and wives, the idea of “attachment” is most clearly defined in the work of John Bowlby (1958). In his theory, Bowlby makes the case that humans form close relationships, particularly with a caregiver, and that these relationships provide the individual with a sense of security. For Bowlby, attachment to a caregiver is instinctual and an artifact of the process of evolution (Bowlby, 1971/1987). Bowlby, therefore, postulated that the primary function of attachment was to achieve protection against predators and secure the survival of the species (Bowlby, 1971/1987). Although Bowlby developed or refined both the concept of the attachment

³ For a fuller discussion of these categories see: Richard F. Carlson, ed. (2000) *Science and Christianity: Four Views* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

bond as well as identifying behaviours that occur when the bond is disrupted, the idea of a relational bond was not new to Bowlby. Indeed, the Christian scriptures allude to the marital bond (c.f. Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:3-6). In Genesis 2 the text indicates that the absence of a vital relationship with an “other” resulted in a sense of loneliness on the part of the man. The suggestion in the text is that the man, being alone and aware that all other species occurred as complementary pairs, felt the need for one to whom he could relate as an equal (Genesis 2:18-24). In this way, the Genesis text alludes to the importance of the marital bond in completing the man’s understanding of his existence as a human being.

One further implication of Genesis 2:24-25 is that the marital bond serves to differentiate the couple from both of their families of origin. Thus, rather than serving to protect a couple against the ravages of a hostile climate, the marital bond functions to differentiate the couple relationship from all other social relationships. Deuteronomy 24:5 underscores the importance of this function of the bond when it indicates that neither business pursuits nor military obligations are to interfere with a man’s responsibility to bond with his wife. The sacred nature of this bond is further emphasized in Matthew 19:6 where we are told that no-one is to contribute to the breakdown of the marital bond. Other biblical passages that assume the significance of the marital bond include the teaching of scripture with respect to adultery (Exodus 20:14, 17; Matthew 5:27-28) and incest (Leviticus 18:9-18, 20:19-21; Deuteronomy 27:22-23). In other words, rather than being an artifact of evolution, a biblical view of the marital bond is that it serves a vital social, rather than physical survival, function, identifying the couple as a distinct pair and protecting them from outside interference.

With respect to the phenomenon of emotion, it is noted that philosophers from the time of Plato, science (in general), evolutionary theory (in particular) and the scriptures all agree that emotions are an observed phenomenon of human existence. Indeed, the existence of the phenomenon of emotions or affect is not in question. What is under discussion is the etiology, meaning and purpose of emotions in human experience. Similarly, there is an element of agreement in that the evolutionary

perspective as outlined by Greenberg (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987) and the biblical-theological perspective provided by the scriptures (i.e. Genesis 18:9-15, 23:1-2; Daniel 2:10-12; Jonah 4; Ezra 3:12-13; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 5:26; Acts 8:4-8; 2 Timothy 1:4) both identify that emotions arise within specific contexts and are measurable responses to observed stimuli. Finally, both science (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987) and the scriptures (c.f. Genesis 3:10; Esther 1:12; James 1:15) observe that emotions are motivational in nature. These observations suggest that a theistic Christian worldview would concur with Greenberg's conclusion that the capacity to experience emotion is an innate, "hard-wired," component of human existence (*Physikos*) (Greenberg & Safran, 1987). This apparent convergence between non-theistic and theistic views does not, however, obscure the fact that a non-theistic perspective on affect understands the phenomenon of emotion through the lenses of neurobiology and human behaviour whereas a theistic perspective seeks to understand this phenomenon in terms of the *Imago Dei* and the fall from grace (see below). While a neurobiological view of emotions does not prove the theistic assumption that humans are created in *Imago Dei*, it is clear that neurobiology provides important insights with respect to the biological mechanisms associated with human emotions (c.f. Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Worthington, 2003).

C. Applying Ingram's Model to an Analysis of Attachment Theory

The theoretical roots of Attachment Theory may be traced, initially, to Bowlby's early training in psychoanalytic theory and, later, to the influences of ethology, evolutionary theory, early systems theory, i.e. cybernetics, and developmental psychology (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992). The influence of ethology is seen in both Bowlby and Ainsworth's interest in observing mother-child interactions with a view to identifying innate behaviours that appear to characterize the mother-child relationship (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992). Through this process both researchers, Ainsworth and Bowlby, identified what they believed to be a direct correspondence between observed behaviours and the child's sense of security within the mother-child relationship.

The fact Bowlby's work in England and Ainsworth's observations in Uganda and the United States report similar findings concerning the significance of the relational bond between the mother and the child suggests that "security seeking behaviour" is an innate or instinctual, rather than a learned, response mechanism among humans. As noted above, Bowlby considered attachment behaviours to be an artifact of the process of evolution (Bowlby, 1971/1987). While there are Christians who may be tempted to reject Attachment Theory on the basis of Bowlby's affirmation of evolution, Ingram's complementarian model of theological integration invites the Christian counsellor to look deeper and evaluate Attachment Theory from several perspectives. It is important to recognize that evolutionary theory is cited by Bowlby as a means of explaining the observed phenomenon of attachment. In other words, it is a meaning construct (*Logos*) employed to account for an observed phenomenon. On the basis of this evaluation, the question then becomes, "Is it possible to account for the phenomenon of attachment by some means other than the attributed explanation of evolution, perhaps at the level of the *Physikos, Bios, Socius, or Theos*?" Utilizing Ingram's complementarian model it will be demonstrated that several alternate domains or groundings may be employed to account for this phenomenon. It will be further demonstrated that the domain or grounding of *Theos* not only accounts for the phenomenon of attachment in a hierarchical sense, it also, in a three dimensional sense, adds meaning both to the physical reality (*Bios*) and the social and individual meaning constructs (*Socius* and *Logos*) attributed to experiences of attachment and non-attachment.

There is no question, the research data compiled by Bowlby, Ainsworth and others identifies there is a universality to the experience of relatedness or attachment that crosses ethnic and cultural boundaries (c.f. Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992; Rholes & Simpson, 2004a). This suggests that "Attachment Behaviours" transcend or go beyond the limits of social prescription (*Socius*). On the basis of these observations, it may, therefore, be argued that the universality of attachment in human experience may in some way be reflective of the constitutional nature of the human condition, the *Bios* of existence (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992). Indeed,

Bowlby appears to have made this link to the *Bios* through his use of Harlow's observations of infant monkeys as an analogue to human experience (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992).

Viewed "bottom-up," the observational data compiled by Bowlby's team suggests that the parent-child relationship is a significant social relationship that reflects the child's biological needs for nourishment, nurture, and protection (c.f. Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1992). Similarly, the data compiled by Greenberg and Johnson indicates the spousal relationship is a significant social relationship that reflects the adult's ongoing emotional and physical needs for safety, security, and significance (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996). These observations suggest that, at the level of *Socius*, attachment relationships derive meaning and social significance from the fact these relationships are the context in which a person's fundamental needs of safety, security, and significance are met.

Conversely, viewed "top-down," the parent-child relationship is a socially or culturally significant relationship that not only contributes to the emotional health of the child but also shapes the child's behaviour (c.f. Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1992). Similarly, the spousal relationship is a socially or culturally significant relationship that shapes behaviour and contributes to emotional health (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996). In addition to this, the social significance of the couple bond extends beyond what the couple derives from the relationship in at least two ways. On the one hand, Joy (1985) observes the behaviours associated with pair bonding are such that the couple alerts others to the fact the relationship has special significance and that neither individual is currently "free" to bond with anyone else. On the other hand, the social context in which a relationship develops defines the couple's behaviours (Augsburger, 1986; Augsburger, 1992; Ghunney, 1993; Leslie, 1995; McGoldrick, Pearce & Giordano, 1982). These observations suggest that, at the level of *Socius*, our understanding of attachment relationships is socially constructed and that these constructs give shape to the relationship.

At this point it becomes clear that the groundings of *Bios* and *Socius* both appear to provide relevant data for understanding the phenomenon of attachment. The question, however, remains, “Does the grounding of *Theos* provide an appropriate perspective (top-down) for understanding the phenomenon of attachment in relationships? From a Christian perspective, the resolution of this question requires reflection in the area of theological anthropology. Briefly stated, theological reflections on human nature, and specifically the *imago Dei* have historically focused primarily on either ontology, that is the human constitution, or relationality (Anderson, 1982). Ontologically oriented discussions utilize Aristotelian logic and “equate the *imago* with one or more faculty of the self which represent(s) a moral, spiritual or rational superiority over non-human creatures” (Anderson, 1982). This perspective on the *imago* is characteristic both of scholastic theologians such as Aquinas as well as many Protestant writers of the post-Reformation period in whose writings the faculty of rationality emerges as having particular importance (c.f. Anderson, 1982; Berkhof, 1939; Hoekema, 1986; Klooster, 1964; Orr, 1905).

One exception to the trend to identify the *imago* with one or more specific human faculties is the view of the Reformers who considered the *imago* as being reflected in the person’s orientation towards God (Anderson, 1982). Here the emphasis is placed on humankind’s covenant relationship with God. In this way, the Reformers understood that the *imago* is both blurred or corrupted by sin and renewed through faith in Christ (c.f. Anderson, 1982; Hoekema, 1986). A similar argument is made by Grenz (2001, 2004) who argued that the *imago* should not be understood in terms of either the constitutive elements of the “self” or the separateness of the “self” from others. Instead, Grenz (2004) argued that the *Imago* could only be truly understood in the light of God’s self-revelation in Christ (c.f. Colossians 1:15). Thus, Grenz argues that “the humankind created in the *imago Dei* is none other than the new humanity conformed to the *imago Christi*, and that the *telos* toward which the OT creation narrative points is the eschatological community of glorified saints” (Grenz, 2004). Viewed from this perspective, Grenz argues the *imago* is known (and experienced) *through* the community of

faith's experience of relatedness as they live lives empowered by the Spirit (Grenz, 2001). Thus he concludes his treatment of the *imago* with this statement, "This relational, ecclesial "self," whose identity and longevity emerges *extra se in Christo* by means of the Spirit-effected experience of being centered in the one in whom all things find their interconnectedness, offers true and lasting hope in the midst of the loss of self... that afflicts the postmodern world" (Grenz, 2001:336).

The implications of Grenz' comments are significant. First, by locating the manifestation of the *imago Dei* initially in Christ, and secondarily in relationships that have been transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Grenz identifies that one can only truly know the fullness of his or her humanity as his or her life is empowered by the Spirit and as he or she relates to others whose lives are likewise empowered by the Spirit. Second, by locating the manifestation of the *imago Dei* within the broader community of the Church, Grenz makes the relationships of the redeemed community the "norm" by which marriage is to be understood. Here he is in agreement with Clapp (1993) and Icenogle (1994) both of whom have argued that, in terms of the Kingdom of God, the defining or foundational social relationship, aside from the believer's relationship with God through Christ, is neither marriage nor family but rather the communal relationship that takes place between believers. Viewed in this light two elements of Paul's argument in Ephesians 5:21-33 may be drawn upon to support the application of Grenz' argument to the marital relationship. To begin, the structure of Paul's argument within the passage is that the relationships found within Christian households are to be Spirit empowered and Spirit transformed. Indeed, a comparison of Paul's argument in Ephesians 5:21-33 with the description of the type of relationships that are to characterize life in the community of faith outlined in Philippians 2:1-5 would appear to support the view that the relationships found in Christian marriages are to mirror those that are expected within the church. Beyond this, however, there is the apostle's comment in Ephesians 5:32 where he specifically identifies that the marriage relationship is itself a reflection of God's relationship to humanity. Here the implication appears to be that Christian marriages, when the relationships are characterized by the life of the Spirit, reveal

the nature and character of God as revealed in his mercy and the self-sacrificing life of Jesus Christ. In other words, just as God has provided the means to experience a secure relationship with Himself by means of Christ's work of salvation, so too a husband and wife experience security in their relationship as they give of themselves for the benefit of each other.

Whereas Grenz' perspective identifies that the *imago* is evidenced **through** the relationships and interactions of the community of faith as it lives in response to the Spirit of God, other twentieth century theologians locate the *imago* **in the function** of relating, that is to say in the encounter of one person with another (c.f. Anderson, 1982; Barth, 1961; Bromiley, 1980; Hoekema, 1986; Klooster, 1964). While this relational perspective is a dominant theme in the writings of twentieth century theologians, it is not unique to this period of history. Indeed, Calvin affirmed the relational nature of humankind when he asserted, "that man was formed to be a social animal" (Calvin, *Genesis*). This comment by Calvin seems to anticipate writers such as Anderson (1982) and Barth (1961) who made the case that humans do not exist as *homo solitarius* but rather in solidarity with one another in "co-humanity." Anderson (1982), therefore, argues that what we know about ourselves as human beings is a product of our interactions with others. Consequently, a sense of differentiated personhood is intimately connected to a person's sense of their co-humanity first with those they encounter on a daily basis and ultimately with all humankind (Anderson, 1982). What is evident about this perspective is that theologians such as Anderson, Barth and Bromiley identify and affirm that inter-subjective relationality among human beings is both an indication of the *imago Dei* and that it finds particular expression within the marital relationship. Viewed from this perspective it may be argued that the marital relationship is that which defines other relationships, rather than being defined by those relationships.

In terms of our understanding of the marital or attachment bond, Barth (1961), followed by Bromiley (1980), argues from Genesis 1:27 that, since the first differentiation and relationship within humanity identified by scripture is between male and female, the male-female differentiation is itself the

expression of what it means to have been created in *imago Dei*. Both writers argue it is as human beings experience oneness or unity in the midst of gendered differentness that the unity within diversity characterizing the divine Trinity is made known (Barth, 1961; Bromiley, 1980). While it is true that this experience of unity within diversity may be known in any social context involving males and females, nowhere is this more fully apparent than in the context of marriage (Barth, 1961; Bromiley, 1980). In this way, marriage, and marital closeness, conveys, experientially to the participants and observationally to others, something of the nature of the Creator God (c.f. Anderson, 1982). Drawing on Barth's and Bromiley's works, it may be further argued the differentiated unity that is to characterize the marital relationship is bilateral in nature in that each requires the other and each must experience the other without pretense or shame in order for this state of unity, this bond, to occur.

In summary, whether one adopts the view presented by Grenz or the view presented by Barth, it seems clear that when *Theos* is invoked as a top-down explanation the couple attachment relationship is imbued with new significance. For Barth, the couple relationship is a "calling" in which the couple experiences security through their relatedness, sharing in each other's humanity and evidencing the mystery of unity in diversity. However, when the relationship is viewed from Grenz' perspective it is defined by God's second work of creation, the new covenant in Christ, rather than God's first work of creation, as in the case of Barth. In this way, Christian marriage takes on a semi-sacramental quality in that the couple both experiences and bears witness to the grace of God as they experience the empowerment of the Spirit in each other's lives. In either case, both perspectives view the couple relationship as a context for experiencing emotional, intellectual and physical intimacy through the safety of a secure attachment.

D. Applying Ingram's Model to EFCT's Perspective on Emotions

For reasons that are not quite clear, a survey of twentieth century theological texts written by, or of significance to, evangelicals reveals that despite the rise of both modern psychotherapy and existentialism the subject of the emotions appears to have been overlooked by these writers (c.f. Anderson, 1982; Barth, 1960; Berkouwer, 1962; Erickson, 1984; Grenz, 2001; Hoekema, 1986; Hughes, 1989). As a result, the following reflections will draw primarily from pre-twentieth century theological texts and the Christian scriptures.

In EFCT emotions are seen to be both a biophysical response to, and a cognitive appraisal of, a particular circumstance or set of circumstances and are understood to be a means by which the individual knows him or herself in within the context of their environment. This perspective on emotion sets EFCT apart from the cognitive therapies in that emotions are a means of quickly accessing information vital to the well being of the individual rather than being in conflict with cognition and rationality. In this way, EFCT is unlike the majority of the Pastoral, Christian and Biblical therapies which have tended to emphasize the role of rationality in the therapeutic process (c.f. Adams, 1970; Bustanoby, 1976; Crabb, 1977; Drakeford, 1980; Friesen & Friesen, 1989; Harley, 1994; Hunt, 1994; Leaman, 1987; Oliver & Miller, 1994; Smith, 1987; Stanley & Trathen, 1994; Tweedie, 1976; Worthington, 1989a; Wright, 1995). The bias shown by the Pastoral and Christian therapies towards rationality is itself a reflection of a set of underlying theological values that view rationality and the capacity to reason as evidence of the *imago*, and, view emotion as being of less value or importance than rationality. These values are not merely rooted in the Enlightenment tradition of the 18th century and/or the philosophy of modernism but also the philosophical and theological traditions of earlier eras. Indeed, the most significant “theological” arguments concerning the emotions written in earlier times are more firmly grounded in philosophy (*Logos*) than biblical or theological propositions (*Theos*).

Two early examples of Christian philosophical reflection on the emotions may be found in the writings of Ambrose of Milan and St. Augustine. Ambrose of Milan's text *On the Duties of the Clergy* contains numerous sections that not only focus on specific emotions such as anger, but also the relationship of passion, or emotional experience, to reason. Indeed, Ambrose rather succinctly defines this relationship:

There are two kinds of mental motions — those of reflection and of passion... There is no confusion one with the other, for they are markedly different and unlike. Reflection has to search and as it were to grind out the truth. Passion prompts and stimulates us to do something. Thus by its very nature reflection diffuses tranquility and calm; and passion sends forth the impulse to act. Let us then be ready to allow reflection on good things to enter into our mind, and to make passion submit to reason (if indeed we wish to direct our minds to guard what is seemly), lest desire for anything should shut out reason. Rather let reason test and see what befits virtue (St. Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* Book 1.)

In this passage Ambrose not only distinguishes between reason and passion, he differentiates between them in terms of their function – passion, he observes, moves a person to action while reason moves a person to understanding. In addition to this, Ambrose characterizes reason as being tranquil while passion, by implication, is turbulent. Of particular interest, however, is Ambrose' comment that passion needs to be submitted to, or held in check by, reason. Here Ambrose' logic parallels that of Cicero who identified that a person's appetites and passions need to be held in check by reason (Cicero, *On the Duties of the Magistrate*, Book I. xxix. §102-105). Ambrose' understanding of the relationship between reason and emotion is underscored just a few paragraphs later where he states "passion should not resist our reason... for if passion yields to reason we can easily maintain what is seemly in our duties" (Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* Book 1, §105). Elsewhere, Ambrose differentiates the roles of reason and passion when he states that reason "checks passion, and makes it obedient to itself (i.e. reason), and leads it whither it will; and trains it by careful teaching to know what ought to be done, and what ought to be avoided, so as to make it submit to its kind tamer" (St. Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* Book 1, §237). To prove his point Ambrose refers to the stories of several Old Testament saints, the most notable of these is the story of Abraham concerning whom

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Ambrose notes that even though Abraham had fears and was suspicious of others his passions were submitted to the “reasonableness of performing his duty to God” (Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* Book 1, §108).


Augustine, a disciple of Ambrose, addressed the subject of emotions in his *City of God*, arguing that while a person may not be in a position to avoid situations that evoke emotions, or passion, he or she may nonetheless determine whether these emotions will overwhelm his or her self, or whether the mind, i.e. reason, shall exercise control over the aroused emotion (*City of God*, Book 9.4-5). These comments reveal two things about Augustine’s view on emotions, namely, that emotions are natural phenomena that arise of their own accord and that a person may utilize reason to control these emotions. While Augustine grounds his argument in the assertion that the Greek philosophers were in essential agreement on this point (*City of God*, Book 9.4), he extends his argument through theological reflection. The grounds for this reflection is the premise that just as the Christian is to subject his or her mind to the rule of Christ, so too the emotions are to be made subject to the mind that is submitted to Christ’s rule (*City of God*, Book 9.5). In this way, emotions that serve the cause of Christ and the good of others are deemed virtuous (*City of God*, Book 9.5).

Aquinas provides a third example of Christian reflection on the emotions, devoting significant portions of his *Summa Theologica* to an exploration and discussion of the passions, i.e. emotions (*Summa Theologica*, Part 2a, Questions 22-48). For Aquinas the emotions are a part, or function, of the soul or psyche (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(22)-A(1)) and structures his understanding of emotions around the structures, functions and powers of the soul described in Part 1 (Questions 75-89) of the *Summa Theologica* (Figure 3.3).

In Part 1 (Questions 75-89) of his *Summa*, Aquinas identified the five “powers” of the soul as being (from least to greatest) vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, locomotion, and intellectual” (*Summa Theologica*, P(1)-Q(78)-A(1)), establishing the intellectual or rational power of the soul as being of a

higher order than any other power. At this point, Aquinas appears to follow Aristotle who, in reflecting on the operations of the soul, stated, “appetite is the genus of which desire, passion, and wish are the species” (Aristotle, *On the Soul*, Book 2, part 3). Inasmuch as Aquinas locates emotions within the sensitive appetite of the appetitive part of the soul, his distinction between the intellectual, or rational, power of the soul and other powers of the soul both separates emotion from, and subordinates emotion to, the intellect (*Summa Theologica*, P(1)-Q(80)-A(2); P(2a)-Q(22)-A(2); P(2a)-Q(22)-A(3)).

Figure 3.3 Aquinas’ Schema of the Soul as it Relates to Human Emotions

| THE HUMAN SOUL | | |
|--|--|--|
| <u>Appetitive part of the soul</u> | | <u>Apprehensive part of the soul</u> |
| Sensitive Appetite | Intellectual Appetite | |
| <i>Realm of Emotions</i> (sensitive power) | <i>Realm of the “Will”</i> (locomotive power) | <i>Realm of Knowledge and Reason</i> (intellectual power) |
| Hierarchical Relationship  | | |
| <i>Irascible faculty</i> | <i>Concupiscible faculty</i> | |
| Regards good or bad as arduous. | Regards good or evil absolutely | |
| Daring, fear, hope, despair, anger | Love, hatred, joy, sorrow, desire, aversion | |
| Based on: Aquinas, <i>Summa Theological</i> (Part 1, Questions 75-89; Part 2a, Questions 22-48) | | |

It is very important for Aquinas that the passions be held in check by reason inasmuch as that which is involuntary or irrational cannot be deemed good or evil whereas the voluntary passions, those that are subject to the will and to reason, may be assessed in moral terms (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(24)-A(1)). Indeed, he makes the case that passions “are not called diseases or disturbances of the soul, (except) when they are not controlled by reason” (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(24)-A(2)). In this comment Aquinas makes two important distinctions. First, the passions are not in and of themselves

unhealthy or immoral. Here, Aquinas appears to follow Aristotle who held that the passions do not have a moral quality to them (*Nicomachean Ethics*). Instead, Aristotle argues, the moral issue with respect to emotions is not that a person experiences a particular emotion, but rather the manner in which the emotion is expressed (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II.5). The second distinction that may be observed in the foregoing quote from Aquinas is that the passions may only be considered unhealthy when they are not controlled by reason. Again, there are echoes of Aristotle whose arguments in favor of the primacy of reason over passion include the assertion that a continent lifestyle requires that reason, i.e. rationality, will prevail over passion (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.1). Aristotle further argues that cognition, i.e. knowledge, awareness, practical wisdom, will not result in a continent life if it is not accompanied by the exercise of reason (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.1). Finally, Aristotle makes the point that in situations where appetite (desire) and reason present two contradictory options, the path of continence requires one to listen to reason rather than appetite (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.3.1.d). Thus, we see there is an Aristotelian orientation in Aquinas' perspective on human emotions and their relationship to reason.

With respect to the types of emotions experienced by human beings, Aquinas makes two significant distinctions. First of all, he separates the passions into two categories, those that are described as "irascible" and those that are described as "concupiscible" (Figure 3.3). The significance of these categories is, as Aquinas describes them elsewhere, that "the concupiscible power regards what is suitable, while the irascible is concerned with what is harmful" (*Summa Theologica*, P(1)-Q(81)-A(2)). The irascible passions, therefore, are those that are understood to arise in the presence, or anticipation, of some danger or harm (c.f. *Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(1)). Similarly the concupiscible passions are those that are understood to arise in situations that pose no danger or harm to the person (c.f. *Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(1)). Secondly, Aquinas observes that most emotions exist as pairs (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(2)). One of the strengths of his argument in this regard is the fact Aquinas recognized that a critical function of the passions is that of

motivating or moving a person to action. Thus, Aquinas identified pairs of emotions for which the action tendency of one emotion is exactly the opposite of that produced by another emotion, i.e. daring and fear, love and hatred (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(2)). While this “pairing” appears to work in most cases, Aquinas does not pair “anger” with a second emotion, arguing that anger occurs in the presence of a “difficult evil” to which the individual must respond because the option of “withdrawal” does not exist (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(3)).

Whereas Ambrose, Augustine and Aquinas tended to use the word “passions” to refer to human emotions, Calvin’s use of this word differs from these earlier writers to the extent that the passions are understood to include both the experience of emotion as well as the “lusts of life,” i.e. the drives and desires which move people to action (c.f. *Institutes*, Book 2). A second difference between Calvin’s outlook on this matter and that of earlier writers is that he rejects the position of the philosophers and theologians who believed the mind is capable of controlling the passions. Calvin argues that this gives too much power to the mind, i.e. reason, (*Institutes*, Book 2, 2). The issue, for Calvin, is not that reason should or should not exercise control over either passion or the will, but whether the mind, in its fallen sinful condition, is capable of exercising this control (*Institutes*, Book 2, 2). Later, Calvin argues that the remedy for uncontrolled lust and passion does not lie merely in the mind but rather begins with the witness of the Law, and finds its fulfillment when, by faith, the believer experiences pardon for sins and submits to the rule of the Spirit of God (*Institutes*, Book 2, 7; Book 3, 17.1).

Jonathan Edwards’ classic text *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* is a theological reflection on the emotions as they relate to the practice of the Christian faith. While it is beyond the scope of this study to thoroughly explore this text, Edwards’ general views on emotions are of merit to the present study. Edwards begins his work by identifying that the soul has two faculties. The first faculty is that of *understanding*, or capability of perception and speculation, the means by which the soul discerns, views, and judges things (Edwards, 1746/2001). The second faculty, as Edwards

describes it, encompasses all those functions by which a person responds to that which is perceived.

Edwards notes that this faculty may be referred to as either the *inclination*, the *will* or the *heart* (Edwards, 1746/2001). In so naming the faculties of the soul, Edwards appears to agree with the distinction between the appetitive and apprehensive parts of the soul made by Aquinas. Edwards' view, however, also differs from that of Aquinas in that he does not differentiate between the will and the affections as being two different faculties (Edwards, 1746/2001). Indeed, Edwards argues for the essential unity of these phenomena:

In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: these are not essentially different from those affections of love and hatred: that liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of love; and that disliking and disinclining, if in a greater degree, is the very same with hatred (Edwards, 1746/2001).

In joining the affect with the will in this manner Edwards is able to assert that the mind is “the proper seat of the affections,” as opposed to the body – even though he admits there is a physiological component to emotional experience (Edwards, 1746/2001). In keeping with his desire to locate human affections within the mind, and thus bring them under the control of the mind, Edwards makes the following distinction between affections and passions:

...affection is a word that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than passion, being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but passion for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animal spirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and less in its own command (Edwards, 1746/2001).

Edwards' comments concerning the distinction between affection and passion are significant for this study as follows. It is observed that Edwards' views “affect” as being the general category or classification for emotional experience. It is further observed that Edwards distinguishes between two types or levels of emotional experience, that which is oriented to the body and that which is oriented to the mind. On the one hand, Edwards appears to agree with earlier writers who believed the mind is capable of exercising control over most, if not all, human emotions. On the other hand, however, Edwards agrees with Calvin when, in describing different states of spiritual maturity, he

makes the following observation concerning the ability of the believer to overcome “natural affections.”

...there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet everyone that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them... (Edwards, 1746/2001).

Admittedly, Edwards uses the word affection here in its broadest sense to include appetite, inclination, passion, emotion and even the will. Nevertheless, the point he seeks to make is that the believer, being truly converted and submitting to the rule of the Holy Spirit, is one whose life is not governed by this age, including his or her emotions. Based on what Edwards writes elsewhere in this treatise, one reason that may be adduced for this claim would be that when the mind and heart are inclined towards God the believer has access to a perspective which permits him or her to arrive at different cognitive appraisals of their situation and thus experience different emotions. In other words, it is the experience of grace and the perspective of faith, rather than the power of the mind, that Edwards sees as being most influential in the realm of human affections.

Edwards identifies three types of human affections, those that relate to the approval of the will, i.e. love, desire, hope, joy, gratitude, complacence, those that relate to the disapproval of the will, i.e. hatred, fear, anger, grief, and those emotions that reflect a mixture of approval and rejection (Edwards, 1746/2001). Edwards identifies that “pity” is an example of this third category in that pity involves both a sense of compassion for the person and a sense of rejection or pain with respect to the suffering (Edwards, 1746/2001). This method of classifying emotions is particularly significant inasmuch as Edwards acknowledges there is a constructed dimension to emotional experience that reflects the individual’s cognitive appraisal of the situation.

While Edwards stops short of stating that the capacity to experience emotions is a reflection of the *imago Dei*, Edwards does assert the affections are a divine gift to humankind, stating that the

affections are that which motivate people to action and that the emotions are a vital component of religious experience (Edwards, 1746/2001). Indeed, Edwards identifies that the Scriptures speak frequently, and positively, of the role of emotions such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal in religious practice and experience (Edwards, 1746/2001). In addition to this, Edwards cites the example of Christ as one who exhibited “holy affections” (Edwards, 1746/2001), noting that Christ is reported to have exhibited the following emotions, love, sorrow, zeal (for the house of the Lord), grief (for the sins of men), pity or compassion, and that he overcame the natural affections of fear and grief when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Edwards, 1746/2001). For Edwards the fact the gospels portray Christ as exhibiting these emotions demonstrates one dimension of how he has shared our humanity and provides us with an example as to how the emotions relate to the life of faith (Edwards, 1746/2001).

Taken together these examples demonstrate the fact that much “theological reflection” with respect to the experience of emotion has been grounded in philosophical (*Logos*) rather than Biblical (*Theos*) considerations. These examples further underscore the point under discussion, namely that there exists within the theological tradition a tendency to value the role of reason within a person’s life and to subordinate the emotions to reason. While elements of these theological-philosophical reflections on emotions might be understood to prefigure or anticipate the perspective that there is a bio-physical dimension to emotions and that emotions serve to motivate a person to action, the overall perspective on emotions offered by these theologians is not at all similar to the perspective found in EFCT. In light of this fact, the question now arises, “Can a coherent theological argument that is grounded in and emphasizes *Theos* be made in favor of the perspective on emotions found in the writings of EFCT?” The following discussion will build on the integrative argument developed in the foregoing reflections on evolution and Attachment Theory and will demonstrate how an evangelical theological argument grounded in the Christian scriptures may be used to derive a perspective on emotions that parallels the view found in EFCT.

Given the fact that psychologists, philosophers and theologians neither deny the phenomenon of emotions nor their significance within human experience, it seems appropriate to begin this reflection at the physical or phenomenological level. Indeed, one of the points where all three fields of inquiry appear to agree is that there is a physical component to emotional experience. Thus, Greenberg and Paivio (1997), on the one hand, identify three physical components, neurochemical factors (*Physikos*), physiological factors (*Bios*), and biopsychological factors (*Bios*), and Edwards (1746/2001), on the other hand, acknowledges a physiological dimension to emotional experience.

For Greenberg and Paivio (1997) these biologically based factors “appear to have evolved to serve the purpose of keeping the organism proactively adaptive” (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). This statement speaks both of the process by which they understand emotions entered into human experience and the purpose for which they exist. One test of the validity of this statement is whether the second part of the statement is necessarily dependent on the first. That is to say, “is it possible to affirm that the positive emotions are proactively adaptive if one also presupposes the work of God in the creation of humankind (Genesis chs.1-2)?” If the claim that the positive emotions are “proactively adaptive” is understood in terms of an individual’s day-to-day it can be taken to mean that these emotions serve to move or motivate an individual to act in ways that are beneficial to themselves and others. Edwards (1746/2001) appears to argue this point using top-down logic (*Theos*) when he states that “the author of human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the spring of men’s actions.” In this way, Edwards asserts the divine purpose of emotions as that of motivating the individual to action. Edwards, however, carries the point further:

Such is man’s nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear, or some other... these are the things that put men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly business; ... take away all love and hatred, all hope and fear, all anger, zeal, and affectionate desire, and the world would be, in a great measure motionless and dead; there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest pursuit whatsoever (Edwards, 1746/2001).

Edwards' point in this passage parallels that of Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, P(2a)-Q(23)-A(2)) as well as Greenberg and Paivio (1997) inasmuch as Edwards is clearly making the point that the role of emotions in human experience is to motivate the individual to meet the challenges that are part of life. Edwards' view, however, differs from that of Greenberg and Paivio in that Edwards affirms the divine origin of emotions whereas Greenberg and Paivio view emotions from a non-theistic perspective.

A second claim made by Emotionally-Focused therapists is that emotions are a form of cognition. The significance of this claim lies in the fact that emotions are understood to be an important source of information equal to, rather than inferior, rationality and the five physical senses. Indeed, within EFCT the emotions are understood to provide vital information concerning a person's relationships. Whereas EFCT theorists draw heavily from Bowlby (1998), and to a lesser extent Buber (1970), who writes of the role the "other" plays in a person's awareness and understanding of his or her self, Barth (1960) argues that true self-knowledge depends not on our knowledge of ourselves in relationship to either our self-concept, our environment, or another person. Rather, true self knowledge depends on our understanding of who we are in relationship to God (Barth, 1960). While Barth does not explicitly reference the role of emotions in his discussion of self-knowledge, the record of scripture connects a person's knowledge of self as revealed through the emotions with the state of that person's relationship with God, i.e. the story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, Genesis 3. In other words, knowledge of God is foundational to knowledge of man (Barth, 1960). While Barth makes the point that man's self-knowledge has been based too narrowly on the data that is observable by means of the human senses, he nevertheless concedes "we are what we perceive ourselves to be" (Barth, 1960). These thoughts are born out in two important texts found in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 2:25 suggests that as long as Adam and Eve were in a state of obedience toward God they saw and understood themselves, and each other, in positive terms. At the point they disobeyed God, however, Adam and Eve experienced the emotions of fear, shame, and guilt through which they

became aware of the fact they had not only broken the command of God but also their relationship with God (Genesis 3). In this way, their “knowledge of good and evil” extended beyond mere rational understanding to include emotional experience. Thus, the emotions experienced by Adam and Eve contribute to their knowledge of self in relationship to God and each other. It is important, therefore, to observe that these powerful emotions are not, in and of themselves, “bad” but rather stand witness to the rupture that has occurred within their relationships as a result of their wrongdoing.

In Genesis 4 we read of the death of Abel at the hands of his brother Cain. In this story Cain has the experience of his sacrifice being rejected by God. One imagines that, as a result, Cain may have felt a variety of emotions, of which anger is the dominant emotion identified by the text. According to the story, this emotion arises in the context of Cain’s relationship with God, revealing something of their relationship and their respective characteristics. However, instead of dealing with his emotions within the context of the relationship in which they arise, Cain allows his emotions to color his relationship with his brother to the point where he kills his brother.

With respect to the present study, the implications of this line of thinking are significant. First of all, to the extent that emotions are both observable and measurable bio-neurophysical phenomena as well as a response to observable and measurable events, emotions are a scientifically observable and source of natural knowledge of the self-in-relationship. Second, as Barth points out, to the extent that our understanding of our emotions is confined to the narrow band of phenomena that are accessible to our senses, whatever knowledge we gain of the self or the other is also limited. Utilizing Barth’s (1960) logic, it is important to ask whether emotions, like rationality and other human faculties, are genuine reflections of the real man or merely symptoms?” At first glance this would appear to be a difficult question to resolve. However, it may be argued that, unlike the ethical and naturalistic views which “visualize man as a self-contained reality” (Barth, 1960), emotions not only reveal the interdependence of human beings they also point to the vertical dimension of human relationality and

invite us to consider that humanity, either in whole or in part, is not a ‘self-contained reality.’ In both of the biblical examples noted above the initial knowledge that was to be derived from these emotional experiences is what Barth (1960) defined as “scientific knowledge” in that it was neither founded on, nor related to, God’s self-revelation but rather definite and observable events in the lives of the individuals involved. Nevertheless, in each case this “scientific knowledge” is augmented through God’s self-revelation, first to Adam and Eve, and then to Cain. While Cain chooses not to respond positively to God’s invitation, the fact is God’s act of self-revelation redefines and recontextualizes the experience, giving it a new sense of meaning. A third implication of Barth’s argument, therefore, is that just as true self-knowledge is dependent on the person knowing the God who reveals Himself to mankind, and thus knowing oneself in relationship to this God, so too any knowledge that is to be gained of the self through one’s emotions takes on a different meaning when it is understood within the context of one’s relationship with God. In other words, God’s self-revelation of His love and righteousness sheds light on and gives perspective to a person’s emotional experience.

E. Summary

The philosophical values that are claimed to be foundational to the theory and practice of Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy raise important questions with respect to the human condition, the value of the “person,” the experience of the person-in-relationship, the nature of the marital relationship and the nature of emotion. In addition, the theoretical roots underlying EFCT are grounded in theories of the person and relationships that are, at best, non-theistic in orientation. Nevertheless, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that an evangelical theological perspective on the human condition provides an alternative grounding for the observed phenomena of attachment and emotions. In this way, it is demonstrated that the practices of EFCT may be incorporated into the work of Christian counselling without compromising the core values of the Christian faith or the functional integrity of EFCT.

Chapter 4: Comparing EFCT with Selected Pastoral Marital Therapies

Subproblem 2. The second subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the marital relationship.

Subproblem 3. The third subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the experience of emotion.

The intent of this chapter is to address the issues presented in Subproblems 2 & 3, and to determine if there is any validity in either the second hypothesis when it states, “that EFCT ... addresses a number of deficiencies in the way marriage is conceptualized and treated by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy,” and/or the third hypothesis which states, “that the theory of emotions offered by EFCT reveals a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy.”

A. Review of the selection criteria

The pastoral and Christian counselling theories contained within this study were selected from among a larger group of authors and theories (see Table Table 4.1 – Admissibility of Counselling Theories as a Comparator to EFCT) on the basis of the selection criteria outlined in Chapter 2 (criteria set 2). A major factor in assessing Criterion 2a was the ability to determine whether each author had written one or more books or articles that describes the theory base underlying his counselling methodology for working with couples. This criterion separated authors such as Gary Chapman, James Dobson, and Gary Smalley whose books enjoy a wide readership within the Christian community from authors whose writings are intended to provide instruction in the practice of counselling. Thus, even though Clinebell, Crabb, Worthington, and Wright have each written texts intended to be read by non-professionals, all four have written at least one text in counselling methodology (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Clinebell, 1979; Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977, Crabb, 1982;

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Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a; Worthington & McMurry, 1994; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a).

| Table 4.1 – Admissibility of Counselling Theories as a Comparator to EFCT | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Model/Author | Criterion 2a | Criterion 2b | Criterion 2c | Criterion 2d |
| Jay Adams | Yes | | Yes | Yes |
| Andre Bustanoby | Yes | | | |
| Howard Clinebell | Yes | 2 Qualitative studies | Yes | Yes |
| A. D. Compaan | Yes | | | |
| Larry Crabb | Yes | 1 Quantitative study | Yes | Yes |
| James Dobson | | Indirectly, uses interventions that have research support | | Yes |
| John Drakeford | Yes | | | Yes |
| Friesen & Friesen | Yes | Indirectly, uses interventions that have research support | | |
| Dennis Guernsey | Yes | | | Yes |
| Willard F. Harley | Yes | Yes | | Yes |
| IMAGO - Harville Hendrix | Yes | Yes | | Yes |
| Richard Hunt (1994) | Yes | | Yes | |
| Donald Joy | Yes | | | Yes |
| Sherrod Miller | | Yes | | Yes |
| Clyde Narramore | Yes | | | Yes |
| Christian PREP | | Yes | | Yes |
| Southard (1959) | Yes | | | |
| Stewart (1961) | Yes | | | |
| SYMBIS Parrott & Parrott (1996) | | Yes | | Yes |
| Tweedie (1976) | Yes | | | |
| Everett Worthington | Yes | Multiple studies | Yes | Yes |
| H. Norman Wright | Yes | Indirectly, uses interventions that have research support | Yes | Yes |

Criterion 2b presented this researcher with a significant challenge in that pastoral and Christian counselling marital theories rarely undergo any form of scientific study (Ripley & Worthington, 1998). As a result, the research supporting some of the models included within this study is quite meager. In the case of the Clinebells' approach to working with couples, the book *Intimate Marriage* (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970) refers to the fact the concepts they describe were tested with two different groups of individuals. While the results of these studies have not been published separately, the text does seem to suggest this application of the model served to refine and confirm the concepts the Clinebells discuss in their book (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). Published research on Crabb's counselling model focuses on both his general counselling model and his *Marriage Builder* model. These studies have reviewed his model in terms of: consumer perceptions of his individual counselling model (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985), the relationship between religiosity, self-concept and symptom reduction (Smith, 1992), and, the effect of using his *Marriage Builder* with a small group of people (Himes, 1990). The research supporting Wright's model differs from that of the other models in this study in that there do not appear to be any published studies that have assessed his particular melding of biblical concepts and cognitive-behavioural psychology. While Williams (1996) notes that very little academic research had been conducted on Wright (p. 242) and was only able to reference one study of Wright's counselling model, a master's thesis this writer was not able to procure, many of the interventions used in Wright's model are drawn from the work of other counsellors and are supported by their research (Williams, 1996). The last comparator, Worthington's approach to marital counselling is the most studied of the four comparator models in this study.⁴

⁴ Burchard, Yarhouse, Kilian, Worthington, & Berry, 2003; Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; McCullough & Worthington, 1995a; Morrow, Worthington & McCullough, 1993; Ripley, 1999; Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001; Sandage, Worthington, Hight and Berry, 2000; Wade and Worthington, 2003; Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley & Baier, 2000; Worthington & Ripley, 2002; Worthington, McCullough, Shortz, Mindes, Sandage, Chartrand, 1995; Worthington, Hight, Ripley, Perrone, Kurusu & Jones, 1997.

Inclusion or exclusion under Criteria 2c and 2d was determined on the basis of the perceived primary market of the model. Thus, even though pastors have been trained in the use of Miller's *Couple Communication* model (Miller, Miller, Nunally & Wackman, 1991) and Hendrix's *Imago Therapy* model (Hendrix, 1988) these models were excluded because they are more widely known outside the community of the church. In contrast, Clinebell, Crabb and Wright have each taught in seminaries, Worthington speaks at conferences for Christian counsellors and all four authors have applied their models to the context of pastoral and/or Christian marital counselling (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Clinebell, 1979; Crabb, 1977, Crabb, 1982; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a; Worthington & McMurry, 1994; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a).

A.1.a *Theoretical Overview of Four Selected Models of Pastoral Marital Counselling*

The four models of pastoral marital counselling selected on the basis of Criteria Set 2 are: Howard J. Clinebell, Lawrence J. Crabb, H. Norman Wright, and, Everett L. Worthington. These models represent distinctly different phases in the development of the theory of marital counselling and represent both theologically conservative and liberal perspectives. The following discussion is intended as a brief overview of the salient features of each of these models.

Howard Clinebell

Clinebell was trained in the psychodynamic tradition and later in the Rogerian method of counselling (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell, 1979; Hayter, 1983; Wimberly, 1990). In the mid-1960's he began to sense the limitations of the methods in which he was trained as well as the need for an approach to counselling that might help the counsellor and counsellee to move beyond these limitations (Clinebell, 1966). For Clinebell effective counselling required more of the counsellor than listening and unconditional positive regard. Indeed, he makes the case that the counsellor needs to understand how to use this strong therapeutic relationship for the benefit of the client, arguing that the counsellor also needs to utilize his or her own "self," i.e. the person of the counsellor, and the authority of the

pastoral office (Clinebell, 1966). Between 1966 and 1979 Clinebell refined his counselling approach, drawing from a variety of counselling traditions that included: psychodynamic counselling theories, behaviourally oriented counselling theories, human potentials therapies, systemic therapies, and spiritual growth approaches to counselling (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell, 1979; Clinebell, 1981; Guy, 1999; Hayter, 1983; Wimberly, 1990), with the human potentials approach that provides the goal of “maximizing a person’s potentiality” (Clinebell, 1979; Guy, 1999). This move from a pathology based to a potential based approach to counselling signals a change in Clinebell’s assumptions about health, dysfunction, treatment, and change and is well documented in his various books and chapters marriage (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Clinebell, 1979; Clinebell, 1981; Clinebell, 1984). For Clinebell this new perspective is a holistic one that encompasses six inter-related dimensions of life (mind, body, relationships with others, environment, relationship to groups and institutions, and spirituality) in which a person can grow and develop their potential (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1979; Clinebell, 1984; Guy, 1999; Hayter, 1983; Wimberly, 1990). Thus, personal growth is not to be undertaken merely for personal fulfillment. Rather healthy personal growth is recognizable by the positive manner in which it reshapes an individual’s external life, particularly as it enables the individual to relate to others in a growthful manner. Clinebell’s *Growth Counseling* model is also hope-oriented, rather than problem-oriented, “helping people deal with their pain in the context of reality-based hope” (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1979).

Taken in the context of everything he has written, Clinebell’s view of marriage may be summarized as follows. “Marriage is a permanent, intimate and dynamic relationship of mutual caring, fidelity, nurture, etc. between a man and a woman in which each partner experiences personal, emotional, relational and spiritual growth while at the same time relating to his or her partner in such a way that his or her partner also experiences growth in all these areas.” At the core of this view of marriage is the premise that all humans possess a basic need to have “a meaningful relationship with at least one other person” (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). This “will”, or need, to relate is seen as a powerful force

that both draws two individuals together and transcends the limitations of their separateness through the creation of a relational bond (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). For Clinebell the effectiveness of this bond, or the depth of intimacy achieved, is not measured solely in terms of the quantity of what two people share but rather in the quality of their experience one with another. Thus, intimacy is defined in terms of “the degree of mutual need-satisfaction within the relationship” and must therefore be nurtured throughout the stages and seasons of marriage (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). Growth within marriage, therefore, occurs as both partners desire a deeper relationship, are committed to invest in their relationship, and, “are willing to draw on whatever external resources ... are needed to lower their walls” (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970).

Lawrence J. Crabb Jr.

The theoretical foundations of Crabb’s approach to marriage counselling are those of his “Biblical Counselling Model,” characterized by an emphasis on developing a biblical-theological basis for counselling interventions, and, an emphasis on the role played by cognition as revealed by a person’s desires, beliefs, and decisions in the shaping of actions, including a person’s response to their experiences (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977). With respect to the first emphasis, Crabb offers a brief critique of the core assumptions and values of five counselling theories representing the psychodynamic, behavioural and existential traditions, noting what he believed to be the short comings of each theory (Crabb, 1975). Similarly, Crabb reflects on some of the assumptions that inform the practice of psychology, noting “psychologists have discovered useful insights but sometimes use them according to wrong assumptions” (Crabb, 1977). Thus, while Crabb, in distinction to Adams (1970, 1980), acknowledged that secular counselling theories may contain echoes of biblical truth, he did not consider that these theories reflected a biblical understanding of the human condition (Crabb, 1972; Crabb, 1973; Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977). Crabb, therefore, identifies that a Christian approach to counselling seriously addresses the issue of sin, accepts the

historicity of Jesus Christ and his redemptive work on the cross, and has a biblical understanding of man created in the image of God (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977).

The significance of the relationship between “faulty beliefs” or “faulty thinking” and problem behaviour is evident in Crabb’s discussion of “basic human needs.” For Crabb, behaviour is goal directed and “wrong” behaviours are based on faulty thinking concerning the goal (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982). The first type of thinking problem occurs when a person has a faulty goal. Whereas secular psychologists have characterized the goal of human behaviour in terms of: two competing drives – *eros* and *thanatos* (Freud); the “will to power” (Adler); or, the “will to meaning” (Frankl), Crabb identified significance and security (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982), or relationship and impact (Crabb, 1987), as the two basic human needs or goals that shape behaviour. Crabb’s understanding was that these needs or longings are spiritual in nature and can only find fulfillment in Christ (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982; Crabb, 1987). Crabb distinguishes between “need “ and “desire” noting that longings for warmth, kindness, understanding, respect and faithfulness are desires rather than needs, making the point that the satisfaction of desires does not make for a true sense of security or significance (Crabb, 1982). Building on this distinction Crabb differentiates between desires and goals, noting that goals are objectives over which a person has control whereas a desire is an objective over which they have no control (Crabb, 1982). The second type of thinking problem identified by Crabb occurs when a person has a good goal but the means of achieving it is faulty (Crabb, 1977). Thus, those who seek to fulfill their longings for significance (impact) or security (relationship) through human relationships, personal influence or personal achievement fall short of achieving the full measure of what is possible in Christ.

Crabb’s contribution to our understanding of Christian marriage is built on the premise that spiritual health, that is the degree to which a person feels secure in their relationship with Christ, is a vital factor in an individual’s ability to relate to his or her partner in a caring fashion (Crabb, 1982). Thus, Crabb’s marriage model seeks to assist couples, both as individuals and as a couple, to be submitted

to the lordship of Christ (Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982; Crabb, 1987; Crabb, 1991). This, he describes as “Spirit Oneness” (Crabb, 1982). Second, Crabb posits that “Soul Oneness” is vital to a healthy marriage and encourages couples to minister to each other’s needs without any sense of manipulation and to experience open healthy communication (Crabb, 1982). Thirdly, Crabb addresses the physical-affectual dimension of couple life, “Body Oneness,” noting that couples should not settle for physical or sensual pleasure but rather desire that their sexual relationship would be an extension of the other two expressions of Oneness (Crabb, 1982).

H. Norman Wright

Wright’s theory of counselling, including his theory of marital counselling, is shaped by a Biblical-Theological perspective that reflects his evangelical worldview (Oliver & Wright, 1997a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). Williams (1996) observes that this evangelical worldview determines which psychological insights Wright incorporates into his approach. Thus Wright’s theology serves as a meta-frame that shapes his understanding of the task of counselling and marriage, including its challenges. While Wright’s approach is defined by his evangelical worldview, his methodologies are derived primarily from cognitive and behavioural psychology (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright 2002) with additional insights drawn from developmental theory (Williams, 1996; Wright, 1995), family systems theory (Williams, 1996; Wright, 1994; Wright 1996) and the solution-focused therapies (Oliver & Wright, 1997a; Williams, 1996; Wright, 2002a).

Wright’s contributions to our understanding of Christian marriage include an affirmation that heterosexual marriage is normative and that it is characterized by an adaptable, monogamous, co-operative, permanent and faithful commitment resulting in mutual enrichment and well-being (Wright, 1974, 1979, 1988b). A critical strength of Wright’s approach is the fact he identifies and discusses key interactional processes in marriage, i.e. caring, communication, and conflict resolution,

and relates these to individual needs and expectations as well as each spouse's experience within the marriage (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1995; Wright 2002a).

Everett L. Worthington Jr.

Worthington characterizes his approach to counselling, and marriage counselling in particular, as a cognitive-behavioural model (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999b). As such it bears some similarity to the models developed by Crabb and Wright. However, while Wright's model tends to be an eclectic collection of techniques and ideas lacking a theory of marriage to inform the use of these techniques, Worthington has developed a model for Christian marital counselling that begins with a theory of marriage and integrates interventions that are consistent both with his Christian presuppositions and his model (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a).

Worthington, like Crabb, places his understanding of marriage in the context of his understanding of the person, identifying that human needs are met "through their spirits, cognitions (thoughts and imaginations) and behaviours" (Worthington, 1989a) such that actions are understood to result from a person's thoughts or cognitions which, in turn, constitute the person's evaluation of their life context. Finally, Worthington's view of persons affirms that humans are holistic beings who are more than their parts and who need to be understood within the context of the relationship between their thoughts and actions, the consequences of their behaviour, as well as their environment and its role in their behaviour.

Marriage, in Worthington's view, is a relationship that brings together two individual lives, operates as a unit or system, and experiences changes throughout the family life cycle (Worthington, 1989a). Throughout the relationship, marriage serves to meet the four basic human needs of commitment, intimacy, effectance or the ability to produce a discernable effects in another, and forgiveness (Worthington, 1989a). The significance of these four needs in his thinking is such that Worthington states "Although I agree with most of Crabb's thinking, I differ slightly. I do believe that spouses are

instrumental in meeting each other's needs. They are one of God's legitimate vehicles for meeting needs, as are friends, relatives and others in the church" (Worthington, 1989a).

Worthington's understanding of how marriages function leads him to conclude that the structures or organization of marriage and the processes or patterns of behaviour and relationship that develop within marriages are directly related to the commitments the couple makes to be mutually dependent on each other, to love each other in ways that nurture the relationship, to foster growth in others, and, to protect the relationship through the practice of forgiveness (Worthington, 1989a). For Worthington, marital commitment includes a sense of interrelationship that seeks to maintain a shared spirit, creates a common mindset that excludes divorce, shares life experiences, i.e. environmental events, and shares environmental structures (Worthington, 1989a). While closeness or intimacy is to be desired, Worthington observes that couples engage in behaviours designed to regulate the amount of intimacy they experience (Worthington, 1989a). In this way intimate experiences are balanced by experiences of distance. Worthington identifies that effectance can be understood within the context of the use of power within the relationship, noting three distinct patterns (Worthington, 1989a), (i) both spouses consciously exercises their power to decide and jointly come to a decision, (ii) neither spouse consciously exercises his or her power to decide, and, (iii) one spouse exercises power such that he or she defines the parameters of the relationship and the manner in which decisions will be made. Finally, Worthington observes that while forgiveness is important to marital health the misapplication of self-sacrifice is detrimental to marriage (Worthington, 1989a).

The third key dimension of Worthington's model locates the marriage within the relational and human life cycle (Worthington, 1989a). For Worthington it is critical to understand the impact of life-cycle transitions on a couple's relationship, noting that "the degree of disruption in time schedules, the number of new decisions about which there is initial disagreement, and the level of ongoing conflict prior to the transition" are important factors that need to be considered (Worthington, 1987b; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1989b).

B. Comparing EFCT with Pastoral Perspectives on the Marital Bond

Subproblem 2. The second subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the marital relationship.

Hypothesis 2. Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy provides an integrated theory of marriage that exposes and addresses a number of deficiencies in the way marriage is conceptualized and treated by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy. This hypothesis invites theoretical and theological reflection both on the nature of the marital bond and the practice of counselling couples.

The models of pastoral marital therapy reviewed in this study are representative of the theoretical diversity that exists in the field, both in terms of theoretical orientation (psychodynamic, experiential, behavioural, systemic) and the sophistication of the model's understanding of marital relations. While this state of diversity may complicate the task of comparison, categories such as those set forth by Worthington (1989a) provide a useful means for comparing theories with different theoretical foundations. In particular, the following questions are germane to this discussion:

- Does this theory of marriage consider individual constructs?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the operation of the marriage as a unit (or system)?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the position of the married couple in the family cycle?
- Does this theory of marriage consider the spiritual nature of the individual and of the marriage from a Christian perspective?
- Does this theory of marriage counselling employ techniques that are: related to the theory, prescribed and standardized so as to be easily usable, varied and individualized, and, clearly applicable at specified points in the therapy?

(Questions adapted from: Worthington, 1989a)

B.1. Use of Individual constructs

Crabb (1977, 1982), Worthington (1989a) and Wright (1981, 1995) present models of therapy that emphasize human beings as rational creatures. Theologically, these models reflect a view of persons consistent with classical theology's ontological assumptions concerning the constitution of human nature and the role of rationality within human activity (see Chapter 3, Part D). This observation is particularly true of Crabb and Wright, both of whose models reflect the view that changes in

behaviour and affect result from changes in a person's thinking and decision-making.

Psychologically, Worthington (1989a) and Wright (1995) utilize a cognitive-behavioural frame of reference while Crabb (1977, 1982) utilizes an eclectic mix of sources that includes both psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural concepts. The "rational" bent found in both Crabb's and Wright's books as well as Worthington's earlier texts marks one significant point on which conservative Christian marital therapies differ from EFCT which views reason and affect as two different dimensions of cognition (see Chapter 3).

Worthington's more recent writings (Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a) demonstrate a move away from focusing almost exclusively on cognition and to a position that incorporates emotional experience. This shift in emphasis suggests an opening up of his view of persons such that affect and rationality are viewed as occupying positions of similar importance rather than affect being viewed as subservient to rationality. As a result, it is not surprising to discover that Worthington's Hope Focused model utilizes concepts borrowed from EFCT (Worthington, 1999a).

The view of persons presented by Clinebell (1970) differs from that found in Crabb, Wright and Worthington in that he begins from a theologically liberal perspective. Clinebell's view of persons is informed, in part, by Buber's philosophy and emphasizes relationality rather than the constitution of the person, i.e. Will, Reason, Affect, etc., and the problem of sin (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). This emphasis enables Clinebell to focus on the person-in-relationship to others and utilize insights from some of the early Family Systems writers. A second important characteristic of Clinebell's view of persons is his emphasis on Self-actualization (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Clinebell, 1979; Clinebell, 1984). Clinebell's writings on this subject reveal his views are shaped both by the Human-Potentials movement and the existential theology of Paul Tillich. Thus, while Crabb, Wright and Worthington affirm that sin is the root cause of marital dysfunction, Clinebell's writings do not focus on human depravity but rather the potential within each person not only to grow and achieve their own potential but to help others to achieve their potential as well (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a;

Clinebell, 1979; Clinebell, 1984). In short, it is evident that the models under discussion make critical assumptions about human nature that serve to differentiate these models from each other.

As noted in chapter 3, the view of persons that informs and undergirds EFCT is one which, on the one hand, utilizes Bowlby's Attachment Theory as a rubric for understanding the role of relationality in human experience, and, on the other hand, considers emotions to be an important source of information equal to, rather than inferior to, rationality and the five physical senses. Thus, rather than emphasizing the constitutive elements historically associated with the mind, EFCT identifies relationships and the needs for security and nurture as being the salient characteristics of human existence.

B.2. Systemic Orientation

While all the writers in this study acknowledge that the marital unit is greater than the sum of its parts, they vary in terms of how this is conceptualized. One of the powerful strengths of EFCT is the way in which Attachment Theory supports and gives shape to a systemic understanding of marriage, providing the EFCT practitioner with a perspective with which he or she can expand the client couple's experience of each other, change their mode of interaction and create a secure base. In this way, EFCT reflects a highly developed view of the couple bond and the couple system.

Crabb's view of the marital system is largely underdeveloped in that marriage is understood in terms of the couple's interlocking needs for security, as in the need to feel unconditionally loved and accepted, and significance, as in the need to make a positive difference in the life of another person, neither of which can be fully met through the efforts of a person's spouse (Crabb, 1982). Crabb, for example, acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of marital oneness, noting that couples can experience oneness at the level of the spirit, soul, and body. Thus, on closer inspection, "Spirit Oneness" refers to the couple's vertical relationship to Christ, "Soul Oneness" refers to the horizontal relationship and the joining of the heart and mind, while "Body Oneness" refers to the couple's

experience of physical intimacy (Crabb, 1982). Of critical importance to the present discussion is the fact that Crabb's treatment of "Soul Oneness" focuses on the couple's efforts to minister to each other's needs rather than the interactivity of the couple as a relational system (Crabb, 1982).

Even though Wright is known as a "marriage counsellor," his concept of marriage, like that of Crabb, is also underdeveloped. Indeed, his books and articles on marriage counselling refer to the marital bond but do not elaborate on its nature, nor do they describe or define the nature of marriage, either from a biblical or psychological perspective (Oliver & Wright, 1997a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). Wright's marriage enrichment texts, however, make up for this apparent omission (Wright, 1974; Wright, 1979; Wright, 1988b). In his *The Pillars of Marriage* (1979) Wright describes marriage in terms of cooperation and the dual task of developing a sense of oneness while maintaining and enhancing individuality, indicating the partnership of marriage does not come at the expense of either spouse's individuality. Thus, marital intimacy is not a denial of individuality but rather, as both Bromiley (1980) and Worthington (1989a) have identified, is the mystery of unity and diversity, differentness and oneness, being simultaneously experienced. Elsewhere Wright describes marriage as a relationship requiring: adaptability, the ability to live with the imperfect, commitment to one's partner, trust, the ability to share power, a continuing sense of friendship with one's spouse, and a sharing of a joint history that is valued (Wright, 1988b). What is significant about this latter description is it operationalizes his understanding of marriage, revealing his cognitive-behavioural orientation. Thus, while these definitions contain intimations of a systemic view of marriage, Wright's understanding of marriage emphasizes behaviour rather than connection and relatedness.

Whereas Crabb and Wright view the marital system in terms of a couple's behaviours, Clinebell approaches the topic from the perspective that all humans possess a basic need to have "a meaningful relationship with at least one other person" (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970:12). For Clinebell this "will to relate" not only draws two individuals together but transcends the limitations of their separateness

(Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). This is another point at which one can differentiate between Clinebell and Wright. Whereas Wright merely places individuality and partnership in tension with each other, Clinebell identifies that relatedness transcends the isolation of individuality and separateness, recognizing that “the achievement of intimacy is always only partial” (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970:82). This view of the marital bond seems to anticipate at least one aspect of EFCT in that it posits that empathy has the power to transcend the isolation and loneliness resulting from an emotional wound. In this way, the effectiveness of the marital bond is assessed not so much in terms of the quantity of what two people share but rather in the quality of their experience one with another (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970).

Of the four pastoral models under discussion, Worthington presents the most fully developed understanding of the systemic nature of marriage when he observes that the structures or organization of the marriage, and the processes or patterns of behaviour and relationship that develop within a marriage are directly related to the couple’s efforts, both individually and collectively, to meet four basic human needs: commitment, intimacy, effectiveness or the ability to produce a discernable effects in another, and forgiveness (Worthington, 1989a). Thus, in order to maintain the structural integrity of their marriage, couples: make commitments to each other, become mutually dependent on each other, love each other in ways that nurture both the relationship and the other, and, protect the relationship through the practice of forgiveness (Worthington, 1989a). Indeed, it is in the operations, or processes, of the marital relationship that the meeting of these needs is understood to be significant. Commitment, for example, is a cognitive event, i.e. a decision of the will, that extends to all dimensions of life such that it: includes a sense of interrelationship that seeks to maintain a shared spirit, creates a common mindset that excludes divorce, shares life experiences, i.e. environmental events, and shares environmental structures (Worthington, 1989a).

Furthermore, while closeness or intimacy is to be desired, Worthington observes that couples engage in behaviours designed to regulate the amount of intimacy they experience (Worthington, 1989a). In

this way, intimate experiences are balanced by experiences of distance. He also observes that all behaviours, irrespective of whether the behaviour is problematic or “normal,” result in one of four outcomes (Table 4.1). Worthington’s discussion of effectance in marital processes focuses on the development of rules and use of power within the relationship, noting three possible outcomes or scenarios, (Worthington, 1989a). In the first case, each spouse consciously exercises his or her power to decide and together they come to a decision. In the second case, neither spouse consciously exercises their power to decide, decisions are made by default and their relationship is shaped by the non-use of effectance. In the third case, one spouse exercises their power in such a way that he or she defines the parameters of the relationship and the manner in which decisions will be made. Finally, Worthington observes that while forgiveness is important to marital health the misapplication of self-sacrifice is detrimental to marriage (Worthington, 1989a).

Table 4.1 - Taxonomy of Marital Behaviour in Relationship to Intimacy

| Impact on Intimacy/Distance | Normal Behaviour | Problematic Behaviour |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Behaviour has no effect on either intimacy or distance. | | |
| Behaviour enhances intimacy | | |
| Behaviour enhances distance | | |
| Behaviour regulates the amount of distance or intimacy experienced | | |

(Adapted from Worthington, 1989a:52)

B.3. Developmental Perspectives

Worthington observes that developmental theories are of two types: stage theories that describe the characteristics of the relatively stable periods that occur between periods of transition and transition theories that focus on the challenges faced by individuals, couples and families as they negotiate the transition from one phase of life to another (Worthington, 1989a). Significantly, three of the four pastoral models under discussion (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Worthington, 1987; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1989b; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1982; Wright, 1995) reflect on the family lifecycle from the perspective of the challenges posed by life’s transitions.

Wright, for example, views healthy marriages as those that develop constructive responses to the challenges couples experience across the lifecycle (Wright, 1982). Similarly, Clinebell observes that the natural developmental crises, or transitions, of the life cycle present couples with opportunities for growth which can be actualized as long as the couple's "heart hungers" for "affirming communication, warm caring, mutual esteem and trust, closeness and companionship" as well as physical closeness are met in each partner (Clinebell, 1975). Worthington, likewise, notes that the extent to which a particular transition will affect a couple or family is dependent on: "the degree of disruption in their time schedules, the number of new decisions about which there is initial disagreement, and the level of ongoing conflict prior to the transition" (Worthington, 1987; Worthington, 1989a:87; Worthington, 1989b).

While developmental issues do not figure in Johnson's discussions of EFCT, Dankoski (2001) notes one of the reasons why transitions through the family life cycle can be stressful is that they challenge the family's attachment bonds. Dankoski observes, for example, two possible benefits from the application of EFCT to problems that arise during the first stage of couple life. On the one hand, this can assist a couple to deal with the pain, disappointment and anger that arises when couples have difficulty adjusting to each other, while, on the other hand, it is useful to address issues relating to the redefinition of the couple's separate relationships to their families of origin (Dankoski, 2001). Along the same line, Dankoski argues that EFCT may be useful in helping couples adjust to the redefinitions in their relationship that result first from having children, secondly when adolescent children begin to exercise increased autonomy, and thirdly when the children leave home and the parents once again need to rebalance their needs for autonomy and intimacy (Dankoski, 2001).

B.4. Incorporation of a Christian perspective on individual and marital spirituality

All four of the pastoral counselling models acknowledge the importance of the practice of spirituality both in a person's individual life and his or her marriage, making a claim to be grounded in the

Christian tradition. In contrast, EFCT makes no claim to be grounded in the Christian tradition, nor does it claim to present a Christian perspective on spirituality. The following discussion seeks to summarize the position of the four pastoral writers on this matter and to posit ways in which EFCT may be a suitable host for incorporating a Christian perspective on spirituality.

The four pastoral models included in this study are not equal in the way they address the issue of spirituality. At the one extreme lie the views of Clinebell which, while he seeks to uphold the value of spirituality in marriage (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Clinebell, 1977a), many evangelical Christians will perceive as sentimentality without submission to the lordship of Christ, revitalization without repentance and regeneration, and, presenting Christ without the cross of suffering. At the other extreme of the continuum lie the views of Crabb who maintained that “Spirit Oneness” occurs when a husband and wife each enjoy a personal relationship with Christ and have that faith in common (Crabb, 1982). For Crabb, the significance of this common faith in Christ extends beyond the fact the couple assents to a common creed. Indeed, Crabb makes the case that in order for each partner to be able to meet the needs of his or her spouse he or she must first have his or her own personal needs met in Christ (Crabb, 1977).

While Crabb (1982), Wright (1995) and Worthington (1989a) each affirm that the problems in marriage are a consequence of unresolved sin and that healthy Christian marriages are a reflection of the partners’ spiritual health, it is in Worthington’s (1989a) discussion of the spiritual dimension of marriage that we find the most detailed Christian apologetic for the mystery of marriage, the sacredness of the marital bond, and the powerful effect of marriage.

Concerning the mystery of marriage, Worthington identifies that marriage serves the dual role of helping couples transcend their egocentrism and mirroring God’s faithfulness to His people (Worthington, 1989a). Worthington highlights the first of these roles:

People usually marry their own image of their spouse rather than marrying a spouse as an individual who is accurately perceived... The fundamental task of early marriage is then to

learn to transcend one's own egocentric picture of the object of love and transform it into a true object of love (Worthington, 1989a:35).

This description of marriage acknowledges a process known as “projective identification” (c.f. Cashdan, 1988; Donovan, 2003). Worthington's treatment of this process offers a new twist on the subject in that he identifies a parallel between what happens in human relationships and the way people relate to God when they seek to relate to a deity made in their own image rather than knowing Him as He really is (c.f. Romans 1:19-23). Worthington takes this perspective one step further, however, by stating one of the mysteries of marriage is that as a person learns to relate to the real person he or she married, rather than the person he or she may have imagined, he or she also learns how to learn to relate to God (Worthington, 1989a). Worthington's treatment of the second mystery, the manner in which marriage mirrors God's faithfulness, reveals his understanding of Ephesians 5:31-32 where the apostle Paul identifies that the biblical description of marriage refers to Christ's relationship to the church.

A second spiritual truth Worthington highlights is that of the permanence of marriage. Just as God enters into covenants with people and is faithful to those covenant commitments, in the same way a couple enters into a covenant where there is an expectation of permanence and faithfulness (Worthington, 1989a). Faithfulness, permanence, and getting to know the “real other,” as opposed to the “imagined other,” creates the opportunity for couples to know each other intimately. The intimacy of which he writes, however, is not one in which a person's individuality becomes lost. Rather, it is a meeting of two lives in which there is unity and individuality, joining and separation. Thus he writes,

Marriage is a relationship of separation and union designed to produce growth and fruit. It is a continual exercise of unity and separateness. Spouses unite sexually and then separate. They experience emotional closeness and then distance. This parallels our relationship with God through Jesus. Although we are to become one with them (John 17:22), we are to maintain individual identities (Worthington, 1989a:37-38).

Third, Worthington makes the point that marriage is a powerful relationship (Worthington, 1989a). As proof of the power of marriage, Worthington observes that when two people's spirits are joined together forgiveness and reconciliation are possible. Indeed, Worthington's research on forgiveness reveals that the ability to forgive is directly connected to a person's ability to experience empathy for the other (Sandage, Worthington, Hight & Berry, 2000; Wade & Worthington, 2003; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley & Baier, 2000). In this regard, Worthington's insights on the role of empathy in the work of forgiveness supports the goal of EFCT to access the couple's emotional experience so as to foster a new kind of contact within the relationship. The other example Worthington gives concerning the power of marriage is the fact that the dissolution of a marriage has an unsettling effect that extends beyond the family to include everyone who knows the couple. For Worthington this is an indication of how the marital bond shapes and influences all social relationships.

In light of the foregoing observations, the question arises, "Is EFCT a theory which is amenable to hosting a Christian perspective on individual and marital spirituality?" It has already been noted that even though the theological-philosophical presuppositions undergirding EFCT are not explicitly Christian, an Evangelical theological argument may be made in support of the perspectives on marriage and emotion found in EFCT (Chapter 3). While a level of concordance at the level of theoretical constructs suggests the model may be able to incorporate a Christian view on spirituality, the extent to which this may be possible remains to be assessed.

In this regard, an argument may be made that Attachment Theory not only recognizes an essential aspect of our created humanity as relational creatures but also a dimension of our spirituality. Indeed, it may be argued theologically and Biblically that human relationality finds its fulfillment both in a sense of connection and security in relationship with God as well as a sense of interhuman connection and security (Genesis 2:18-3:24, Romans 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 1 Peter

1:3-5). Thus, Augustine writes: “Thou hast formed us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee” (*Confessions, Book 1.1*).

In recent years, the significance of grounding one’s sense of self in one’s relationship with God has been explored both in terms of the marital relationship (Butler & Harper, 1994; Butler, Gardner & Bird, 1998) as well as the individual’s sense of well-being (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002; Tisdale, Key, Edwards, Brokaw, Kemperman, Cloud, Townsend & Okamoto, 1997). While Tisdale et.al. did not utilize the framework of Attachment Theory, their work nonetheless notes a correlation between a person’s adjustment, his or her ability to function in relationship with others and their personal “God Image.” In other words, a person’s understanding of his or her self in relationship to God has a significant impact on his or her functioning. Rowatt and Kirkpatrick’s study, on the other hand, reflected on the relationship between an individual’s “Attachment to God” and other dimensions of his or her life. Their results indicate a correlation between both an anxious and an avoidant attachment style and that individual’s affect and religiosity (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). While Rowatt and Kirkpatrick focused on individuals and their relationship with God, the significance of their findings for this study is the fact they have posited an understanding of religiosity, which is an expression of spirituality, that can be framed in terms of Attachment Theory, suggesting that EFCT’s use of Attachment Theory may make it suitable for incorporating a Christian understanding of individual and marital spirituality.

A second point of correlation between EFCT and the practice of Christian spirituality lies in the emphasis placed on the practice of empathy, especially as a reparative mechanism within marriage. Although his perspective differs from that of EFCT, Crabb (1982) notes that compassion is a vital component to healthy marriages. Similarly, Worthington (Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a; Worthington, 2003c; Worthington, Berry & Parrott, 2001; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley & Baier, 2000; Worthington & McMurry, 1997) identifies the importance of “love based emotions” such as empathy, sympathy, and compassion in maintaining healthy relationships and

doing reparative work within the relationship – i.e. the work of forgiveness. In emphasizing the role of love-based emotions within marriage these writers touch on a dimension of individual and relational spirituality that is rooted in the *New Testament* message of the Gospel. When asked to identify the greatest commandment, Jesus responded by stating it involved complete and unrestrained love for God and then added that the second command required that we love one another similarly (Matthew 22:34-40). What is significant about this and other passages (c.f. John 13:34-35, 15:12-14; Philippians 2:1-18; 1 John 2:10-11) is that the *New Testament* clearly affirms the role of love-based emotions in creating healthy relationships and communities of living, by connecting the expression of these emotions and qualities to the person's spirituality as experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. In addition, in the *New Testament* the practice of interpersonal forgiveness, which is dependent on the capacity to have empathy for another, is also understood in terms of our spirituality – specifically the believer's own experience of God's gift of forgiveness (c.f. Matthew 6:8-15, 18:21-35).

In conclusion, it would appear that while EFCT is not a specifically Christian counselling theory, the perspective it offers on marriage and emotions is both theoretically consistent with Christian theology and its constructs are amenable to hosting a Christian perspective on individual and marital spirituality.

B.5. Techniques / Interventions

Briefly stated, all the models reviewed in this study employ techniques that are clearly related to that theory's fundamental values and assumptions (Clinebell, 1966; Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1977a; Clinebell, 1979; Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977, Crabb, 1982; Greenberg & Johnson, 1995; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 2000; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a; Worthington & McMurry, 1994; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a). In addition, the techniques employed by these models are generally described in an orderly fashion such that the reader is able to discern the clinical rationale for using the interventions described. Johnson,

for example, presents the practice of EFCT in a manualized fashion, clearly outlining therapeutic tasks and interventions, therapist behaviours, the steps to effective therapy, and three critical change events (see chapter three). Each of these techniques is described in sufficient detail as to equip the pastoral counsellor to use this approach with couples. Similarly, the pastoral marital counselling models highlighted in this study also outline the authors' methodologies beginning with the point of first contact and ending with the successful termination of counselling. Thus, Worthington (1989a, 1999a) outlines a way to enhance therapeutic outcomes by providing clients with information about the therapeutic process prior to the first session.

B.5.a Assessment Techniques and the First Session

In terms of the first session, all five models not only emphasize the importance of assessment but the methods of assessment are related to the theory. In EFCT the assessment seeks to identify "how each partner experiences the relationship and views the self in relation to the other" (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). The intent of this process is to understand how each partner's emotional schema constructs the emotions that are expressed (c.f. Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Johnson, 1996), identify negative interactional cycles (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996), and begin to reframe the problem in terms of the couple's underlying emotions and attachment needs (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996).

Crabb (1982) describes assessment as a process of reflecting on the counsellee's story so as to identify: negative feelings, negative or problematic behaviour, and wrong thinking. Unlike EFCT which aims to create a new type of contact within the marital dyad, Crabb's intent in assessment is to identify how to challenge and change a person's basic assumptions so as to encourage right thinking which, in turn, leads to planning right behaviour and identifying satisfying feelings (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982).

Clinebell encourages couples to assess their own marriage by means of a standardized exercise he refers to as the “Intentional Marriage Method” (IMM) (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1981; Clinebell, 1984). The IMM is designed to foster personal and relational growth through a four-step process in which: the couple identifies and discusses their perceived relational strengths, the couple identifies and discusses their unmet wants or needs, the couple strategizes how to meet their unmet needs, and, the couple commits to implementing their strategy and evaluating its effectiveness (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1981; Clinebell, 1984). In addition to this, Clinebell (1984) identifies twelve tasks that balance cognition (tasks 2, 4, 5, 6-9) with volition (tasks 8, 9) and affect (tasks 1, 2, 3, 5, 10) and which should characterize the first session with couples in crisis (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 - The Initial Session in Marriage Counseling

(Clinebell, 1984:261-262)

- 1) Communicate warmth, caring, and a willingness to help, and affirm the couple for seeking help.
- 2) Find out how each feels about being there; why each person came *now*; what each wants, fears, expects, and hopes for from counseling; discover how much motivation each person has to improve their side of the relationship.
- 3) Help motivate the less-motivated partner by building rapport with that person and awakening realistic hope for more satisfaction and less pain in the marriage.
- 4) Discover how long the crisis or problems have been going on. Is the alienation chronic and protracted, or does the couple have periods of connectedness between crises?
- 5) Provide comparable opportunity for each person to describe the problems, express their feelings, and say what changes must occur (usually in the other) to make the marriage workable for them, (i.e., which clauses of the marriage contract are unfair and unsatisfying and therefore must be revised?).
- 6) After their anger and hurt are expressed and reduced, find out what each person still values about the marriage and about each other, and affirm whatever strengths and potential resources they have with which to strengthen their marriage through counseling.
- 7) Make a tentative decision (based on what is discovered in 2 and 4) concerning whether to try short-term marriage crisis counseling or refer the couple to a marital therapist. If, after three to five sessions of crisis counseling, the couple has made little or no constructive movement, they probably need longer-term marital and/or individual therapy.
- 8) If short-term counseling seems likely to help, ask the couple to agree to come for three or four additional sessions with the expectation that at the end of that series, they and the counselor will decide what is needed. If in the initial session referral obviously is needed, the pastor should explain why and assure the couple that she or he will assist them in finding the specialized help they need.

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- 9) Help the couple decide on and commit themselves to some between-sessions at-home assignment-some small, constructive action they will take to help make their relating more mutually satisfying as soon as possible.
- 10) Near the close of the first session (and other sessions) ask them how they feel about what has occurred – drawing out and accepting any negative feelings they may have.
- 11) Use prayer or other religious resources only if clearly appropriate with that couple.
- 12) After the interview, reflect on what was learned, and make tentative plans for helping the couple; check with a consultant or colleague (peer consultant) if the situation is complicated or confusing.

Wright's strategy for engaging a couple in a conjoint counselling relationship begins prior to the first session when the couple completes and returns to the counsellor a number of pre-counselling assessment inventories (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a).

Wright argues that the use of these inventories not only engages both partners in the counselling process, it also permits the pastor to tailor the first session to the couple's needs and accelerates the counselling process (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). For Wright this means that the first session can focus on the couple and their goals for counselling (Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a) as well as any identifiable strengths and positive qualities that may characterize their relationship (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). Wright further notes that an effective first session requires the following skills: listening, demonstrating genuine interest and caring, sensitivity, encouragement, adaptability, acceptance and empathy (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1995) while employing an active, not overbearing, approach intended to communicate interest in seeing change in the couple's relationship (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996).

Table 4.3 - Worthington's Core Areas for Marital Assessment

| Marriage Counseling with Christian Couples (1991) | Marriage Conflicts (1994) | Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling (1999) |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| | Christianity | Central values & belief |
| | Core vision of marriage | Core vision of marriage |
| Confession & forgiveness | Confession & forgiveness | Confession & forgiveness |
| Closeness | Closeness | Closeness |
| Communication | Communication | Communication |
| Conflict resolution | Conflict resolution | Conflict resolution |
| Cognition | Cognition | Cognition |
| Commitment | Covenant & commitment | Commitment |
| Complicating factors | Complicating factors | Complicating factors |

Worthington, like Wright, believes in conducting a thorough assessment. While Wright has the couple complete a battery of assessment forms either before the first session or between the first and second sessions, Worthington is not adverse to having couples complete a number of short forms within the counselling session, arguing that this can facilitate the process of creating an effective therapeutic alliance (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1999a; Worthington, McCullough, Shortz, Mindes, Sandage, & Chartrand, 1995). This methodology sets him apart from Wright (1995) who views the completion of assessment forms to be a distraction that is better handled in another context, thus permitting the counsellor to facilitate joining by creating a positive climate within the first session. Whether the information is obtained by means of face-to-face dialogue or an assessment form, Worthington's goal is that of obtaining information that will permit him to assess the core areas of the marital relationship (Table 4.3). Worthington highlights the value of assessment when states he writes a report in which he summarizes his findings and then shares with the couple in the following session (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1991a; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a).

B.5.b *Techniques for the Middle Phases of Therapy*

Aside from the foregoing description of EFCT (Chapter 2), space does not permit a detailed discussion of all the techniques associated with the therapeutic models under discussion. As a result,

this discussion will describe the intervention strategies used in these models, highlighting a few select interventions.

In the early portion of the middle stage of therapy Clinebell builds on the IMM exercise, utilizing techniques for enhancing communication, clarifying values, making relationships growth-nurturing, enhancing intimacy, dealing with the transitional issues of the life cycle, improving sexual relations in marriage, dealing with emotions (especially accumulated negative feelings), encouraging forgiveness and, enhancing spirituality in marriage (Clinebell, 1975; Clinebell, 1981; Clinebell, 1984).

For Crabb, the focus during the middle phase of therapy is to encourage the couple to become responsive to the work of the Spirit of God in their lives. Intervention, therefore, challenges a person's basic assumptions with a view to encouraging right thinking which, in turn, leads to planning right behaviour and identifying satisfying feelings (Crabb, 1982). Since the goal of marital counselling involves a reclaiming of marital intimacy Crabb seeks to invite both spouses to set aside any feelings of distance he or she may have and decide to relate to his or her partner in ways that demonstrate caring, i.e. compassion, for the other (Crabb, 1982). What is striking about Crabb's construct is that, unlike Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy which invites the couple to become empathically attuned to each other (c.f. Johnson, 1996), Crabb envisions a process by which compassionate behaviour is seen to be the result of an individual deciding and willing to do what is right for another. The problem is that the mind and the will are not always willing to act in this way, a fact Crabb attributes to sin. Thus, Crabb argues that the ability to act in this manner depends on an individual being willing to respond to the movement of the Spirit of God who both quickens the mind and enables the person to act in this way.

In Wright's model the strategies that characterize the counselling relationship beyond the first session include an understanding of the values of modeling the skills, attitudes and behaviours the couple is beginning to implement in their own relationship (Wright, 1994; Wright, 1996). Thus the counsellor,

by his or her very presence and behaviour, becomes a catalyst (Wright's term) for change in the couple relationship. Wright's basic therapeutic strategy is behavioural in that it emphasizes behaviour change reinforced by cognitive activity (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996). One of the recurring emphases in Wright's work is the role communication plays within couple relationships (Wright, 1974; Wright, 1977b; Wright, 1983; Wright, 1988a; Wright, 1989a). As a result, it is no surprise that one of the major strategies he identifies for the counsellor is that of understanding, clarifying and redefining the way couples communicate (Wright, 1977a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). Related to this emphasis on communication is the fact he focuses on the couple's marriage expectations (of themselves, each other and the marriage) with a view to clarifying these expectations and facilitating the couple's ability both to communicate and meet these expectations as well as resolve conflict (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a; Wright & Oliver, 1994). In his work, Wright makes extensive use of homework assignments such as interactive activities, reading books, and listening to audiotapes (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a). The basic idea behind this strategy is that these activities serve to reinforce and support the development of new behaviours.

Worthington's books contain a plethora of interventions which he differentiates according to: the stage of the counselling process the intervention may be used with the best effect, the type of problem the intervention is designed to address or correct, and the intent of the intervention, i.e. increase the couple's awareness of problematic behaviours, engage the couple in the process of breaking up their old patterns of relating, or facilitate the building of new patterns of relating (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a). During the middle phase of therapy Worthington has argued for the use of two types of interventions, those designed to increase intimacy and those designed to improve communication (Worthington, 1989a). Throughout this phase, but especially towards the end, care is taken to support the couple as they seek to consolidate the changes they have made in their relationship (Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a,

Worthington & McMurry, 1994). In addition to this, Worthington encourages counsellors to engage in ongoing and informal evaluation or assessment throughout the middle phase of counselling as a means of monitoring progress and ensuring that any obstacles to success are addressed (Worthington, 1999a).

B.6. Summary

**Table 4.4 – Perspectives on the Marital Relationship:
Four Pastoral/Christian Marital Counselling Theories Compared with
Emotionally-Focused Couples Therapy**

| Does this theory... | Clinebell | Crabb | Worthington | Wright | EFCT |
|---|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| ... consider individual constructs? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ... consider the operation of the marriage as a unit (or system)? | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| ... consider the position of the married couple in the family cycle? | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ... consider the spiritual nature of the individual and of the marriage from a Christian perspective? | | Yes | Yes | Yes | amendable |
| ... employ techniques that are: | | | | | |
| • related to the theory | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| • prescribed and standardized | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| • varied and individualized | | | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| • clearly applicable at specified points in therapy | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Table 4.4 summarizes the foregoing discussion, highlighting the fact that, in terms of the theory of marriage presented by each of the models under discussion, Worthington’s model best meets the criteria that were set. While this should not be a surprise, given that Worthington defined the categories, what is significant are the points at which most of the other models do not meet the evaluative criteria. Perhaps the greatest surprise is the fact Wright does not deal with marriage in ways that are consistent with a systemic perspective. Equally significant is the fact that while EFCT is not an explicitly Christian model its theory of marriage compares favorably to Worthington’s model and better than the other three comparator models.

With respect to the second hypothesis, it is clear that EFCT views marriage differently than most of the pastoral models under discussion and that it demonstrates marked coherence between its theoretical constructs and its prescribed modes of intervention. Compared to Crabb and Wright, it may be argued that the EFCT model highlights specific areas of weakness, especially with respect to how the marital bond is conceptualized and treated, whereas the point of difference between EFCT and either Worthington or Clinebell's models lies in the fact EFCT builds its view of the couple system on the foundation of Attachment Theory rather than a cognitive-systemic base (Worthington) or an existential-systemic base (Clinebell). While, on the one hand, EFCT compares favorably to these four pastoral models in terms of its conceptualization of the marital unit, it does not address the themes of commitment, sin or forgiveness from a specifically Christian perspective.⁵ Nevertheless, it has been shown that the Attachment model may be amenable to incorporating aspects of Christian spirituality. Similarly, specifically Christian themes such as spiritual growth, the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of counselling, the role of prayer, the centrality of Christ as healer and the restorer of relationships, and the role of scripture (both to support the theory base as well as in the work of intervention) are also missing from EFCT. Yet, on the other hand, EFCT's use of empathy as a means of healing is consistent with the emphasis placed on love and compassion in the Christian scriptures. While the perspective provided by EFCT appears to be an improvement on the models of marriage provided by Clinebell, Crabb, and Wright, as well as an improvement over the view of emotions found in Crabb, Wright and Worthington's earlier writings, the absence of any clear reference to Christian spirituality suggests the second hypothesis is not unequivocally supported by the data. What this suggests then is the case for EFCT as an improvement over the pastoral marital therapies needs to be made on the basis of either its attractiveness to the consumer and/or its demonstrated efficacy.

⁵ For a definition of a Christian perspective on these topics see: Worthington, 1989a and Worthington, 1999a.

C. Comparing EFCT with Pastoral Perspectives on Emotions

Subproblem 3. The third subproblem is to identify, compare and evaluate the manner in which EFCT and a representative group of pastoral and Christian marital counselling theories conceptualize and treat the experience of emotion.

Hypothesis 3. That the theory of emotions offered by Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy reveals a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy. As in the case of the second hypothesis, this hypothesis invites theoretical and theological reflection both on the nature of emotions and the role or use of emotions in marital counselling.

C.1. Views on Emotional Experience

Emotions, Feelings, Passions, Affect, it does not matter which name is used, these phenomena are a universal feature of human experience. Indeed, the centrality of emotions is evident in our everyday interactions with others, the philosophy of Plato and Descartes, the theological reflections of Augustine, Aquinas, and Jonathan Edwards, the literary works of Shakespeare, Blake and Agatha Christie, and the evening's offerings on the television set. While there is agreement as to the importance of emotions, counsellors differ as to the conceptualization and treatment of emotional experience. This is as true in the pastoral counselling literature as it is in the general counselling literature in that different theoretical orientations, i.e. biblical-theological, psychodynamic, experiential, behavioural, systemic, yield differing conceptualizations of emotion. Thus, just as the comparison of pastoral marital therapies requires the use of categories capable of assessing divergent theories of marriage, so too the comparison of how these therapies conceptualize emotions requires an equally robust set of categories.

The categories used in this portion of this study are drawn from James Hillman's *Emotions* (1992) where he proposes an integrative model that is inclusive of twenty schema or typologies for understanding emotions reviewed in his text. Hillman argues that Aristotle's "four causes" (*Physics*, II.3) provide a framework for reflecting on the phenomena of emotions that gives an explanation, or grounding, for our understanding of emotion (Hillman, 1992). Given the limitations of Aristotle's

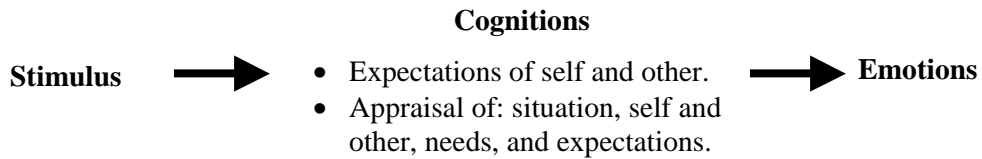
understanding of emotions identified in chapter 3, it is important to state that the utilization of Aristotle's schema for understanding change does not necessitate the acceptance of his schema for emotions. Rather, the use of Aristotle's "four causes" is based on the realization that these categories of explanation or grounding are sufficiently varied to account for the variety of explanations of emotions that exist (Hillman, 1992). Additionally, it is to be noted that a single theory may be "grounded" in more than one "cause." Indeed, Hillman's review of the literature highlights the fact that individual theories can illustrate different typologies and may be grounded in more than one "cause." The fact that one theory may be grounded in multiple causes should not be taken to mean that because these are not absolute categories they are in some way less meaningful. Rather, an acknowledgment of multiple groundings recognizes the complexity of both emotional experience and human reflections on these experiences.

All five of the selected models of marital therapy included within this study acknowledge a link between an event, irrespective of whether it is an actual event or a potential event, and the experience of emotion (Crabb, 1982; Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Johnson, 1996; Wright, 1986; Worthington, 1989a). Hillman notes that this connection between stimulus and response is suggestive of Aristotle's *causa efficiens* (Hillman, 1992). Despite the apparent concordance among these theories on this point, it is possible to differentiate between theories by noting that in order to ground a theory of emotion in the *causa efficiens* it is necessary for the theory to hypothesize that emotion is best explained in terms of the stimulus (Hillman, 1992). Theories grounded in the *causa efficiens* describe emotions in terms of: conflicts, situations, symbolic representations (conscious or unconscious), physiological stimulus, instinct, the unconscious, the spirit, genetics or the absence of a specific stimulus (Hillman, 1992).

Viewed in this light, Crabb's biblically informed psychology, as well as Worthington's and Wright's cognitive-behavioural approaches, and Clinebell's experiential model are grounded in the *causa efficiens* when they frame emotional experience in terms of conscious representations of an event or

conflict, particularly between individuals (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970; Clinebell, 1977a; Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982; Crabb, 1987; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1991a; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 1998; Wright, 2002a). Stated functionally, the perspective the reader derives from these authors is that emotions are psychologically triggered or stimulated by an event the individual interprets, consciously or unconsciously, as either positive or negative.

Figure 4.2 - Wright’s Conceptualization of Emotions



Wright’s description of this process in his books on marital counselling reveals what appears to be a one dimensional view in which a stimulus is filtered through the person’s cognitive schema evoking an emotional/affective response (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.3 – Crabb’s Taxonomy of Secondary Emotions

| | | Cognitive Evaluation of an Event | |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|
| | | <i>Relevant to one’s needs</i> | <i>Relevant to one’s desires</i> |
| Initial (Primary) Emotional Experience | <i>Pleasurable</i> | Secondary emotion: <i>dependency</i> | Secondary emotion: <i>satisfaction.</i> |
| | <i>Displeasurable</i> | Secondary emotion: <i>bitterness (sinful)</i> | Secondary emotion: <i>disappointment (non-sinful).</i> |

(adapted from: Crabb, 1982:136)

Crabb’s (1982) view of the *causa efficiens* differs from that of Wright in that he adds a second level of understanding in which the stimulus event is assessed both in terms of “pleasure” as well as whether it is relevant to the person’s needs (Table 4.3).

Although EFT acknowledges a psychological basis exists for the secondary and instrumental emotions, it conceptualizes the *causa efficiens* of the primary emotions as being physiologically based

in the neurophysiology of the human brain (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997), a view which accords with Worthington's recent writing on forgiveness (Worthington, 2003c).

Hillman posits six explanations concerning the essential nature or *causa materialis* of emotion: emotion as an invisible energy that is present as a substrate to life, emotion as weakness or a formless blur, emotion as coexistent with the body, emotion as a representation (sensations, ideas, images, perceptions), emotion as a force motivating humans to overcome inertia, or, emotion as the result of the interplay of invisible forces (Hillman, 1992). In this regard, Crabb's two-dimensional taxonomy of secondary emotions implies recognition of what EFT therapists refer to as the "bodily felt emotions" (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997) and those theories which Hillman states "explain emotion through the body" (Hillman, 1992). There is a second dimension to the *causa materialis* of emotion within EFCT, however, in that emotion is also understood as that which moves an individual to action. Thus, the EFCT therapist, as well as the pastoral counsellor utilizing Worthington's insights on forgiveness (Worthington, 2003c), recognizes that an experience of empathy has the power to move two people closer together, even when they have been kept apart as a result of anger and bitterness. The difference between these approaches and the Christian marital therapies, however, is that the Christian marital therapies view the essence or material of emotions as consisting in the sensations, ideas, images and perceptions of the person (Crabb, 1975; Crabb, 1977; Crabb, 1982; Crabb, 1987; Worthington, 1989a; Worthington, 1991a; Worthington, 1996b; Worthington, 1999a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 1998; Wright, 2002a).

Hillman notes, "just as there have been explanations of emotion through the initiating cause and others through the material stuff, there are explanations of emotion which turn mainly on essence" (Hillman, 1992). Here the focus lies not on the stimulus or the substance of the emotion but rather the essential quality that defines the emotion, i.e. its phenomenology (Hillman, 1992). Hillman refers to this as the *causa formalis*. Hillman (1992) identifies that the question of essence may be understood as: a pattern or mode of expression of the emotion, the specific quality (joy, anger, love, etc.) of the

emotion, or the fact the emotion may lack both pattern and quality. When emotion is seen to be a “pattern” it is understood to be instinctual, physiologically based, and “a motion of the subject-object relationship” (Hillman, 1992). This description fits well with the perspective on emotion that arises from Attachment Theory and which is found in EFCT (Johnson, 1996). It also fits with Clinebell’s perspective where emotions are understood within the subject-object relationship (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). In contrast, the other pastoral writers place their emphasis on the quality of the emotions expressed. Crabb, for example, identifies that any experience of emotion that is “mutually exclusive with compassion involves sin” (Crabb, 1977:103). Here he states that the issue is not whether an emotion is experienced as positive or negative, but rather if, in the experiencing of the emotion, the person is capable of having compassion, thus suggesting that the essential differentiating quality with respect to all emotion is the presence or absence of compassion for another. Worthington and Wright, on the other hand, approach their understanding of emotions in terms of the couple’s experience of fulfillment or conflict in their interactions (Worthington, 1989a; Wright, 1981; Wright, 1986; Wright, 1994; Wright, 1995; Wright, 1996; Wright, 2002a).

Finally, theories of emotion may be grounded in the Aristotelian category of the *causa finalis* or the purpose towards which the emotional experience moves or directs the person experiencing the emotion (Hillman, 1992). This implies that the emotion does not exist in and of itself but rather serves some end purpose. Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) touch on one dimension of the *causa finalis* when they note the presence of positive emotions such as love, trust and hope function to build couple intimacy while emotional immaturity, the fear of being hurt, guilt feelings, and mishandled hostility act as major barriers to couple intimacy. Crabb (1987), likewise points towards this same sense of purpose when he reasons that a person’s emotions reflect the direction in which that person’s heart is oriented. A second dimension of the *causa finalis* is discernable at those points where the pastoral literature sees emotion as an expression of some form of conflict – intrapsychic, interpersonal or with the broader environment (Crabb, 1982; Worthington, 1989a; Wright, 1995) – in which the end

purpose of the emotion is the survival of the individual. Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) highlight the third dimension of the *causa finalis* when they observe that conflict is a potential factor in fostering growth, both in the individual and in the relationship (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). The motivational nature of emotional experience is also attested to in the literature on Emotionally-Focused Therapy where primary emotions are described as possessing an action orientation that serves to motivate an individual and is useful for problem solving (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997; Greenberg & Safran, 1987).

**Table 4.5 – Perspectives on Emotions:
Comparing Four Pastoral Marital Counselling Theories with EFCT***

| | Clinebell | Crabb | Worthington | Wright | EFCT |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Causa efficiens</i> | Psychological | Psychological | Psychological (1989a) Physiological (2003c) | Psychological | Primary emotions: Physiological Secondary / Instrumental emotions: Psychological |
| <i>Causa materialis</i> | | Representations | Representations (1989a) Emotion moves the person to action. (2003c) Concrete and Visible physiological expressions (2003c) | Representations | Emotion moves the person to action. Concrete and visible physiological expressions (i.e. <i>Res extensa</i>) |
| <i>Causa formalis</i> | Pattern: reflects subject-object relationship | Quality: presence or absence of compassion | Quality: fulfillment vs. conflict | Quality: fulfillment vs. conflict | Pattern: primary emotions are physiologically based |
| <i>Causa finalis</i> | Signification Improvement | Survival Signification | Survival (1989a) | Survival | Survival Improvement |

*The categories and descriptions used in this table are based on Hillman’s integrative framework (1992:243-289)

Table 4.5 summarizes the foregoing discussion, revealing that EFCT differs most significantly from the cognitively oriented pastoral therapies of Crabb, Wright, and Worthington’s 1989 text and least from the experiential approach of Clinebell. It is noted also that Worthington’s more recent works not only reflect the shift in perspective he alluded to when he wrote that his current approach “does not emphasize behaviour, cognition and structure as much as it did” (Worthington, 1994c;

Worthington, 1996b) these works also suggest changes in his conceptualization of emotional experience.

C.2. **Treatment of Emotion**

Aside from the foregoing description of EFCT (Chapter 2), space does not permit a detailed discussion of all the techniques these models employ when addressing emotions. As a result, this discussion will focus on selected intervention strategies with a view to highlighting similarities and differences between the models being reviewed.

Clinebell identifies that one of the significant issues facing couples in their midyears is an accumulation of “guilt, disappointment, and resentment” which, if left unchecked, has the capacity of “diminishing or shutting off satisfying communication” (Clinebell, 1977a:18). Clinebell’s words highlight two important features of emotional experience. First, emotions are derivative in the sense that they arise out of and give meaning to past words, behaviours, and experiences. Secondly, emotions are formative in that they influence both an individual’s beliefs as well as his or her decision to speak or act in the present. For this reason Clinebell identifies that the resolution of an accumulation of built-up emotion has the capacity to profoundly transform a marital relationship. To accomplish this task, Clinebell invites couples to engage the four-step process outlined in Table 4.6. One of the significant features of this process is that the goal, like that of EFCT is not the mere release of emotion but rather the sharing of hurts and vulnerabilities with a view to reforging and strengthening the marital relationship.

Table 4.6 Four Steps for Letting go of Accumulated Negative Feelings

(Clinebell, 1977a:16-18)

- 1) Face your feelings and bring them out into the light of a trust-full relationship. To ignore painful feelings is to leave them festering in the cellar of your psyche... List the hurts, resentments, guilt feelings, and griefs that weigh on your mind. Do this with your spouse or a trusted friend present for support
- 2) Take several sessions to talk out your painful feelings with your partner. Let the feelings flow. Expressing them openly in a relationship of trust usually helps reduce the burden

of such feelings... It often strengthens a marriage to share the things that give each other pain. However, it is important not to confess things that may damage the relationship

- 3) Do whatever you must to make amends, repair damaged relationships, and release your emotional load. Taking reparative action is an essential step in the unburdening process
- 4) In those things you cannot change, restore, or improve try to make peace with the past. Accept yourself as having done all you can and then accept God's forgiveness

Crabb's approach to addressing emotions requires a decision on the part of each spouse to set aside any sense of entitlement they may have and to act compassionately towards each other (Crabb, 1982).

For Crabb, the fundamental issue is not one of being heard by one's partner but rather knowing that irrespective of what has occurred within one's marital relationship God is the one who understands and who provides the ultimate sense of significance and security each partner craves. As a result, Crabb suggests the wounded individual needs to acknowledge to his or her self as well as to God how he or she feels about the situation. Second, the wounded individual is invited to subordinate the public expression of this emotion to the goal of allowing God to use his or her partner for His purposes (Crabb, 1982:69). In this way, Crabb distinguishes between the "acknowledgement" and "expression" of emotion.

In one of his earlier writings Worthington commented that unbridled emotional expression was not helpful in couple's therapy, although the same book also makes reference to the use of "empathetic repentance" (Worthington, 1989a). While this last intervention receives only brief mention, the description he provides suggests it involves engaging one partner in a process that places himself or herself in the position of considering his or her own personal faults, i.e. behaviours and attitudes that irritate his or her partner, rather than focusing on the faults of the other. In this way, the goal is to become attuned to his or her role in the problem. While this intervention cannot be equated with what practitioners of Emotionally-Focused Therapy describe as the "blamer softening event" (c.f. Bradley & Furrow, 2004; Johnson, 1996), this intervention does share with EFT the fact it invites the individual to look beyond his or her perceived hurt to consider the other partner's experience of the situation.

In recent years Worthington, along with his associates, has given careful consideration to the challenges posed by interpersonal injuries, both within and outside of marriage, contributing to over fifteen articles and books on this subject.⁶ Among the key themes to emerge from this work is the awareness that forgiveness and unforgiveness are parallel emotional processes (Worthington, Berry & Parrott, 2001), and, the vital role empathy plays in transforming unforgiveness into forgiveness (c.f. Worthington, 2003c; Worthington, Berry & Parrott, 2001). These insights are significant for the practice of counselling inasmuch as they underscore the clinical efficacy of fostering and utilizing empathy as an intervention when working with situations where an interpersonal injury has occurred. Finally, while Wright's approach is predominantly behavioural in orientation, emphasizing the couple's communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and behaviours that communicate value to one's partner (Wright, 1981; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2002a), he departs from this model when dealing with issues resulting in deep hurt and/or resentment. In these situations Wright describes a Gestalt style technique in which he asks each person to write down the full list of hurts and how each hurt affects them (Wright, 1994; Wright, 1996). These couples are then asked to write an angry letter to their spouse (but to not give it to them). Next, they are asked to sit in an empty room and read the letter to an empty chair. Wright explains that this process "drains the emotional intensity" present within the marriage (Wright, 1994; Wright, 1996). As creative as this intervention may be, it differs from the Emotionally-Focused therapies in that Wright, by his own admission, seeks to drain the emotional intensity from the relationship whereas EFCT seeks to use the emotion within the marital system as a tool to draw marital couples together (c.f. Johnson, 1996).

⁶ c.f. Exline, Worthington, Hill & McCullough, 2003; McCullough & Worthington, 1995b; Ripley & Worthington, 2002a; Sandage, Worthington, Hight & Berry, 2000; Wade & Worthington, 2003; Worthington, 1998a; Worthington, 1998c; Worthington, 2001; Worthington, 2003b; Worthington, 2003c; Worthington, Berry & Parrott, 2001; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990; Worthington, Kurusu, Collins, Berry, Ripley & Baier, 2000; Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough & Sandage, 1996; Worthington, McCullough & Sandage, 1997; Worthington, Sandage & Berry, 2000; Worthington & Wade, 1999.

C.3. Summary

As Table 4.5 demonstrates, EFCT does indeed reflect a perspective that is significantly different from the cognitive-behavioural orientation that characterizes the evangelical models of marital counselling outlined by Crabb, Worthington, and Wright. Similarly, the foregoing discussion highlighting how each model treats emotions, particularly in the wake of an interpersonal injury reinforces the fact that EFCT differs significantly from the models of marital counselling that are most familiar to evangelicals. It is noted, for example, that EFCT honors the physiological basis of the primary emotions in ways that have only recently begun to be addressed in the Christian counselling literature (c.f. Worthington, 2003c). Similarly, EFCT concerns itself with the motivational quality of emotions rather than their representational significance. As a result, EFCT's mode of intervention works with emotions as they occur in the present, rather than reflecting on them as historical events or distant objects, with a view to utilizing these emotions to facilitate the process of building connection within the relationship. Thus, with respect to the third hypothesis, it would appear that that the theory of emotions offered by EFCT does indeed reveal a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy. The data also seems to suggest that while other therapeutic approaches acknowledge the importance of empathy and compassion, EFCT provides the pastoral counsellor with a clear process for engaging both partners so as to evoke these emotions and foster connection.

Chapter 5: Christians' Evaluations of Five Marital Counselling Theories

Subproblem 4. The fourth subproblem is to assess whether self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling would prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy to any of the other approaches included within this study.

Hypothesis 4. It is hypothesized that self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling from a pastor or Christian counsellor/therapist will not prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy over any of the other approaches included within this study.

Pastoral and Christian models of counselling, specifically models of marital counselling, continue to be understudied (Ripley & Worthington, 1998), supported, in many cases, by only one or two published studies. In light of this fact, it is not surprising that an extensive review of the literature revealed a limited number of intermodel studies involving Christian counselling theories (Pecnik & Epperson, 1985; Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985; Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988; Worthington & Scott, 1983; Ripley & Worthington, 2002a; Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001). Two of these studies investigated the preferences of conservative Christians for specific Christian counselling models and concluded that, on the basis of a written case study, conservative Christians differentiated between models of individual counselling and appeared to prefer a counselling approach they perceived as having similar religious beliefs to their own (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). In another study, it was noted that Christians and non-Christians rated Christian therapists differently (Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988). This study also identified that clients were more likely to give a high rating to a session if the counsellor was "perceived as encouraging clients to a) forgive other, b) forgive God, and c) engage in religiously oriented homework" (Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988). In terms of the present study, one limitation common to the above noted studies is that the primary focus was on the individual in therapy rather than the couple.

With respect to the practice of pastoral or Christian marital therapy, there is a growing body of literature in support of specific models or modes of intervention (c.f. McCullough & Worthington,

1994a; Ripley, 2003; Ripley & Worthington, 1998; Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough & Sandage, 1996). One recent study examined the effect of religiosity on client preferences and expectations for marital counselling, and noted that highly committed Christian clients demonstrate a preference for counsellors who are willing both to explore the clients' religious beliefs and values as well as to incorporate them in the counselling process (Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001). Aside from this study, there do not appear to be any other studies that examine client preferences for Christian marital therapy. Thus, there are no known studies of pastoral or Christian marital counselling that parallel the studies of Dougherty and Worthington (1982) and Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) by examining whether self-identified Christian couples can be said to prefer a specific model of pastoral marital counselling. The intent of this chapter is to address this gap in the literature by comparing the preferences of Christians for five pastoral models of marital counselling and therapy with a view to determining if the data validates the fourth hypothesis which states, "that self-professed Christians seeking marital counselling from a pastor or Christian counsellor/therapist will not prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy over any of the other approaches included within this study."

A. Method

The format and methodology of this study will be a partial replication and extension of an earlier study conducted by Worthington and Gascoyne (1985). In this study the authors compared the preferences of Christians and non-Christians for five (individual) Christian counselling models. The present research partially replicates the methodology of Worthington and Gascoyne, addressing two gaps in the pastoral and Christian counselling research – namely, the absence of studies comparing models of Christian or pastoral marital counselling, and, a dearth of replication studies (Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). While it is significant that this study partially replicates Worthington and Gascoyne's methodology, it is equally significant that the present study provides a means for comparing different models of pastoral/Christian marital counselling. The present study therefore

extends the previous research through the application of the research methodology to include models of therapy not covered in the original study (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 – Christian Counselling Theories used in Studies Assessing Counsellee Preference

| Study | Author / Counselling Model | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
| | Adams | Bustanoby | Clinebell | Crabb | EFCT – Christian Adaptation | Clyde Narramore | Worthington | Wright |
| Dougherty & Worthington (1982) | XXX | XXX | | XXX | | XXX | | |
| Worthington & Gascoyne (1985) | XXX | XXX | | XXX | | XXX | XXX | |
| Mutter (2005) | | | XXX | XXX | XXX | | XXX | XXX |

The counselling models selected for this study were: (a) Howard J. Clinebell, who represents a theologically liberal approach to the Christian faith and an experiential-humanistic approach to pastoral counselling; (b) Lawrence J. Crabb, who represents a theologically conservative perspective and whose writings reflect an eclectic blend of psychodynamic influences and cognitive psychology; (c) H. Norman Wright, who represents a theologically conservative perspective and whose writings reflect a cognitive-behavioural approach to marital therapy; (d) Everett L. Worthington, who represents a theologically conservative perspective and whose writings reflect a cognitive approach to marital therapy that has become tempered by Emotionally-Focused Therapy; and, (e) a pastoral adaptation of EFCT that sought to reflect a theologically conservative but not highly integrated perspective.

A.1. **Participants**

Volunteers were gathered from a cross section of evangelical churches located primarily within one county in south-central Ontario as well as the faculty, staff and students at a small evangelical seminary, also located in the same county. These volunteers responded either to a verbal

announcement given to the entire congregation, a written notice circulated within their faith community, or to personal invitations to participate in the study given by friends who were aware of this project. It should be noted that while several attempts were made to involve participation from church communities not normally associated with Canadian evangelicalism the leadership of these communities did not respond to the invitation to be involved in this study.

A.2. **Treatment Plans & Sample Therapeutic Dialogues**

Treatment plans were constructed to treat a fictitious couple, Tom and Alice (see Appendices). Tom and Alice were described as having been married for about ten years and experiencing marital tension. Alice was described as feeling lonely and unappreciated in her marriage while Tom was described as feeling nagged and unappreciated. Complicating factors in this relationship include the following facts: three and a half years prior to seeking counselling Tom had a brief affair with another woman, Alice has recently given up her career to be at home with two small children, and Tom has recently taken a job that involves a lengthy commute. Five treatment plans, one for each of the five models included in this study, were constructed using representative writings of each model as a guide. In addition, five sample dialogues were constructed, guided by each author's writings and the written treatment plan. As a check for validity, the treatment plans and sample dialogues were each vetted by a different external reader (a pastoral/Christian therapist or experienced pastor) and double-checked by this researcher to ensure each treatment plan and sample dialogue reflected the values and priorities of its corresponding model.

A.3. **Procedure**

Two methods of recruitment were used to obtain participants for this study. In the first method of recruitment, permission was sought from pastors and senior Christian leaders to approach members of their faith community to participate. These leaders were provided with a brief description of the survey that included the intent of the study, the nature of the questions being asked, and the method

the researcher wished to use to contact members of their community. Of the sixteen communities that were originally approached in this manner,⁷ six communities agreed to permit the researcher to invite participation in this study.⁸ Depending on the context, the invitation to participate was extended either by making a brief announcement to individuals attending the Sunday morning worship services of the participating churches with instructions to request a survey package from the researcher following the service, or, by circulating a written invitation to individuals within the participating faith community with instruction to request a survey package from a designated individual. This second method of recruitment utilized informal networks of relationships through contacts facilitated by the researcher's graduate students, professional colleagues and friends who offered to invite persons to participate in the study.⁹ This method of approach proved to be quite valuable in that it resulted in a significant number of completed surveys. A second benefit of this method of recruitment was the access it provided to faith communities that may have otherwise been inaccessible to this researcher, thus increasing the likelihood the results may be generalizable beyond the scope of the Baptist community. Irrespective of the method of recruitment, all interested participants were provided with a copy of a disclosure statement concerning the study (see Appendices), a consent form and a copy of one of five different survey forms. Participants had the option of completing the form "on site" or returning the form to a designated location. Distribution of the survey forms was semi-randomized in that all five surveys were placed in a single pile (A-B-C-D-E-A-B...) and distributed to participants in the order in which the participants indicated interest in the study. Completed surveys were either collected on site by the researcher, mailed to the researcher at a later date, or returned to the researcher by the

⁷ Invitations to participate in this study were given to the leaders of: four churches associated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, four churches associated with the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, two Presbyterian churches, one church affiliated with the Brethren in Christ, one church affiliated with the Associated Gospel Churches, one Pentecostal church, one church affiliated with the Vineyard churches, one "open" Brethren assembly, and one theological seminary. In addition, an attempt was made to connect with the leadership of a church associated with the United Church of Canada.

⁸ Three Baptist churches, one associated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches and two associated with the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, a Pentecostal church, a Vineyard church and one theological seminary.

individuals who assisted in the distribution of surveys. The first step in processing these surveys was to preserve the anonymity of the participants by separating the signed Informed Consent Statement from the completed survey. These forms were stored separately from the completed surveys. Analysis of the data derived from the completed surveys was facilitated through the use of the *SPSS Graduate Pack 11.5 for Windows*.

The demographic data collected by these surveys included: general items (age, sex, marital status), items that might influence the respondent's answers (level of education, previous experience with different types of counselling, an evaluation of the quality of any pastoral marital counselling received in the past) and information about the person's faith commitment (religious affiliation, frequency of church attendance, and self-identification as a Christian/non-Christian).

Participants were screened for marital status to determine if prior marital breakdown might influence perception. Similarly, participants were not only asked about prior counselling experiences, but also if they had ever received marital counselling from a pastor and to indicate their level of satisfaction with respect to the counsel received from that pastor.

Whereas other researchers have included additional tests for participant values (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001; Worthington and Gascoyne, 1985) and religious commitment (Ripley, Worthington & Berry, 2001) with a view to determining the relationship between these factors and client preferences, this study did not include either a test for terminal values or religious commitment. The decision not to include these tests was motivated by both practical and other considerations. From a practical standpoint it was recognized the survey package involved a considerable amount of reading and reflection such that the addition of these measures might discourage some people from participating. Second, in light of the observations of Worthington & Gascoyne (1985) that Christian and non-Christian respondents can be differentiated

⁹ Among the faith communities accessed through this informal method of recruitment were congregations affiliated with: the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Mennonite Brethren churches, the Associated Gospel Churches, and one non-

on the basis of their frequency of church attendance, self-identification as a Christian, and, their understanding of the most important factor in determining what a Christian is, it was decided the use of these factors in this study would provide an adequate measure of client religiosity.

The evaluative data collected in this study consisted of the participants' responses to ten questions that invited them to reflect on and evaluate the case study scenario, treatment plan and sample dialogue. As with the two previous studies conducted by Worthington, each question utilized an eight-point Likert scale (1= least, 8=greatest) as the means of rating the respondent's perception of the scenario (c.f. Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985). The ten questions relating to the counselling scenario employed in this study addressed topics covered in the two previous studies comparing models of Christian counselling (Dougherty & Worthington, 1982; Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985) plus two new questions designed to obtain an additional understanding of the respondent's perception of the situation. In order to facilitate the process for the participants, the response questions were strategically placed following: the initial case description (2 questions), the treatment plan (4 questions), and, the sample dialogue (4 questions).

One of the two new questions in this study was placed immediately following the initial case description and asked, "Based on what you have read, estimate this couple's chances of improving their relationship." This question was included as a means of identifying the respondent's "pre-treatment impressions" of the situation. The second "pre-treatment question" asked the participants to indicate the role "religion" or "faith" should play in counselling this couple (c.f. Worthington & Gascoyne, 1985).

Next, participants were invited to read a treatment plan that represented one of the five selected models and respond to four questions. These questions replicated questions used by Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) and focused on rating the model in terms of: the degree of anticipated change,

closeness of the counsellor's and participant's approach to religion, the counsellor's reliance on biblical principles, and, the use of scripture to coerce the person to conform.

Finally, participants were invited to read a sample dialogue illustrating the model being evaluated and to respond to four additional questions. The first of these questions, "How helpful did you think the counsellor's responses in this dialogue were for the couple?" was new to this study and was included as a means of identifying whether the participants had formed an opinion concerning the style of interaction portrayed in the scenario. The wording of this question was carefully considered and in the end several factors suggested it was preferable to ask this question rather than "rate the way the pastor deals with the couple's emotions." First of all, it was determined that the question "rate the way the pastor deals with the couple's emotions" would not necessarily provide a measure of the participant's perception of the overall efficacy of the intervention(s) used. Second, it was determined that the question "rate the way the pastor deals with the couple's emotions" would not be useful in identifying how the participants' perceived the counsellor's overall style of interaction. Third, after reviewing the sample dialogues there was a sense that participant responses to the question "rate the way the pastor deals with the couple's emotions" might focus on the use of empathy by the pastor rather than the extent to which the pastor engages the couple to connect with their own, and the other's, emotions and to process these emotions. Finally, a review of the dialogues revealed that all five case studies incorporated an emotional focus that appeared to communicate understanding, suggesting that perhaps participants may not be able to provide a nuanced response to the question "rate the way the pastor deals with the couple's emotions." Thus, for reasons of wishing to: obtain a response set that would be more likely to differentiate the five models, focus on the outcome of the dialogue, as well as focus on the perceived efficacy of the intervention(s) used to deal with the affective dimension of the relationship, it was determined that the question "How helpful did you think the counsellor's responses in this dialogue were for the couple?" was to be the preferred wording.

The remaining three questions in the survey replicated questions used by Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) and focused on: the appeal of the counselling method, likelihood the person would refer a Christian friend to this pastor for counselling, and, the likelihood the person would refer a non-Christian friend to this pastor for counselling. In total, four of the evaluative questions highlighted the issue of theological integration by examining the respondents' perceptions of the role of religion or faith in counselling, three questions provided a measure of the perceived value of the clinical process and three questions focused on the desirability of the models included in this study.

B. Results

The sample group ($n= 301$) provided over fifty surveys per model, drawn primarily from individuals attending churches in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (pop. 438,515 – *2001 Census of Canada*) in the Province of Ontario, Canada. Individuals not residing within the immediate confines of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo were residents of the Province of Ontario. The present sample represents 44.59% of the 675 surveys that were distributed to those who “self-selected” to participate in this project. While this response rate appears to be high, it is appropriate to note the present sample is drawn from a pool of individuals who indicated an interest in this study. It is further noted that publicly issued invitations issued via either a spoken announcement in a church service or a written invitation to members of a religious community yielded the lowest levels of participation. Indeed, the rate of interest in the largest churches was less than one person in ten when church attendance on the day the invitation was issued was over 700 individuals. Balanced against this, however, is the observation that the distribution of surveys via informal networks of relationships wherein individuals were personally invited to participate by a person other than the researcher generally resulted in virtually all the surveys distributed in this manner being returned completed.

B.1. General Demographics

**Table 5.2 – Distribution of demographic characteristics of participants across models
(Total $n=301$)**

| | Clinebell | Crabb | Wright | Worthington | EFCT |
|---|-----------|-------|--------|-------------|------|
| <u>Gender (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| Female | 31 | 37 | 38 | 33 | 35 |
| Male | 27 | 24 | 23 | 31 | 21 |
| <u>Age (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| Young Adult <30 years | 13 | 13 | 8 | 17 | 10 |
| Adults in Mid-life 30-49 years | 22 | 31 | 29 | 17 | 22 |
| Mature Adults 50+ years | 22 | 17 | 23 | 28 | 21 |
| <u>Education (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| High School | 10 | 6 | 12 | 6 | 9 |
| Some College/University | 18 | 16 | 11 | 16 | 13 |
| Community College | 7 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 6 |
| University Degree | 23 | 29 | 28 | 31 | 28 |
| <u>Marital status (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| Single | 8 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 5 |
| Married or Common-Law | 45 | 45 | 46 | 45 | 48 |
| Widowed | 1 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Separated or Divorced | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| <u>Baptist vs. non-Baptist (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| non-Baptist | 29 | 31 | 31 | 38 | 29 |
| Baptist | 29 | 30 | 30 | 27 | 27 |
| <u>Prior experience of Counselling (n) *</u> | | | | | |
| Individual | 21 | 29 | 27 | 30 | 19 |
| Marital (any) | 24 | 15 | 19 | 24 | 17 |
| Marital (from pastor) | 15 | 11 | 17 | 18 | 13 |
| Family | 18 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 14 |
| Any form of counselling § | 32 | 39 | 33 | 40 | 32 |

* Unequal n between demographic categories are due to missing data.

§ Some respondents indicated receiving more than one type of counselling during their lifetime, as a result the total # of individuals who have received any form of counselling is less than the sum of those receiving the types of counselling reported in this survey.

An analysis of the demographics of the sample group (Table 5.2) indicates a higher response rate for women (57.8%) than men (41.9%) and that the sample group was comprised primarily of married individuals (76.1%) as opposed to singles, i.e. Never married, Separated/Divorced and Widowed. The

average length of marriage for married respondents was 19.67 years, while the average number of years a person had been separated or divorced was 7.83 years. In terms of age, the Mean age within the survey group was 44.26 years. An analysis of the age distribution of participants suggests the number of individuals within the age 25-64 age range is weighted more heavily towards the age 45-54 age group (31%) than the rate found in the general population (19.45%), an observation which is consistent with the length of time the respondents reported they had been either married or divorced. It is further noted the number of individuals aged 75+ participating in this survey is much lower than the rate found in the general population, a fact which may be a result of health and mobility issues. In terms of education, the sample group is, on average, better educated than the general population with 46.2% possessing a minimum of a Bachelor's level education, more than twice the rate found within the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (20.8% - 2001 *Census of Canada*).

B.2. Comparisons between Counsellor Treatment Plans

Comparisons between the participant ratings of the five counselling models were conducted on both the aggregate results (Table 5.3) as well as selected sub-groups based on the information provided in response to questions 1-11. The following discussion highlights the findings from these comparisons.

Observations drawn from the aggregate sample

Participant ratings of the five treatment plans indicate Clinebell's approach was anticipated to be the least effective (Question 14). While Worthington's model received a slightly higher rating than the other models, participant expectations for Crabb, Wright, Worthington, and EFCT do not create a meaningful distinction between models (Table 5.3). Ratings of the five sample dialogues identified Clinebell as being perceived as the least helpful (Question 18), but not significantly lower than the rating given to Crabb. Wright, Worthington and EFCT were perceived as the most helpful with little differentiation being made between models.

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Table 5.3 Mean ratings of five Christian counsellors' treatment plans on eight variables (Total* n=301)

| Survey | | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses | How appealing do you find this counselling approach | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|-------------|-----------|--|---|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Clinebell | Mean | 4.6140 | 3.8070 | 3.5517 | 2.1053 | 4.9914 | 4.7759 | 4.3966 | 4.8103 |
| | n* | 57 | 57 | 58 | 57 | 58 | 58 | 58 | 58 |
| Crabb | Mean | 5.3607 | 6.4746 | 7.1333 | 3.5333 | 5.1833 | 5.3167 | 5.4167 | 4.1525 |
| | n* | 61 | 59 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 59 |
| Wright | Mean | 5.3833 | 6.1695 | 6.3667 | 3.9138 | 6.2034 | 5.9746 | 5.8772 | 5.6491 |
| | n* | 60 | 59 | 60 | 58 | 59 | 59 | 57 | 57 |
| Worthington | Mean | 5.6406 | 6.5079 | 6.6563 | 3.0156 | 6.0156 | 5.8906 | 5.6923 | 5.4385 |
| | n* | 64 | 63 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 65 | 65 |
| | Std. Dev. | 1.51571 | 1.80388 | 1.46080 | 1.83002 | 1.58857 | 1.84406 | 2.18606 | 2.14241 |
| EFCT | Mean | 5.3304 | 5.8000 | 5.5636 | 3.3269 | 6.1250 | 5.8214 | 5.4732 | 5.7054 |
| | n* | 56 | 55 | 55 | 52 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| | Std. Dev. | 1.45314 | 1.81965 | 1.79261 | 2.29852 | 1.56161 | 1.86944 | 2.16043 | 2.01083 |

* Unequal n are due to missing data

Table 5.4 – Results from analyses of variance [ANOVA] comparing preferences for five Christian counsellors' treatment plans (Total n=301)

| | df * | F | Sig. |
|---|--------|--------|------|
| Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | 4, 293 | 3.845 | .005 |
| How close is the counsellor's approach to religion/faith to your own? | 4, 244 | 20.733 | .000 |
| How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | 4, 292 | 42.229 | .000 |
| Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | 4, 286 | 5.994 | .000 |
| How helpful were the pastor's responses? | 4, 292 | 6.577 | .000 |
| How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | 4, 292 | 3.995 | .004 |
| Would you refer a Christian friend? | 4, 291 | 4.126 | .003 |
| Would you refer a non-Christian friend? | 4, 290 | 5.415 | .000 |

* Unequal df are due to missing data

Questions 15-17 measured the participants' perception as to whether the five counselling models 'fit' with their own religious schema. When asked to identify their sense of the degree of similarity between their faith and that of the five counsellors (Question 15), Clinebell's approach was seen to be

least similar while Worthington and Crabb were considered to be most similar. With respect to the rating given to EFCT, participant ratings suggest the approach to faith modeled in the survey was viewed as being significantly closer to that of the respondents than Clinebell but less so than the other three models. In terms of the respondent's perceptions of the five counsellors' use of scripture (Question 16), participants clearly considered that Crabb relied on the Scriptures more than the rest and the lowest rating was given to Clinebell. Worthington and Wright were rated second and third on this scale, but did not differ significantly from each other, while EFCT pastoral counsellor was seen to be more Biblically based than Clinebell but not as much as either Worthington or Wright. When asked to identify whether the five counselling models used scripture to coerce the counsellee (Question 17), none of the respondents considered any of the models to use Scripture in this manner. Wright (Mean= 3.9138) received the highest rating on this index, while the remaining models received lower ratings and Clinebell was identified as the least coercive approach.

Questions 19-21 were included as a means of measuring the degree to which the five models "fit" the participants' expectations of an effective marital counselling model. When participants were asked to rate the model on the basis of its appeal to the reader (Question 19) Clinebell, followed by Crabb, received the lowest rating. The ratings of the other three models did not clearly differentiate between approaches. With respect to the question of referral, the respondents were least likely to refer a Christian to Clinebell (Question 20). Among the remaining models, Wright received a marginally better rating when it came to referring a Christian for counselling but was not seen to be significantly better than either Worthington, Crabb or the EFCT pastoral counsellor. Finally, in terms of the possible referral of a non-Christian couple for marital counselling (Question 21), the respondents rated Crabb the lowest. Although the EFCT counsellor received the highest rating on this scale, Wright and Worthington were not significantly lower than the EFCT pastoral counsellor.

Gender, Age & Education

On the whole, gender does not appear to have a significant impact on the participants' perceptions of, or preferences for, the five counselling theories. Uniformly, men and women indicated Clinebell's was the least attractive and Worthington's model appears to be rated slightly better than either Wright's model or EFCT, both of which enjoy virtually equal levels of support (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Mean ratings of five Christian counsellors' treatment plans on eight variables by gender (Total* n=301)

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Female (n=174) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=31) | 4.7000 | 3.6667 | 3.1935 | 2.0667 | 5.1290 | 5.1613 | 4.6774 | 4.9355 |
| Crabb (n=37) | 5.4595 | 6.5714 | 7.2222 | 3.4444 | 5.2222 | 5.4722 | 5.6667 | 4.1111 |
| Wright (n=38) | 5.5263 | 6.2632 | 6.2895 | 3.5556 | 6.3243 | 6.1622 | 6.1429 | 5.7714 |
| Worthington (n=33) | 5.9375 | 6.9032 | 6.9062 | 2.7188 | 6.3125 | 6.0938 | 5.7879 | 5.5758 |
| EFCT (n=35) | 5.3000 | 6.1765 | 5.7647 | 3.7419 | 6.3429 | 6.0286 | 5.6429 | 5.6714 |
| Male (n=125) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=27) | 4.5185 | 3.9630 | 3.9630 | 2.1481 | 4.8333 | 4.3333 | 4.0741 | 4.6667 |
| Crabb (n=24) | 5.2083 | 6.3333 | 7.0000 | 3.6667 | 5.1250 | 5.0833 | 5.0417 | 4.2174 |
| Wright (n=22) | 5.1364 | 6.0000 | 6.5000 | 4.5000 | 6.0000 | 5.6591 | 5.4545 | 5.4545 |
| Worthington (n=31) | 5.2903 | 6.0645 | 6.3548 | 3.3871 | 5.6774 | 5.6452 | 5.5161 | 5.2258 |
| EFCT (n=21) | 5.3810 | 5.1905 | 5.2381 | 2.7143 | 5.7619 | 5.4762 | 5.1905 | 5.7619 |

When participant responses are sorted according to the participants' stage of life it is observed Clinebell's model is evaluated as least attractive by all age groups (Table 5.6). It is noted that, whereas young adults (age < 30 years) and adults in mid-life (age 30-49 years) seemed to prefer Wright's cognitive behavioural approach to marital therapy, among mature adults (age 50+ years) the EFCT approach was seen to be most attractive on five of eight variables. In general, however, stage of life does not appear to significantly account for participant preferences for the five counselling models.

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Table 5.6 Comparison of five counselling models – mean scores on eight variables, by age grouping
(Total n=301)

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses? | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Young Adults (age < 30 years) (n=61) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=13) | 5.8462 | 5.3846 | 4.6154 | 1.6154 | 5.7692 | 5.6923 | 5.5385 | 5.3846 |
| Crabb (n=13) | 6.1538 | 6.8462 | 7.6923 | 2.9231 | 5.4615 | 5.5385 | 5.3077 | 4.0833 |
| Wright (n=8) | 6.3750 | 7.2500 | 7.2500 | 4.3750 | 6.7500 | 6.5000 | 6.6250 | 6.3750 |
| Worthington (n=17) | 5.9412 | 6.2941 | 6.4706 | 3.6471 | 6.5882 | 6.5882 | 6.6471 | 6.1176 |
| EFCT (n=10) | 5.7500 | 5.7000 | 5.6000 | 3.9000 | 6.1000 | 5.8000 | 5.3500 | 5.8500 |
| Adults in Mid-Life (age = 30-49 years) (n=123) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=22) | 4.2857 | 3.1905 | 2.7727 | 2.1905 | 5.1136 | 4.7273 | 4.0909 | 4.6364 |
| Crabb (n=31) | 5.2581 | 6.4333 | 7.0323 | 3.5806 | 5.0323 | 5.1290 | 5.2258 | 3.8065 |
| Wright (n=29) | 5.2414 | 5.6786 | 6.3448 | 3.9630 | 6.1379 | 5.8103 | 5.5926 | 5.4630 |
| Worthington (n=17) | 5.3529 | 6.1765 | 6.6471 | 2.8824 | 5.4118 | 5.5294 | 4.9412 | 5.1176 |
| EFCT (n=24) | 5.0417 | 5.6667 | 5.3478 | 3.1905 | 5.9167 | 5.3750 | 4.9167 | 5.2083 |
| Mature adults (age > 50 years) (n=112) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=23) | 4.2174 | 3.4783 | 3.6957 | 2.3043 | 4.4348 | 4.3043 | 4.0435 | 4.6522 |
| Crabb (n=17) | 4.9412 | 6.2500 | 6.8750 | 3.9375 | 5.2500 | 5.5000 | 5.8750 | 4.8750 |
| Wright (n=23) | 5.2174 | 6.3913 | 6.0870 | 3.6957 | 6.0909 | 6.0000 | 5.9545 | 5.6136 |
| Worthington (n=28) | 5.5000 | 6.7857 | 6.6786 | 2.8214 | 5.9286 | 5.5714 | 5.5714 | 5.2143 |
| EFCT (n=21) | 5.4286 | 5.9000 | 5.6667 | 3.3000 | 6.3333 | 6.2857 | 6.1429 | 6.1429 |

Finally, when participant responses are sorted by the participants' highest level of formal education the two response categories, "elementary school only" and "doctoral," are excluded from consideration by virtue of there being too few responses (Table 5.7). Interestingly, with the exception of those with a Master's level of education, participants rated Clinebell's model as least appealing and least biblical. Among those with a master's degree, however, Clinebell's model was deemed to be both more effective and more appealing than the other models. Among those with only a high school diploma, Crabb's and Worthington's models tended to be rated the highest with Wright also receiving high ratings. Similarly, Wright's, Worthington's and Crabb's models received high ratings among those with some college or university education and those with a bachelor's degree. However, among those with a Community College certificate or Trade's certificate, it was the EFCT approach followed

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by either Wright or Worthington that tended to receive the highest ratings. In general, however, while there appears to be some variance of opinion depending on the person's level of education, these differences do not indicate there is a significant correlation between the participants' preferences for the five counselling models and their level of educational achievement.

Table 5.7 - Comparison of five counselling models – mean scores on eight variables, by highest level of education

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses? | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Highest Level of Education = Secondary School (n=42) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=10) | 5.3000 | 5.0000 | 3.7000 | 3.3333 | 5.3500 | 5.2000 | 4.6000 | 4.8000 |
| Crabb (n=6) | 6.3333 | 7.8000 | 7.8333 | 3.3333 | 6.6667 | 6.8333 | 7.0000 | 5.8333 |
| Wright (n=11) | 5.6364 | 6.4545 | 6.3636 | 2.9091 | 6.1000 | 6.3000 | 6.5000 | 6.2000 |
| Worthington (n=6) | 6.0000 | 6.1667 | 7.0000 | 2.5000 | 7.1667 | 7.3333 | 6.5000 | 6.5000 |
| EFCT (n=9) | 6.0556 | 7.1111 | 6.5000 | 1.3750 | 6.7778 | 6.3333 | 6.0000 | 6.0000 |
| Highest Level of Education = Some College or University (n=74) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=18) | 4.3889 | 4.1667 | 3.3333 | 1.4444 | 4.8333 | 4.8333 | 4.3333 | 5.0000 |
| Crabb (n=16) | 5.3125 | 6.2000 | 7.2667 | 3.6000 | 5.3333 | 5.5333 | 5.3333 | 3.7333 |
| Wright (n=11) | 6.0000 | 7.1818 | 7.0909 | 2.7273 | 6.6364 | 6.2727 | 6.3636 | 6.6364 |
| Worthington (n=16) | 6.1250 | 6.7333 | 7.0000 | 2.9375 | 6.4375 | 6.2500 | 6.3750 | 5.8750 |
| EFCT (n=13) | 5.4615 | 6.1667 | 5.8462 | 2.8462 | 6.0000 | 5.9231 | 5.6154 | 6.0000 |
| Highest Level of Education = Community College (n=41) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=6) | 3.5000 | 3.1667 | 3.2857 | 2.5714 | 5.5714 | 4.5714 | 4.0000 | 4.5714 |
| Crabb (n=10) | 4.6000 | 6.4000 | 6.9000 | 2.6000 | 4.9000 | 4.8000 | 5.1000 | 4.0000 |
| Wright (n=9) | 4.7778 | 5.8889 | 5.8889 | 4.3750 | 6.6667 | 6.4444 | 6.2500 | 6.0000 |
| Worthington (n=10) | 5.5000 | 6.9000 | 7.1000 | 2.8000 | 6.0000 | 5.7000 | 5.7000 | 5.0000 |
| EFCT (n=6) | 5.5000 | 6.5000 | 6.3333 | 3.1667 | 6.6667 | 6.5000 | 6.8333 | 7.0000 |
| Highest Level of Education = Bachelor's Degree (n=85) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=15) | 4.7333 | 2.8667 | 3.8667 | 2.0000 | 4.3333 | 4.0000 | 4.0667 | 4.4667 |
| Crabb (n=18) | 5.5556 | 6.3889 | 7.0556 | 3.6667 | 4.7778 | 5.0000 | 5.0556 | 3.8824 |
| Wright (n=14) | 5.7143 | 5.7857 | 6.1429 | 4.3077 | 5.9286 | 5.4286 | 5.5385 | 4.6154 |
| Worthington (n=21) | 5.7143 | 6.4286 | 6.3810 | 3.0952 | 6.0476 | 5.9048 | 5.5000 | 5.4091 |
| EFCT (n=17) | 5.2941 | 5.1765 | 5.1176 | 4.5714 | 5.8235 | 5.3529 | 4.6176 | 4.5588 |
| Highest Level of Education = Master's Degree (n=36) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n=6) | 5.5000 | 4.3333 | 4.0000 | 1.6667 | 6.0000 | 6.3333 | 5.8333 | 5.6667 |
| Crabb (n=10) | 5.1000 | 6.3000 | 6.8000 | 4.3000 | 5.0000 | 5.1000 | 5.4000 | 4.4000 |
| Wright (n=7) | 4.5714 | 5.0000 | 7.2857 | 5.5714 | 5.8571 | 5.3571 | 4.7143 | 5.2857 |
| Worthington (n=7) | 4.2857 | 6.1429 | 5.5714 | 3.8571 | 4.8571 | 4.5714 | 4.5714 | 4.8571 |
| EFCT (n=6) | 4.3333 | 5.6667 | 5.6667 | 4.6667 | 6.0000 | 5.5000 | 5.3333 | 5.6667 |

In addition to gender, age and educational achievement, the completed surveys also permit data analysis based on religious beliefs and the participants' previous experiences with marital therapy (below).

Different Types of Christians

This study included two methodologies for categorizing the “faith orientation” of the participants, the participants’ understanding of what being a Christian means and denominational affiliation. The first method of differentiation, speaks to the person’s “held theology.” As with the Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) study, the response “a Christian does what is right and good” ($n=2$) was used too infrequently to provide a means of correlation. Unlike the Worthington and Gascoyne study, however, the response “a Christian shows love to his or her fellow humans” ($n=8$) was also chosen too infrequently to be used in data analysis. The second method of differentiation speaks to a person’s organizational affiliation, key elements of their “held theology” as defined by church polity and their sense of historical connection. The data obtained through this question reveals that an overwhelming number of participants (47.5%) identify themselves with one of the Baptist congregations present within the catchment area. Other denominational groups named with regularity ($n>14$) included the Associated Gospel Churches ($n=14$), Christian Reformed Churches ($n=14$), Mennonites ($n=25$), Non-Denominational Churches ($n=26$), Pentecostals ($n=27$), and the Vineyard Church ($n=19$). None of these groups, however, responded in sufficient numbers to facilitate any comparison other than that of Baptists vs. non-Baptists.

Comparison of Baptist and non-Baptist responses.

Ratings by both Baptists and non-Baptists of the five counsellors discriminated between the models (Table 5.8). Participant ratings of the five treatment plans indicate both Baptists and non-Baptists anticipated Clinebell’s approach to be the least effective (Question 14). While Baptists indicated higher expectations for success with Worthington’s approach, they did not significantly differentiate between the remaining three models. Non-Baptists did not clearly differentiate between the remaining four models in terms which model was expected to be most effective. Baptist and non-Baptist ratings of the five sample dialogues perceived Clinebell as the least helpful (Question 18). For the Baptists,

the model that was considered most helpful was that of the EFCT pastoral counsellor, although this subgroup did not significantly differentiate between EFCT, Worthington or Wright in terms of the perceived helpfulness of the dialogue. Non-Baptists, in contrast, provided a slightly more nuanced differentiation between these three models, rating Wright (Mean= 6.1935) ahead of EFCT (Mean= 5.89666) and Worthington (Mean= 5.7895).

**Table 5.8 Mean Ratings of Five Christian Counsellors' Treatment Plans on Eight Variables
Baptist respondents (n=143) vs. non-Baptist respondents (n=158)**

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses? | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| BAPTIST (n=143) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 29) | 4.6552 | 3.5172 | 3.5517 | 1.8966 | 5.0862 | 4.8966 | 4.4828 | 4.8966 |
| Crabb (n = 30) | 5.2333 | 6.4138 | 7.0000 | 3.6667 | 5.4333 | 5.3667 | 5.5667 | 4.3793 |
| Wright (n = 30) | 5.2069 | 5.8276 | 6.2759 | 4.4483 | 6.2143 | 6.0714 | 5.6786 | 5.4643 |
| Worthington (n = 27) | 5.9231 | 6.5769 | 6.6538 | 3.0000 | 6.3462 | 6.3846 | 5.9259 | 5.6296 |
| EFCT (n = 27) | 5.3148 | 5.8462 | 5.6296 | 3.1200 | 6.3704 | 6.1481 | 5.8889 | 6.1111 |
| NON-BAPTIST (n=158) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 29) | 4.5714 | 4.1071 | 3.5517 | 2.3214 | 4.8966 | 4.6552 | 4.3103 | 4.7241 |
| Crabb (n = 31) | 5.4839 | 6.5333 | 7.2667 | 3.4000 | 4.9333 | 5.2667 | 5.2667 | 3.9333 |
| Wright (n = 31) | 5.5484 | 6.5000 | 6.4516 | 3.3793 | 6.1935 | 5.8871 | 6.0690 | 5.8276 |
| Worthington (n = 38) | 5.4474 | 6.4595 | 6.6579 | 3.0263 | 5.7895 | 5.5526 | 5.5263 | 5.3026 |
| EFCT (n = 29) | 5.3448 | 5.7586 | 5.5000 | 3.5185 | 5.8966 | 5.5172 | 5.0862 | 5.3276 |

* Unequal n are due to missing data

When participants were asked to identify their sense of the degree of similarity between their faith and that of the five counsellors (Question 15), Baptists and non-Baptists perceived Clinebell's approach to be least similar to their own approach to faith. For Baptists the models considered to be closest to the participants' approach to faith were those of Worthington and Crabb while non-Baptists gave top ratings to Crabb, Wright and Worthington. For both Baptists and non-Baptists the margin of difference between the top-rated models was not significant. Baptists and non-Baptists alike perceived Crabb as relying on the Scriptures the most and Clinebell the least (Question 16). The EFCT pastoral counsellor was seen to be significantly more reliant on Scripture than Clinebell. In terms of

their reliance on Biblical principles, both groups ranked Worthington's and Wright's approaches between Crabb and the EFCT counsellor. Consistent with the entire sample, Baptists identified Wright as using the Scriptures to coerce clients (Question 17). Crabb was perceived by Baptists as being somewhat less coercive than Wright, the EFCT counsellor and Worthington were rated slightly less coercive than Crabb. Non-Baptists, however, rated Wright, Crabb and the EFCT counsellor almost identically in terms of being the most coercive. Both Baptists and non-Baptists were agreed that Clinebell appeared least likely to use Scripture to coerce people.

When participants were asked to rate the model on the basis of its appeal to the reader (Question 19) Baptists identified Worthington's model as the most appealing, followed closely by Wright and the EFCT pastoral counsellor. Non-Baptists, however, gave a slight edge to Wright, with Worthington and the EFCT counsellor rated closely behind. For both Baptists and non-Baptists the level of differentiation between Wright, Worthington and EFCT is not significant. Again, all participants were agreed that Clinebell's model was the least appealing. With respect to the question of referral, Baptists and non-Baptists were least likely to refer a Christian to Clinebell (Question 20). While Baptists gave Worthington and the EFCT counsellor a slightly higher rating when referring a Christian friend, non-Baptists indicated they were more likely to refer a Christian friend to a pastor using Wright's model. Finally, in terms of the possible referral of a non-Christian couple for marital counselling, Baptists and non-Baptists agreed they were the least likely to refer a non-Christian to a counsellor using Crabb's approach (Question 21). Whereas Baptists indicated that a counsellor using EFCT might be their first choice when referring a non-Christian friend, non-Baptists gave almost identical ratings to both Wright and the EFCT pastoral counsellor.

Prior experience of marital counselling

Four of the demographic questions on the survey, marital status, prior experience with marital counselling, prior experience with pastoral marital counselling and a rating of the value of any

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pastoral marital counselling received, were included as a means of determining whether the participant's experience of marital distress had an influence on his or her responses. Based on the participant responses the number of individuals who indicated they were either separated or divorced was too small (7.1%) to determine if there may be a correlation between marital status and participant responses. Balanced against this, however, a significant number of respondents indicated prior experiences with marital counselling (33%) and/or pastoral marital counselling (24.8%).

Table 5.9 Mean Ratings of Five Christian Counsellors' Treatment Plans on Eight Variables
Prior Experience of Marital Counselling (n=99) vs. no Prior Experience of Marital Counselling (n=202)

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses? | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Prior Experience of Marital Counselling (n=99) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 24) | 3.8261 | 3.1304 | 2.9583 | 2.5417 | 4.1458 | 3.7500 | 3.3333 | 3.6250 |
| Crabb (n = 15) | 5.0667 | 6.4000 | 6.8000 | 3.8000 | 4.6000 | 4.6000 | 4.5333 | 3.6000 |
| Wright (n = 18) | 5.3889 | 6.5294 | 6.5000 | 3.4444 | 6.1111 | 5.8611 | 5.9444 | 5.9167 |
| Worthington (n = 24) | 5.6957 | 6.6087 | 6.4348 | 2.6957 | 6.0000 | 5.8696 | 5.3333 | 5.0833 |
| EFCT (n = 17) | 4.8824 | 5.4706 | 5.4375 | 3.2308 | 5.9412 | 6.0000 | 5.3529 | 5.5882 |
| No Prior Experience of Marital Counselling (n=202) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 34) | 5.1471 | 4.2647 | 3.9706 | 1.7879 | 5.5882 | 5.5000 | 5.1471 | 5.6471 |
| Crabb (n = 46) | 5.4565 | 6.5000 | 7.2444 | 3.4444 | 5.3778 | 5.5556 | 5.7111 | 4.3409 |
| Wright (n = 42) | 5.3810 | 6.0238 | 6.3095 | 4.1250 | 6.2439 | 6.0244 | 5.8462 | 5.5256 |
| Worthington (n = 41) | 5.6098 | 6.4500 | 6.7805 | 3.1951 | 6.0244 | 5.9024 | 5.9024 | 5.6463 |
| EFCT (n = 39) | 5.5256 | 5.9474 | 5.6154 | 3.3590 | 6.2051 | 5.7436 | 5.5256 | 5.7564 |

* Unequal n are due to missing data

Participant ratings based on whether or not the participant had previously experienced marital counselling (Tables 5.9) discriminated between the models. Indeed, those who reported having previously experienced marital therapy made a clearer differentiation between models than those who did not report having received marital therapy (Table 5.9).

Among those who had previously received marital therapy, the treatment plan based on Clinebell's approach was predicted to be the least effective (Question 14) while Worthington's approach seemed

to generate the greatest expectations for positive change. Ratings for the remaining three models by those who had previously received marital therapy placed these models in the middle and did not create a meaningful distinction in terms of the model's anticipated effectiveness. In contrast, the rating of these models on this variable by those who had never experienced any form of marital therapy were very closely grouped with less than 0.5 separating the mean score for the highest (Worthington) from the lowest (Clinebell). When asked to evaluate the sample dialogue those who had previously received any form of marital counselling, as well as those who did not report receiving marital counselling, gave a very slight edge to the dialogue based on Wright's model, although the degree of differentiation between Wright, Worthington and EFCT was not significant.

Those who reported having received marital counselling rated Clinebell's approach to religion or faith as least like their own (Question 15). This same group rated Worthington's, Wright's and Crabb's approaches to faith as most like their own, the EFCT counsellor's approach was rated better than Clinebell's model in terms of the model's approach to religion and faith. Those who did not report previous marriage counselling rated Clinebell higher than their counterparts, but still viewed his model as being least like their approach to faith. This group also rated Worthington and Crabb (with no meaningful difference between them) as being most like their approach to faith. On this scale, Wright and the EFCT counsellor were rated almost identically and slightly lower than Worthington and Crabb. In terms of the models' reliance on scripture (Question 16), all the respondents perceived Crabb as relying on the Scriptures the most, although the ratings provided by those with no counselling experience were higher than those who reported having previously attended counselling or therapy. Likewise all respondents rated Clinebell as relying on the scriptures the least. Both groups of individuals gave high ratings to Worthington's and Wright's models on this scale. At the same time, the EFCT counsellor was recognized as using biblical principles, but not to the same extent as Crabb, Worthington and Wright. For those with prior experience with marital counselling, Crabb was rated as using the Scriptures to coerce clients (Question 17) whereas those who did not report having

received marital counselling considered Wright's model to use scripture more coercively than the rest. Both groups rated Clinebell as being the least coercive in his use of Scripture.

When participants were asked to rate the model on the basis of its appeal to the reader (Question 19), Clinebell, followed by Crabb, received the lowest rating by both groups. Among those who reported previous experiences with marital therapy, the EFCT pastoral counsellor, followed by Worthington and Wright, was seen to be the most appealing. In contrast, those with no previous marital counselling experience found Wright to be most appealing, followed by Worthington and the EFCT counsellor. With respect to the question of referral, all respondents were least likely to refer a Christian to Clinebell. Wright, on the other hand, was seen by those with previous counselling experience as the best suited for a Christian couple, although the ratings for Worthington and the EFCT pastoral counsellor were only somewhat different than the rating given to Wright. Among those who did not report any previous marital therapy, Worthington's, Wright's and Crabb's models received almost identical ratings. Finally, in terms of the possible referral of a non-Christian couple for marital counselling, those reporting some previous marital therapy rated Wright the highest while those who did not report previous marital therapy rated the EFCT pastoral counsellor, Worthington and Wright the highest, with no significant variation between their scores.

Prior experience of pastoral marital counselling

Participant ratings based on whether or not the participant had previously experienced pastoral marital counselling also discriminated between the models (Tables 5.10). As with the comparison between those who did and did not report any experience with marital counselling, those who have previously experienced pastoral marital counselling were able to more clearly differentiate between models than their counterparts.

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Table 5.10 Mean Ratings of Five Christian Counsellors' Treatment Plans on Eight Variables
Prior Experience of Pastoral Marital Counselling (n=74) vs. no Prior Experience of Pastoral Marital Counselling (n=227)

| Survey | Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple | How close is the counsellor's approach to religion / faith to your own? | How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles? | Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform? | How helpful were the pastor's responses? | How appealing do you find this counselling approach? | Would you refer a Christian friend? | Would you refer a non-Christian friend? |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Prior Experience of Pastoral Marital Counselling (n=74) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 15) | 3.7143 | 3.3571 | 3.8000 | 2.8000 | 4.4000 | 4.0667 | 3.5333 | 4.0667 |
| Crabb (n = 11) | 5.5455 | 6.9091 | 7.3636 | 3.4545 | 4.9091 | 5.0909 | 5.1818 | 3.7273 |
| Wright (n = 16) | 5.6875 | 6.8000 | 6.5625 | 3.5333 | 6.2500 | 5.9063 | 6.0625 | 6.0938 |
| Worthington (n = 18) | 5.4118 | 6.4118 | 6.2353 | 3.2941 | 5.4118 | 5.2941 | 5.1111 | 4.7222 |
| EFCT (n = 13) | 5.1538 | 5.6923 | 5.4167 | 3.2727 | 5.6154 | 5.7692 | 5.1538 | 6.0769 |
| no Prior Experience of Pastoral Marital Counselling (n=227) | | | | | | | | |
| Clinebell (n = 43) | 4.9070 | 3.9535 | 3.4651 | 1.8571 | 5.1977 | 5.0233 | 4.6977 | 5.0698 |
| Crabb (n = 50) | 5.3200 | 6.3750 | 7.0816 | 3.5510 | 5.2449 | 5.3673 | 5.4694 | 4.2500 |
| Wright (n = 44) | 5.2727 | 5.9545 | 6.2955 | 4.0465 | 6.1860 | 6.0000 | 5.8049 | 5.4756 |
| Worthington (n = 47) | 5.7234 | 6.5435 | 6.8085 | 2.9149 | 6.2340 | 6.1064 | 5.9149 | 5.7128 |
| EFCT (n = 43) | 5.3837 | 5.8333 | 5.6047 | 3.3415 | 6.2791 | 5.8372 | 5.5698 | 5.5930 |

Among those who had previously experienced pastoral marital counselling (Table 5.10), the treatment plan based on Clinebell's approach was predicted to be the least effective. By way of comparison the treatment plan based on Wright's approach seemed to generate the greatest expectations for positive change but was not significantly differentiated from Crabb's and Worthington's models, or even the EFCT informed approach. Those who did not report any experience with pastoral marital therapy rated the treatment plan based on Worthington somewhat higher than the rest of the models, there was, however, no meaningful difference in the predicted outcomes for EFCT, Crabb, and Wright. When asked to comment on the counsellors' methodology as illustrated in a sample dialogue Clinebell, followed by Crabb, received the lowest ratings by both groups. For those who reported receiving pastoral marital therapy, Wright received the highest rating, while Worthington and the EFCT pastoral counsellor received virtually identical ratings. Those who did not report any experience with pastoral marital therapy rated the EFCT counsellor higher, although this rating was not statistically different from the ratings given to Worthington's and Wright's models.

Among those who reported receiving pastoral marital counselling in the past, Crabb's and Wright's models were considered to be most like the participants' approach to religion whereas Worthington's and Crabb's models were seen to be closer to the views of those who did not report receiving pastoral marital counselling (Question 15). In terms of the counsellors' reliance on Biblical principles, all respondents perceived Crabb as relying on the Scriptures the most, while Clinebell received the lowest rating (Question 16). Those with a previous experience in pastoral marital counselling rated Crabb and Wright equally with respect to using the Scriptures to coerce clients. Those who did not report previous pastoral marital counselling saw Wright's model as more coercive (Question 17).

When participants were asked to rate the model on the basis of its appeal to the reader (Question 19), the EFCT pastoral counsellor and Wright received virtually identical ratings as the most appealing among those who reported receiving pastoral marital therapy. Among the remaining participants, Worthington's model received the highest rating but was not significantly different from either Wright's model or the EFCT counsellor. With respect to the question of referral, those who had previously experienced pastoral counselling appear to be more likely to refer a Christian to a counsellor using Wright's model whereas those who did not report receiving marital counsel from a pastor were more likely to refer a Christian to someone using Worthington's model (Question 20). Finally, in terms of the possible referral of a non-Christian couple for marital counselling (Question 21), all respondents rated Crabb the lowest. While all respondents gave high ratings to the EFCT counsellor on this scale, the ratings provided by those who had received marital counsel from a pastor were not clearly differentiated from their ratings of Wright. The ratings of EFCT provided by those who did not report any pastoral marital counselling were not significantly differentiated from the ratings given to Worthington and Wright.

B.3. Expectation of positive change

The inclusion of question 12 “Based on what you have read, estimate this couple’s chances of improving their relationship” provided a means of assessing participant perceptions of the case study couple prior to reading one of the five treatment plans. In general, participant responses to this question indicate that the respondents were generally pessimistic about this couple’s chances of improving their relationship ($n=301$, Mean = 3.51). When these responses are compared to the participants’ responses for question 14, it is observed that all the treatment plans, irrespective of model, resulted in the respondents expressing a higher level of optimism with respect to outcome than they expressed prior to reading the treatment plan (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 – Subject Impressions of the Case Study Couple’s Chances for Improvement

| Rating level | Clinebell | | Crabb | | Wright | | Worthington | | EFCT | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|-------|------|--------|------|-------------|------|------|------|
| | Q12: | Q14: | Q12: | Q14: | Q12: | Q14: | Q12: | Q14: | Q12: | Q14: |
| 1.00 = least helpful | 8 | 4 | 6 | | 1 | | 6 | | 4 | |
| 2.00 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 13 | | 13 | 3 |
| 3.00 | 12 | 8 | 23 | 5 | 23 | 7 | 17 | 6 | 20 | 3 |
| 4.00 | 14 | 13 | 9 | 5 | 14 | 2 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 8 |
| 5.00 | 6 | 11 | 5 | 19 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 16 |
| 6.00 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 17 | 5 | 24 | 8 | 19 | 7 | 12 |
| 7.00 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 11 | | 13 |
| 8.00 = most helpful | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| Total # Responses | 57 | 57 | 61 | 61 | 60 | 60 | 65 | 64 | 54 | 56 |

Q12 = Estimate the couple's chances of improving their relationship
 Q14 = Predict the counsellor's ability to help this couple

B.4. Measuring the “fit” between faith and practice.

Virtually all the respondents self-identified as “relationship Christians” ($n=291$), a definition that is consistent with Evangelicalism’s emphasis on conversion (Bebbington, 1989). When asked, “How important do you believe religion/faith should be in counselling this couple?” 55.81% ($n=168$) selected one of the two highest response categories, which is a response level that is consistent with Evangelicalism’s commitment to Biblical authority and the transformation of a person’s lifestyle as a result of conversion. In addition, the vast majority of participants ($n=286$) report they attend church at least once per week. Taken together, these observations suggest the present sample is representative

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of a group of highly committed evangelical Christians. It is therefore significant that only 48.2% ($n=145$) of these participants rated the counsellor’s approach to faith as being very close to their own. Similarly, only 47.8% ($n=144$) selected one of the top two categories to rate the counsellor’s approach highly in terms of “relying on Biblical principles.”

Participant responses to the question “How important do you believe religion/faith should be in counselling this couple?” were compared with their responses to questions 15 through 17. Table 5.12 reveals the respondents viewed Crabb’s, Wright’s and Worthington’s models as being very similar to their own approach to the Christian faith. The data also suggests a negative correlation between the respondents’ evaluation of the importance of religion in counselling and their perception as to whether any of the counselling models used scripture coercively. These findings remained when the data was sorted to take into account the participants’ age, gender, religious affiliation, and/or prior experience with pastoral marital counselling.

Table 5.12 – Perceptions of the role of religion and use of scripture in counselling

| Rating level | Clinebell | | | | Crabb | | | | Wright | | | | Worthington | | | | EFCT | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|-------------|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|
| | Question | | | | Question | | | | Question | | | | Question | | | | Question | | | |
| | 13 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 1.00 | | 10 | 13 | 32 | | | | 13 | 1 | | | 11 | 3 | 1 | | 17 | | | 1 | 16 |
| 2.00 | | 13 | 9 | 10 | | | | 11 | | 5 | 1 | 12 | | 3 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| 3.00 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 7 | | 5 | 1 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.00 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| 5.00 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| 6.00 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 14 | 9 |
| 7.00 | 17 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 15 | 20 | 11 | 7 | 16 | 14 | 19 | 3 | 11 | 15 | 16 | 2 | 8 | 13 | 10 | 2 |
| 8.00 | 19 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 21 | 16 | 34 | 3 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 7 | 20 | 25 | 24 | | 23 | 12 | 8 | 3 |
| Total # Responses * | 57 | 57 | 58 | 57 | 61 | 59 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 59 | 60 | 58 | 64 | 63 | 64 | 64 | 56 | 55 | 55 | 52 |

* Variance of totals within counselling model groupings is due to missing data.

Q13 = How important do you believe the role of religion should be in counselling?

Q15 = How close is the counsellor’s approach to religion/faith to your own?

Q16 = How much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles?

Q17 = Does the counsellor use the bible to coerce the person to conform?

C. Discussion

Three major findings arise from the present study. Namely, Christians drawn from a variety of denominations in a predominantly urban area differed in terms of the degree to which they preferred

one model of pastoral marital counselling to other models. Baptists and non-Baptists differentiated between five models of pastoral marital counselling. Irrespective of religious affiliation persons with no previous experience with marital counselling, pastoral or otherwise, differed from those who had previously experienced marital counselling in terms of their perceptions of five counselling models.

C.1. Participants

Participants in this study tended to be middle-aged, educated, married individuals with some counselling experience. The level at which two of these factors were reported, level of education and previous counselling experience, mirrors Dougherty and Worthington's (1982) observation that their sample group included a large proportion of both university educated individuals and persons who had previously attended therapy or counselling. The presence of a sizeable number of persons who had experienced therapy suggests a possible pre-existing interest in the practice of pastoral counselling. Similarly, the presence of a sizeable number of university-educated participants may be a reflection of the value this group of individuals would place on the work of research. In addition to this, the churches from which the sample population was drawn are made up predominantly of Caucasians and individuals for whom English is their mother tongue. This is particularly significant as the Regional Municipality of Waterloo is a multi-racial and multi-ethnic community (*2001 Census of Canada*) in which are located several churches that minister in the mother tongue of these new Canadians, i.e. churches that minister in Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. What is clear from the data is that age, gender and education appear to account for only minor variations in the participants' perceptions of the five counselling models.

C.2. Baptist vs. non-Baptist

Participants who identified themselves as Baptists did not differ in terms of either their frequency of church attendance or in their understanding as to what it means to be a Christian from those who identified they were affiliated with another religious body. Despite this seeming homogeneity,

Baptists and non-Baptists did reveal minor differences in their perceptions of, and preferences for, the five counselling models. Further study is necessary, however, to determine whether or not any specific factor(s) can be said to contribute to this difference. For example, can this difference be accounted for in terms of: theological orientation, i.e. Reformed, Anabaptist, Pentecostal-Charismatic, etc., style of pastoral ministry, or some other factor?

C.3. **Previous counselling experience**

The data suggests that previous counselling experience may have an impact on the way in which particular models were perceived. This finding mirrors that of Dougherty and Worthington (1982) who noted that 60% of their sample group had previous counselling experience. In the present study, it was identified that 176 persons (58.47%) had previous counselling experience and 74 (24.58%) had consulted with a pastor for marital counselling. As noted elsewhere, those who reported receiving some form of marital counselling more clearly differentiated between the five models than those who did not report having received marital counselling in the past. This finding raises the question posed by Dougherty and Worthington (1982) who wondered if perhaps people are more responsive to those therapies that appear to be similar to the methods used by those from whom they have previously received counsel? This is a question the present data cannot address, nor is it likely a research methodology could be designed that would adequately explore this question given that most people probably do not know which counselling model was employed at the time they received marital counselling from their pastor.

C.4. **“Fit” Between Faith and Practice**

Given the sampling methodology used in this study, it is not surprising that the present sample consists of highly committed evangelical Christians. The data derived from this sample group suggests that the approach to faith revealed in Crabb’s and Worthington’s models is seen to be most similar to the participants. In addition to this, most of the participants used the lower half of the range

to rate the extent to which any of the models used scripture coercively. This suggests a possible concurrence between the core values of evangelicalism, i.e. conversionism, biblicism, activism, and crucicentrism, and Wright's and Crabb's models that was not observed to the same extent in the other three models. Another possible explanation, however, may be that the material associated with these approaches was perceived to be more effective than the other models in facilitating the work of forgiving each other, forgiving God, and engaging the couple in religiously oriented homework (Worthington, Dupont, Berry & Duncan, 1988). An initial analysis of the treatment plans and dialogues associated with each of the models suggests that both factors, perception of explicitly evangelical themes and the incorporation of distinctly Christian elements may indeed have been a contributing factor for the ratings received.

Based on the findings of this study, Clinebell's model fits least well with those who would be considered evangelicals. The findings also suggest that Crabb's model was seen as reflecting values that were most alike those of the participants, and thus, in terms of worldview, potentially a good fit. What is particularly significant, however, is the fact EFCT was consistently rated alongside Wright and Worthington, suggesting that the participants considered this adaptation of EFCT "fit" their worldview and expectations for counselling as readily as counselling models that have been created specifically for use by pastors. Given that EFCT is not generally known or practiced by evangelical pastors, and as a result there is likely very little history with this model, the fact participants rated EFCT as favorably as other models is notable. This positive rating not only serves to confirm Hypothesis 4, it suggests that, with the exception of the ratings given for Clinebell's model, they perceived Crabb, Wright, Worthington, and EFCT as being more alike than different.

Chapter 6: Summation

The purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate the degree of “fit” in employing Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy [EFCT] within the context of congregational ministry and/or a Christian counselling center when counselling couples who have experienced an “attachment injury.”

Specifically, this study has been concerned with determining the feasibility of using EFCT with evangelical couples who, by virtue of their religious context, may be accustomed to approaches to marriage counselling that emphasize the role of rational cognition to govern behaviour and change relationships. Of particular concern to this researcher was an impression drawn from his pastoral and clinical experience that the use of rationally based counselling techniques by evangelical clergy and counsellors is not particularly effective in addressing deeply felt affect, particularly in situations of betrayal. Some of this ineffectiveness may be a function of the fact evangelical clergy receive minimal training and/or supervision for the counselling work they do. There is also, however, the question as to whether or not the models employed by evangelical clergy are adequate for the more serious challenges they may face. Thus, the present study introduces and examines the possibility that, given an appropriate level of theological reflection, EFCT may be an appropriate counselling methodology for use by evangelical clergy and counsellors.

Chapter two demonstrated that EFCT provides a perspective on relational problems that is rooted in Attachment Theory and views the relational stresses of marriage as well as the experience of strong emotions within marriage as a function of the attachment bond and attachment behaviours. In this way the problems and challenges of marriage are understood in terms of the couple’s relational process, particularly each partner’s attachment needs and behaviours. Within this context, emotions are understood to be both an experiential as well as an epistemological reality that serves to inform the individual and the couple concerning each person’s experience of, and sense of security within,

the relationship. Thus, emotionally focused therapists seek to interrupt the negative cycles of behaviour that lead to an appraisal that the relationship is not considered “safe.” While EFCT is well established, both in research and clinical practice, as an effective therapeutic modality and several pastoral and Christian therapists have written about the use of EFCT in clinical practice, very little work has been done on the interface between EFCT and ecclesiastical practice (c.f. Craig, 2000).

The theological reflection and analysis contained in chapter three addresses the first of three critical dimensions of the interface between EFCT and ecclesiastical practice. This discussion examined EFCT’s theoretical paradigms and assumptions in light of an evangelical worldview that is committed to the role of scripture to inform both faith and practice (Subproblem 1). In particular it was noted that the philosophical values claimed as foundational to Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy challenge evangelical assumptions about the human condition, the value of the “person,” the experience of the person-in-relationship, the nature of the marital relationship and the nature of emotion. Nevertheless chapter three demonstrates a process of theological reflection that suggests an evangelical theological perspective on the human condition provides a suitable alternative grounding for the observed phenomena of attachment and emotions that opens the door to incorporate EFCT into the work of pastoral marital counselling. Thus, confirming that “Emotionally-Focused Couple’s Therapy is not necessarily dependent upon the philosophical assumptions of its founding writers” (Hypothesis 1). Indeed, this chapter concludes by affirming that the practices of EFCT may be utilized by Christian counsellors without compromising the core values of the Christian faith or the functional integrity of EFCT (Hypothesis 1).

Chapter four compared EFCT with four pastoral/Christian marriage counselling models chosen on the basis of “*Criteria Set 2*,” Howard J. Clinebell, Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., H. Norman Wright, and Everett L. Worthington, Jr.. The particular focus of this comparison consisted in an examination of how these five approaches to marital counselling conceptualize and treat both marriage (Subproblem 2) and emotions (Subproblem 3). This analysis focused specifically on these two dimensions of

Focusing on Emotions in Pastoral Marital Counselling: An Evangelical Assessment.

marital counselling, differentiating between each of the five models. This discussion confirmed that EFCT views marriage differently than the pastoral models under discussion (Hypothesis 2) and that it demonstrates marked coherence between its theoretical constructs and its prescribed modes of intervention. Compared to Crabb and Wright, it was argued that the EFCT model highlights the fact these models do not have a clearly defined understanding of the marital bond. As a result the mode of treatment employed by these models focuses more on behaviours (Wright) and meaning constructs (Wright and Crabb) rather than the relational bond. Compared to EFCT Worthington and Clinebell, both of which present a view of the couple that recognizes the importance of the relational bond, EFCT offers a different perspective in that it builds its view of the couple system on the foundation of Attachment Theory rather than a cognitive-systemic base (Worthington) or an existential-systemic base (Clinebell). One further point of contrast between EFCT and the pastoral approaches to marital counselling is the fact that, within the EFCT literature, there is an absence of any clear reference to Christian spirituality.

In terms of EFCT's treatment of emotions, it was identified that the perspective offered by EFCT is significantly different from the rational and cognitive-behavioural orientation that informs the evangelical models of marital counselling of Crabb, Worthington, and Wright. In this discussion it was noted EFCT honors the physiological basis of the primary emotions in ways that have only recently begun to be addressed in the Christian counselling literature (c.f. Worthington, 2003c). Similarly, it was highlighted that EFCT is concerned with the motivational quality of emotions rather than their representational significance, thus emotions are reflected on as they occur in the present, rather than as historical events or distant objects. Thus, it was noted that EFCT does indeed reveal a potential weakness in the perspective on emotions presented by representative writers in the field of pastoral and Christian marital therapy (Hypothesis 3).

If the first two dimensions of the interface between EFCT and ecclesiastical practice are defined in terms of the interface between evangelical theology and counselling theory, and, the manner in which

EFCT conceptualizes marriage and emotions, the third dimension of this interface lies in the receptivity of couples to be counseled according to this model (Subproblem 4). This question is explored in the research project that informs the discussion contained in chapter five. A review of the findings reveals that, with the exception of the ratings given for Clinebell's model, participant responses suggest they perceived the four remaining models as being more alike than different. Thus, while there may be some indication on certain scales of a preference for one model or another, overall, the participants in this study did not prefer Emotionally-Focused Couple's Therapy to any of the other approaches included within this study (Hypothesis 4). Nor, for that matter, did the participants rate EFCT significantly less favorably than the other models. While Hypothesis 4 appears to be confirmed by the data, the findings also suggest a number of directions for future study and model refinement.

The case study on which the research survey was based presented a couple experiencing marital problems resulting from attachment behaviours activated by a recent change in their life circumstances. The findings from this research project demonstrate that committed evangelical Christians clearly differentiated between five models of pastoral marital counselling. Given that Worthington and Gascoyne (1985) observed that Christians and non-Christians differed significantly in their evaluation of the five counselling theories in their study, the question arises as to how non-evangelicals, non-Christians, or even self-identified Christians from non-evangelical denominations might rate these five marital counselling theories? It has already been noted that attempts were made to involve participation from church communities not normally associated with Canadian evangelicalism but that the leadership of these communities did not respond to the invitation to involve their faith communities in this study. As a result the current data set does not permit a comparison between Christians and non-Christians of types of Christians in the same way that Worthington and Gascoyne were able to compare these groups. Further research could, however, seek

to address this imbalance by involving participants from mainstream denominations that are not identified as being evangelical, i.e. Roman Catholic, United Church of Canada.

It has also been observed that the findings from this research project reflect the perspective of white, English speaking evangelical Christians. Given the fact that the region in which the survey was taken is very multicultural and that there are a variety of churches seeking to minister within these communities, not to mention the fact that the published works of at least three of the authors presented in this study have been translated into at least one of the other languages spoken within this community and are therefore available for use by pastors,¹⁰ the absence of participants representing other cultures poses a significant limitation to the generalizability of these findings. Further research is therefore needed to determine the extent to which ethnicity factors such as ethnic identity, nation of birth, or language spoken at home may factor into client preferences for marital counselling.

Another possible limitation of this study is the fact that all the treatment plans were written by the researcher, thus raising the question as to whether or not the treatment plans and dialogues may have skewed participant responses. To this end, this researcher acknowledges a pre-existing bias in favor of EFCT. It was for very this reason that a concerted effort was made to ensure that the treatment plans and dialogues fairly represented the models included in this study. These efforts included making a detailed summary of the theory and methods of each model as well as the involvement of external assessors who were asked to assess whether the treatment plans and dialogues. It is, however, entirely possible that researcher bias remained present in the materials and that the survey materials may have influenced the results. At this point it is impossible to determine if the presence of any latent bias in these materials would have a statistically significant effect, nor is it possible to

¹⁰ A brief internet search combining the names of the authors included in this study with the French, Portuguese and Spanish equivalents for “marriage” identified the following books in translation: Larry Crabb: *Marriage builder* (French, Portuguese, Spanish); H. Norman Wright: *Communication: Key to your marriage* (French, Portuguese, Spanish), *Before you say “I Do”* (French); Everett Worthington: *Hope focused marriage counseling* (Portuguese).

determine the direction in which the results may be skewed as a result of researcher bias in creating both the treatment plan and the dialogue.

In terms of the methodology used in this study, an initial analysis of the treatment plans and dialogues associated with each of the models suggests that the perception, or lack thereof, of explicitly evangelical themes and the incorporation, or nonincorporation, of distinctly Christian elements may be a contributing factor for the ratings received. Further study might include obtaining feedback as to which Christian themes and elements are perceived to be present in these materials. Specifically, such an analysis of the EFCT dialogue and treatment plan might clarify some ways in which Christian themes can be explicitly incorporated in the use of this model in Christian settings.

It is noted, also, that this study only considered the participants' preferences for descriptions of counselling situations. As a result, the data needs to be interpreted somewhat cautiously and merits at least two caveats. First of all, it is entirely possible that people would respond differently to a particular model of therapy if they were to experience the model first-hand rather than simply read about it. In this respect, it might be profitable to construct a study that tracks the responses of self-identified Christian couples to their experience in marital therapy. Secondly, the data suggests that prior counselling experience seems to have an impact on perceptions of different counselling models.

The findings suggest a potentially higher level of receptivity towards EFCT by those who have previously experienced marital therapy or pastoral marital counselling. Curiously, even though those who had previously experienced marital counselling found the EFCT model appealing, their responses suggest they preferred to refer a Christian to a counsellor using Wright's model. The data gathered from this study does not permit an identification as to the possible reasons for this contrast. Further study might, therefore, seek to explore this by controlling for the type of previous counselling experience, books on marriage the participant may have read in the previous year and/or their previous involvement in a marriage enrichment group or program. Exploring these possibilities could

serve to identify the extent to which familiar perspectives shaped and influence participant perspectives of the case study scenario.

The data suggests there *may* be a connection between a person's assessment of the *quality* of their previous counselling experience and their perceptions of the models featured in the surveys. At this point the data set cannot determine whether or not a previously positive experience in pastoral counselling predisposes an individual in favor of, or against, a particular model. It is entirely possible that a study that combined both a larger sample of persons who had previously experienced pastoral marital therapy and the use of a focus group format might serve to unpack this possible connection. Further to the questions that have been raised concerning the relationship between past counselling and participant responses, the question arises "If it is possible that those who have previously sought marital therapy were, on the one hand, responsive to the methodology because it spoke to their experience and needs, or, on the other hand, found themselves desiring a model that more fully, or explicitly, reflected their core spiritual belief system?"

With respect to the use of EFCT within an evangelical Christian context, this present study suggests that while EFCT may not be well known within the evangelical community the perspective it offers on marriage and its methodology "fit" with the values of this segment of the Christian community. In particular, EFCT appears to appeal to those who are in later life and those who have previously experienced marital difficulties. As a result, it may be stated that EFCT offers a mode of intervention that is suitable for use with evangelical Christians, particularly when the pastor or pastoral counsellor is working with a couple who have experienced an attachment injury.

To this end, it is significant that, in an effort to remain faithful to the language and methodology of EFCT, the adaptation of this model featured in the present study, like the model proposed by Hart & Hart-Morris (2003), made only minimal reference to explicitly Christian concepts. Yet, despite this limitation, the model was rated on a par with models that are more explicitly Christian in orientation.

This suggests there may be something within the EFCT model that speaks to the committed evangelical believer, even in the absence of spiritual components such as the use of scripture, prayer, religious homework, or an explicit focus on spiritual themes such as forgiveness and mutuality in marriage. One wonders, therefore, how evangelical believers would respond to an adaptation of EFCT that more fully incorporated explicitly Christian elements? The use of Ingram's model of theological integration outlined in chapter 3 provides a means for introducing an explicitly Christian perspective that grounds the underlying theory informing EFCT in the Christian scriptures as well as in the life experience of the Christian couple. Such an adaptation would not only build on Worthington's (1989a) guidelines for a Christian theory of marriage counselling, it would create a distinctly Christian variation of the EFCT model that addresses the observed short-comings of Hart-Morris' (2000, 2002a, 2002b), Bradley's (2001) and even Craig's (2000) work.

In addition to the material discussed in Chapter 3, other Christian themes that could be included in a refinement of an evangelical Christian adaptation of EFCT include: (i) an exploration of marriage as covenant and its relationship to attachment, (ii) an exploration of sin and forgiveness and their relationship to attachment injuries, (iii) promoting forgiveness and the relationship of this practice to healing attachment injuries, (iv) the connection between marital and spiritual growth, and, (iv) networking within the Body of Christ with a view to grounding the marriage within a caring community (Ripley & Worthington, 1998). It is noted, for example, that none of these themes were explicitly mentioned in either the EFCT sample treatment plan or the EFCT sample dialogue – although it may be argued that the work of forgiveness was implied in the treatment plan. It seems to this writer that EFCT's emphasis on facilitating healing where there has been an attachment injury makes it a natural host theory for exploring the Christian themes of forgiveness and reconciliation. Finally, while the EFCT treatment plan alluded to the use of prayer, meditation and Bible study as suitable interventions in the course of treatment, the dialogue made no mention of these practices. Yet, even with this oversight, the EFCT model was rated favorably when compared to the other

models. This raises several critical questions. For example, would the EFCT model be perceived as “fitting better” with an evangelical worldview if the work of “withdrawer engagement” were explicitly tied to the Christian disciplines of prayer for the one who has caused the attachment injury, forgiveness, repentance, and/or acts of service towards the one who has caused the attachment injury. Similarly, would the EFCT model be perceived as “fitting better” with an evangelical worldview if the “blamer softening” event were explicitly tied to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, repentance, or, forgiveness, all of which require a person to practice empathy or compassion towards another? Finally, would the EFCT model be perceived as “fitting better” with an evangelical worldview if the tasks of “cycle de-escalation” and “changing interactional patterns” were explicitly tied to the Christian couple’s understanding of biblical values such as mutuality (Philippians 2) or “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15)?

While the possibilities for further research in the use of EFCT by pastoral counsellors seem endless, one thing is clear, EFCT was rated favorably when compared to what are understood to be the best models of pastoral marital counselling available today. Indeed, it seems evident that, even in an undeveloped state, a Christian adaptation of EFCT is perceived as suitable and fitting by evangelical believers, at least in situations where the marital bond has been stressed as a result of an attachment injury such as an affair. For this reason it would be prudent for future studies and research on the use of EFCT in pastoral and Christian counselling to focus on the practical integration, as opposed to theological or theoretical integration, of explicitly Christian themes in the practice of EFCT to determine whether the inclusion of these themes has an impact on the overall efficacy of the model.

Appendices

Informed Consent Statement

Study Title: Focusing on Emotions in Pastoral Marital Therapy

Researcher: Kelvin F. Mutter, M. Th.

Advisor: Dr. Callie J. Hugo, Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa

You are invited to participate in the attached research study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate five selected approaches to pastoral marital counselling both in terms of how well they “fit” the needs of people as well as in terms of the way each counselling approach handles emotions. The researcher is a candidate for the Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Therapy offered by the Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa.

Information:

Individuals are invited to read one of five treatment plans and complete the survey that is included with the treatment plan.

This study will run for the months of September to October 2005.

Benefits:

Participation in this study will provide pastors/Christian counsellors with a better idea of which approach to pastoral marital counselling best “fits” the needs of couples seeking counselling.

Risks:

*Participants **may** experience an emotional response to the situation presented in the case study and treatment plan. Aside from this, there do not appear to be any risks involved in completing the survey.*

Confidentiality

Individuals are invited to participate and no identifying information will be released in the publication of this research. Participation in the survey is anonymous. The demographic information requested on the survey is limited to information that is important for the purposes of data analysis.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You have the right to omit any questions you choose not to answer.

Contact:

If you have questions about this study, or if you experience any adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher, Kelvin F. Mutter, through Heritage Seminary, (519) 651-2869 ext. 238.

Feedback and Publication:

Results of the research will be included in a doctoral thesis written by the researcher and will be available in the Spring of 2006.

Participant’s Initials: _____

(detach and keep this form if you are agreeing to participate)

Informed Consent Statement

Study Title: Focusing on Emotions in Pastoral Marital Therapy

Researcher: Kelvin F. Mutter, M. Th.

Advisor: Dr. Callie J. Hugo, Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa

Consent:

I have read and understand the attached information sheet. I agree to participate in this study. It is understood that the act of returning this form and the survey instrument will be taken as permission to include in this study any non-identifying information I will provide.

Participant's Signature _____ *Date* _____

Researcher's Signature _____ *Date* _____

Survey Materials – Survey Questions, Case Study, Treatment Plans and Dialogues

Survey Questions

Question 1: Sex: Male, Female

Question 2: Age

Question 3: Highest level of education: Secondary School, Some College or University, Community College, University - Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate.

Question 4: Marital Status: Single (never married), Married/Common-Law (# of years), Widowed, Separated/ Divorced (# of years).

Question 5: Have you ever sought counselling for: Personal difficulties? Marriage / couple difficulties? Family difficulties?

Question 6: Have you ever received counselling from a pastor or member of the clergy for marital or couple difficulties?

Question 7: How helpful did you find the counselling provided by a member of the clergy?

Question 8: Religious Affiliation: Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Mennonite, non-Denominational, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, United Church, Other (please specify)

Question 9: On average, how often would you say you attend church? less than once per month, once per month, twice per month, weekly, more than once per week.

Question 10: Do you consider yourself a Christian?

Question 11: Please consider these three statements. Which do you consider the most important in determining what a Christian is? (It might be a difficult choice, but please select only one of the three.) a) A Christian does what is right and good. b) A Christian has a personal relationship with Jesus. c) A Christian shows love to his or her fellow humans.

Question 12: Based on what you have read, estimate this couple's chances of improving their relationship.

Question 13: How important do you believe religion/faith should be in counselling this couple?

Question 14: Circle the number that reflects your prediction of how well this counsellor will be able to help this couple.

Question 15: How close is the counsellor's approach to religion to your own?

Question 16: In your opinion, how much does the counsellor rely on biblical principles?

Question 17: Do you think the counsellor uses scripture to coerce the person to conform?

Question 18: How helpful did you think the pastor's responses in this dialogue were for the couple?

Question 19: How appealing do you find this counselling approach?

Question 20: How likely is it that you would refer a Christian friend to this pastor for marital counsel?

Question 21: How likely is it that you would refer a non-Christian friend to this pastor for marital counsel?

Case Study¹¹

Presenting Problem

Alice approached her pastor for counselling because she is feeling lonely and unappreciated in her marriage. She reports she and her husband (Tom) have been arguing a lot and says, “Tom thinks I am a nag.”

Brief History

Tom and Alice began dating twelve years ago and dated throughout their last year of university. Following university Tom found a position in an engineering firm about an hour away from the Teacher’s College Alice was attending. During that year they saw each other on weekends and communicated several times a day, either by phone or email. Alice remembers this period as the time when she felt closest to Tom. Following Teacher’s College, Alice secured employment as a High School teacher. A few months later Tom obtained a job in the community where Alice was working. A year later they were married.

During the early years of their marriage both Tom and Alice worked hard to become established in their careers. Alice says she did not mind the long hours Tom worked because it gave her an opportunity to prepare class materials and grade student assignments. Things changed when, midway through her first pregnancy, Tom confessed he had had an affair with a woman he met at the fitness club. As a result of this confession they sought marriage counselling at a local agency and attended five sessions, making some positive changes in their relationship.

Tom and Alice now have two children, a daughter three years old and a son six months of age. During her second pregnancy Tom and Alice began to consider the possibility that Alice might stay home with the children when her parental leave ends. Then, at the very beginning of her parental leave, Tom surprised Alice with the news he had taken a new job that would make it financially possible for Alice to stay home with the children if she desired. Now, instead of working in town, Tom commutes into the city and is away from the house for eleven to twelve hours each working day.

Treatment Plans

Survey A – Howard Clinebell

Primary area(s) of concern:

Tom and Alice’s pastor observes that the story of their marriage suggests they are not currently enjoying much intimacy and that their relationship has become devitalized. The concern here is that Tom and Alice are experiencing a prolonged period of distance in their relationship and that neither appears to feel like their needs are being met by the other. As a result, their pastor will be looking to invite each of them to invest in their relationship. Given that the present situation appears to be the result of Tom taking a new job in another city, the pastor wonders if perhaps the traditional roles of the husband-breadwinner and wife-homemaker may be placing additional stresses on both of them.

¹¹ The situation described in this case study is based on the researcher’s experience in working with couples and does not reflect the story of any specific couple.

Finally, the pastor wonders whether the fact Tom had an affair earlier in their marriage is a factor in the present situation.

Goal(s) for counselling Tom and Alice:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes that the purpose of all pastoral counselling is to help people develop behaviours and beliefs so that they will feel fulfilled, both individually and as a couple. Thus, the goals for counselling are to help Tom and Alice:

- Learn effective communication skills.
- Interrupt the cycle of mutual attack and retaliation.
- Become aware of their strengths, personally and as a couple, and use these strengths to make positive changes in their marriage.
- Identify specific areas where each needs to change so that each person's needs are fulfilled within their marriage.
- Agree on, and put into action, ways in which each person takes responsibility for changing her/his side of the interaction.
- Develop a sense of hope for the marriage.
- Discover, explore, and address any subconscious or unconscious roots of the present conflict.
- Rework those aspects of their relationship that are unworkable or feel unjust.

Treatment Plan:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes the two key conditions for creating change in a relationship are affirming love and honest openness. For this to happen the pastor will work with them as a couple, helping them to identify and draw on their strengths.

Given that the primary concern in this marriage is a loss of intimacy, Tom and Alice's pastor will encourage them to: risk openness/honesty with themselves and each other, learn to be emotionally connected to each other, develop a high degree of caring for each other, and, act in ways that are trustworthy. As part of learning to be open with, and to care for each other, the pastor will encourage Tom and Alice to identify any unmet wants or needs. Similarly, the pastor plans to encourage them to become emotionally connected by inviting them to deal with any resolved issues and the emotions associated with those issues.

Number of Sessions:

Tom and Alice's pastor anticipates they will need between four and six counselling sessions to accomplish the goal of revitalizing this marriage.

Use of Spiritual Resources:

While Tom and Alice's pastor believes that counselling helps people to become the people God intended them to be, he does not believe it is necessary to use the scriptures in his counselling. In terms of the practices of confession and forgiveness, the pastor believes a person needs to confess, change and improve what they can. If the person has done what they can, they need to accept this and then accept God's forgiveness.

Survey B – Lawrence J. Crabb Jr.

Primary area(s) of concern:

Tom and Alice's pastor observes that the story of their marriage suggests they are not currently enjoying much intimacy. While the present situation appears to be the result of Tom taking a new job, the pastor wonders what Tom and Alice do to meet each other's needs for significance and security. In other words, are their needs to feel connected in a relationship and/or their desire to make a difference being met? If so, how? The pastor believes Christ is the only one who can truly satisfy the longings of the heart and is therefore curious to discover whether Tom and Alice's relationship with God plays a role in their sense of feeling connected and important. Related to this, the pastor wonders if Tom and Alice are concerned about each other's needs or whether they are mainly concerned with having their own needs met?

Goal(s) for counselling Tom and Alice:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes that the primary goal of all pastoral counselling is to promote Christian maturity as people are submitted to the lordship of Christ. The pastor's second goal is that of promoting oneness or intimacy in the couple relationship on three levels – physical closeness, the mind and the emotions, and spiritual intimacy.

Treatment Plan:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes it is important to meet with them as a couple.

In terms of promoting Christian maturity, the pastor will encourage Tom and Alice to: reflect on whether or not they have sinned against each other (or God), repent of any identified sins, and, resist temptation. In this regard, their pastor hopes to discover whether there are any unresolved hurts stemming from Tom's affair. In terms of promoting a sense of oneness or intimacy, the pastor recognizes a major challenge in working with couples is that one or both marital partners may be wrestling with deep feelings such as hurt, disappointment, or hopelessness. As a result, the pastor will seek to promote a sense of oneness by encouraging the couple to exercise *grace*, *commitment* and *acceptance* towards each other. Two ways the pastor may try to encourage these qualities will be by inviting Tom and Alice to (a) forgive each other, and, (b) demonstrate compassion and caring for each other. Throughout his work with them, the pastor will invite them to read the scriptures and learn to recognize the witness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Finally, the pastor will encourage Tom and Alice to fully acknowledge their feelings to God (as well as each other) and to look to God to satisfy any needs or longings the other is unable to satisfy or fulfill.

Number of Sessions:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes between six and eight one-hour sessions are required to help this couple improve their marriage.

Use of Spiritual Resources:

The Bible is a very important tool in this pastor's counselling ministry. As a result the pastor will use the Bible both to challenge wrong thinking as well as for teaching new behaviours. The pastor will also encourage this couple to forgive each other and pray together.

Survey C – H. Norman Wright

Primary area(s) of concern:

Tom and Alice's pastor observes that the story of their marriage suggests they are not currently enjoying much intimacy. He also notes neither spouse appears to feel fulfilled or happy within this marriage. Based on what they have told him, the pastor identifies two events – the birth of their son and Tom's decision to take another job – both of which have brought about the changes that have left Tom and Alice feeling less connected to each other. As a result this couple, and especially Alice, no longer feels like they are working together as a team. As the pastor listens to Tom and Alice tell their story he wonders about the possible role that unmet needs, lack of mutual care, poor conflict resolution strategies, and/or, negative communication may play in this situation.

Goal(s) for counselling Tom and Alice:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes that the purpose of marital counselling is to help couples experience healing in the marital relationship and to redefine the relationship so that both feel fulfilled and satisfied.

Treatment Plan:

Tom and Alice's pastor plans to work with them as a couple. However, in the event that either Tom or Alice decides not to continue with counselling, the pastor is willing to counsel the remaining spouse on his or her own.

It is the pastor's habit to conduct a thorough assessment. As a result, if Tom and Alice did not complete an assessment questionnaire prior to the first session, they will be asked to complete one between the first and second sessions. This information will be used to guide the counselling process.

One of the pastor's first priorities in working with Tom and Alice will be to build a sense of hope by inviting them to identify some of the strengths and positive qualities each brings to the marital relationship. Tom and Alice's pastor believes that changes in behaviour result in changes in feelings. As a result he will first seek to identify which behaviour(s) appear to be causing hurt feelings and will then encourage them to change the way they act and talk towards each other. It is worth noting the pastor believes that Sin, in particular the failure of one spouse to act toward the other in the same way he or she would wish to be treated, is the root of much marital dysfunction. Finally, the pastor will invite Tom and Alice to develop new communication skills as they clarify and discuss the expectations they have of themselves and each other.

Following each session the pastor will give Tom and Alice a homework assignment designed to reinforce the changes discussed in that session.

Number of Sessions:

Tom and Alice's pastor estimates they will need about six sessions to help them with their concerns.

Use of Spiritual Resources:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes that hurtful behaviours are motivated by self-interest and sin. As a result the pastor uses scripture both to confront people with the sinfulness of their actions as well as to support and encourage new behaviours. Other spiritually oriented interventions used by the pastor include: the use of prayer, confession of sin, giving forgiveness, and acts of service towards one's partner.

Survey D – Everett I. Worthington Jr.

Primary area(s) of concern:

Tom and Alice's pastor observes they are not currently enjoying much intimacy at the present time. While the situation appears to be the result of Tom taking a new job in another city, the pastor is interested in exploring the following aspects of their relationship. Are Tom and Alice still able to love each other, and is this love demonstrated in actions that say they are still committed to each other and value each other? Is there a sense of hope, do Tom and Alice believe they can still have a future together? Finally, how much energy or work are Tom and Alice willing to put into this relationship in order to repair it?

Goal(s) for counselling Tom and Alice:

The pastor's primary goal is to increase Tom and Alice's faith in each other, the marriage and God as he focuses on two key areas: their love for each other and what they do to show that they love and value each other.

Treatment Plan:

Tom and Alice's pastor plans to work with Tom and Alice as a couple and will build on their commitment to each other and the relationship. In addition to this, he believes in the importance of conducting a full assessment that includes the use of material reported by the couple, standardized testing, as well as his in-session observations of the couple.

The pastor observes a pattern of "distancing" and "pursuing" in Tom and Alice's relationship and decides one of the first tasks will be to find a way to interrupt this pattern. To do this, the pastor will invite Tom and Alice to see how their current behaviours are contributing to the problem they wish to resolve. Next, the pastor will invite each of them to a) describe the kind of relationship he or she desires, b) speak clearly about his or her needs in ways that will not cause the other person to withdraw or become angry, and, c) respond to each other in a manner that indicates he or she understands what his or her partner desires. Finally, the pastor will invite Tom and Alice to practice different behaviours with a view to reshaping their relationship.

Number of Sessions:

Tom and Alice's pastor indicates he believes the problems they want to address may require a total of six or eight counselling sessions.

Use of Spiritual Resources:

Tom and Alice's pastor is committed to providing counsel that is consistent with the Bible and Christian theology. He is also committed to providing counsel that focuses on issues of Christian concern (i.e. love, faith, hope, forgiveness, commitment, moral integrity) and has Christ at the center. As a result, the scriptures are a vital tool for highlighting specific concerns and inviting Tom and Alice to act differently.

Survey E – Pastoral Adaptation of EFCT

Primary area(s) of concern:

The pastor observes Tom and Alice are not enjoying much intimacy at the present time. Because the situation appears to have developed following the birth of their child and Tom taking a new job in another city, the pastor is curious as to the possible effect these events have had on the marriage. In

particular, the pastor will explore the possible connection between Tom and Alice's actions, their need to feel secure in the relationship and their partner's sense of security or insecurity.

Goal(s) for counselling Tom and Alice:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes the purpose of marital counselling is to heal and restructure the relationship. In Tom and Alice's case, the pastor's goals will be to invite them to: a) identify the cause(s) of stress in their relationship, b) understand their emotional responses/reactions to these stresses, and c) using these emotions to reshape the relationship so that each spouse feels secure and accepted by the other.

Treatment Plan:

Tom and Alice's pastor plans to work with Tom and Alice as a couple and to focus on the issues that are currently happening in their lives rather than focusing on the past.

In the initial sessions the pastor will seek to: offer acceptance and empathy to both partners, create a safe atmosphere for both partners, focus on and reflect each partner's emotional experience, and validate and accept each partner's experience. During this phase of counselling the pastor will seek to identify the negative behavioural cycle and invite them to slow down or stop behaving in ways that reinforce this negative cycle.

The next phase of the counselling will build on this first phase in two very specific ways. On the one hand, Alice will be invited to identify her fears and share them with Tom. In this way, Alice will be encouraged to talk about the vulnerabilities that are hidden by her anger and blame. This will give Tom an opportunity to respond to her in ways that show he cares. Similarly, the pastor will invite Tom to talk about the fears (or other emotions) that keep him from being more actively involved in the life of the family. In this way, Tom will talk about the vulnerabilities that are hidden by his non-involvement and Alice will have an opportunity to respond in ways that show she cares.

Number of Sessions:

Tom and Alice's pastor indicates he believes the problems they want to address may require a total of six or eight counselling sessions.

Use of Spiritual Resources:

Tom and Alice's pastor believes that a couple's ability to cope with the challenges of life is a reflection of their relationship with God. If the husband and wife each feel secure in their relationship with God, they are better able to deal with marital stress. For this reason the pastor will encourage Tom and Alice to find their security in God through prayer, meditation and Bible study.

Sample dialogues

Survey A- Howard Clinebell

Pastor: How did you feel when Alice invited you to attend today's session?

Tom: Surprised, I guess, and a little annoyed... I mean, I'm a busy guy what with our plan for me to work while she stays at home with the children. But then I thought, it would be worth coming if Alice could feel better about herself.

Pastor: I appreciate your honesty. I understand that in spite of your demanding schedule you do care about your wife.

Tom: I do care for her a lot. Oh, I admit I behaved very badly a few years back but I thought we had managed to get everything back on track. Then a couple of months ago, everything seemed to fall apart again. You know, I'm feeling lost, I don't know what to do anymore...

Pastor: It must be difficult for both of you. I sense that you'd like to get back the good things you've lost. *(both nod their heads in agreement)* I wonder... Alice, could you give us a bit of an idea as to what might be bothering you right now?

Alice: Every day Tom takes the bus into the city, so he gets up very early and leaves the house before anyone else is awake. If the traffic is good, he usually gets home around 6:30 in the evening. The first thing he does when he gets home is ask, "What's for dinner?" and then he sits down in front of the television set! Can you imagine that? He has just spent an hour and a half sitting on the bus while I have been caring for his children and cooking supper and the only thing he can think to do is sit down in the family room!

Tom: Do I have to take this? Yes, I ride the bus. But I use that time to handle the leftover bits from the day and prepare for the next day. It's not as if all I do on the bus is listen to my tunes and sleep!

Pastor: I get the sense you are frustrated with each other and the situation. Tom, your job sounds like it is pretty demanding, *(Tom nods in agreement)* and Alice it must be a major change for you to be home alone for so long with both of the children. *(Alice nods in agreement)*

Alice: I admit I haven't been the easiest person to live with lately. Actually it's been pretty heavy for both of us since about the time Mark was born.

Tom: Yeah, and I would agree that this new job has me feeling uptight and keeps me away from home more than I used to be.

(a few minutes later in the session)

Pastor: I would like to give you some feedback of what I think I'm picking up... You both appear to be feeling cut off from the other person and you're expressing this in ways that make it difficult for the other person to meet your needs. Tom, you're away from home a lot and so you're not able to help the way you might want and you may be feeling a little bad about this. Alice, your anger over the fact Tom decided to take this new job before you were ready for this change makes it really easy for you to blame him for everything. When you withdraw into your anger, it makes it difficult for Tom to reach you and give you the emotional support you need. As for you Tom, it seems like when you pull away from Alice she gets the message you aren't interested in her.

Tom: Yeah, we are getting further apart all the time...

Pastor: Earlier you mentioned you thought things had been going pretty well for a while. I wonder... are the two of you able to set your pain aside for a bit and think about one thing you appreciate about the other person? *(silence)*

Alice: Well, I guess I haven't been very good at saying this. Tom, I do appreciate the fact that you were able to find a job that can support our family so that I don't have to worry about going back to work while the children are preschoolers.

Tom: I appreciate the way you try to make home a safe and inviting place for everyone. Even when you are upset with me for not helping you, I still want to come home. I'm sorry for acting in ways that say I don't care.

Pastor: Now, for a somewhat more difficult task. I wonder if each of you are able to ask the other

person for something, some action or comment, that your partner can do that would show you that he or she still cares about you and this relationship?

Survey B – Lawrence Crabb Jr.

Alice: ...Tom takes the bus into the city, so he gets up very early and leaves the house before anyone else is awake. If the traffic is good, he usually gets home around 6:30 in the evening. The first thing he does when he gets home is ask, "What's for dinner?" and then he sits down in front of the television set! Can you imagine that? He has just spent an hour and a half on the bus while I have been caring for his children and cooking supper and the only thing he can think to do is sit down in the family room!

Pastor: Alice, it sounds like you are pretty frustrated with Tom right now. Can you tell me a little more about it?

Alice: Well, it's almost like our relationship has been going backwards for the last six months. I mean, for the first two years after I learned about Tom's affair we worked really hard to spend time together, to talk, and go on dates. All that seems to have changed with little Mark's birth. It's not just the fact he commutes, the fact is he made the decision to take this job without even consulting with me! It just feels like I am not important anymore.

Pastor: Alice, I would like to know more about your reactions when Tom just goes and sits in the family room. I wonder, "What kinds of things do you say to yourself when he does this?"

Alice: Actually, some days it starts before he even gets home. About four o'clock I realize the house needs a little tidying. At that point I start cleaning up the house and wonder whether or not he will notice. Then, when he gets home, he usually just walks in and sits down in front of the T.V.. That's when it all starts. (*Tom nods in agreement*) I mean he never comments about the house. Every now and then he may ask about the children, but he almost never stops to ask if I need help or how my day has gone! At that point I start thinking, "He really doesn't care about my life." As soon as these thoughts begin I begin to feel miserable and I start acting mean.

Pastor: Tom, were you aware Alice was upset about these things?

Tom: Yeah, it's pretty hard to avoid actually... what with the complaining and the little digs and whatever. Truthfully, some nights I go to the family room because it feels like the safest place to be, out of the way.

Pastor: Tom...what do you say to yourself when Alice starts acting like this?

Tom: Most days I start wondering about what sort of mood she is going to be in when I am coming up the street. After I get home, however, I usually think something like this... "Doesn't she realize how hard it is for me to get up at 5:00 a.m. and commute? How can she be so hard on me all the time? Doesn't she realize that this is a sacrifice I am making so she doesn't feel obligated to go back to work?"

Pastor: It seems to me there is a pretty clear pattern to this conflict. Alice, the more you feel ignored and neglected by Tom the more you get upset with him and complain. (*Alice nods her head in agreement*).

Tom, your part of this pattern is that the more Alice complains the more you seem to withdraw. Would it be fair to say that you feel resentful? (*Tom nods his head*)

And you Alice, do feel resentful towards Tom?

Alice: Of course I do! Every day he leaves me at home with two small children and when he is at home he hardly raises a finger to help me!

(Tom shakes his head from side to side and scowls)

Tom: Do you see what I have to live with? I'm not sure there is anything here to save.

Pastor: Both of you have described and expressed some pretty unpleasant emotions, anger, resentment, bitterness, and hopelessness, each of which has the power to be destructive to a relationship. The emotions you describe seem to have one thing in common... both of you think and feel like the other person is failing you. In fact, I am reminded of the words of James who wrote... "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask of God." (James 4:1-2) While you may not be physically injuring each other, I think you will agree this fight is killing your marriage. All this is happening because each of you is upset that the other person is not giving you what you want.

Survey C – H. Norman Wright

Alice: ... Every day Tom takes the bus into the city, so he gets up very early and leaves the house before anyone else is awake. If the traffic is good, he usually gets home around 6:30 in the evening. The first thing he does when he gets home is ask, "What's for dinner?" and then he sits down in front of the television set! Can you imagine that? He has just spent an hour and a half sitting on the bus while I have been caring for his children and cooking supper and the only thing he can think to do is sit down in the family room!

Tom: Do I have to take this? Yes, I ride the bus. But I use that time to handle the leftover bits from the day and prepare for the next day. It's not as if all I do on the bus is listen to my tunes and sleep!

Pastor: I get the sense you are frustrated with each other and the situation. Tom, your job sounds like it is pretty demanding, *(Tom nods in agreement)* and Alice it must be a major change for you to be home alone for so long with both of the children. *(Alice nods in agreement)*

Alice: I admit I haven't been the easiest person to live with lately. Actually it's been pretty heavy for both of us since about the time Mark was born.

Tom: Yeah, and I would agree that this new job has me feeling uptight and keeps me away from home more than I used to be.

Pastor: Would you agree you both miss what you used to have? *(Both Tom and Alice nod in agreement)*

Pastor: I wonder... can you describe a time when you thought your partner really cared for you? What was it like? What did they do? What was different?

Tom: Well, it's not as if everything is terrible right now. I mean, Alice does all kinds of wonderful caring things for me and with me. Just last weekend she made arrangements with a neighbor to look after our children so we could go to the market and have breakfast together. We had a wonderful time talking, sharing memories and laughing together. *(he looks at Alice)* Thank you for the good time.

Alice: You're welcome. Actually, Tom's right... its not that we are always fighting or at each other's throats. In fact we do get along pretty well most of the time. I think one of the most wonderful things Tom has done for me recently occurred three weeks ago. It had been a very hard day and I was exhausted, but he didn't know that. That night when he came home he walked into the kitchen and gave me a great big hug. Then, after supper, he encouraged me to find a quiet place to read while he tidied up and got the children ready for bed. For the first time in months I didn't have to ask for his help, it was wonderful!

Pastor: So it sounds to me like the two of you are able to really connect with each other and appreciate the effort the other person makes. I wonder, Alice, if Tom granted you three wishes, three things you could ask him to do for you, what would those be? And you Tom, if Alice granted you three wishes what would those be?

The session continues with Tom and Alice talking about what they want from each other and how not having these things has resulted in them feeling frustrated, angry and bitter towards each other.

Survey D – Everett L. Worthington Jr.

Alice: ...Tom takes the bus into the city, so he gets up very early and leaves the house before anyone else is awake. If the traffic is good, he usually gets home around 6:30 in the evening. The first thing he does when he gets home is ask, "What's for dinner?" and then he sits down in front of the television set! Can you imagine that? He has just spent an hour and a half on the bus while I have been caring for his children and cooking supper and the only thing he can think to do is sit down in the family room!

Tom: Do you see what I have to live with? All she does is complain. Her mind is made up, I can do nothing right!

Alice: Well, its not as if you are giving me reasons to not to complain! All you do is sit there and wait to be served.

Tom: So here we go again, I'm the bad guy and you (*he looks at Alice*) play the martyr.

Pastor: It's easy to see how discouraged the two of you are feeling. However, arguments like this don't usually help a couple restore their love for each other. I think it would be really helpful if we examined this issue. Alice, you claim that Tom does not help you and that he is not involved in the way you would like him to be. Tom, you claim that Alice is a nag and a complainer.

Tom: It's not a claim, it's what she does every day.

Pastor: I want to analyze what just happened to see if this might help the two of you relate to each other differently. Tom, how would you describe the conversation you and Alice just had?

Tom: She was describing her day to you and then began to complain about what I don't do when I get home.

Pastor: Then...?

Tom: Then I started to complain about her behaviour...

Pastor: And...

Tom: Then she complained more and I gave in...

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Pastor: Alice, is that the way you saw it?

Alice: Well... sort of... I mean, I will admit I was a little rough on him. But I wouldn't exactly say that he "gave in" to me.

Tom: But I admitted I was the bad guy!

Alice: True... but the way you did it left me feeling like you were just trying to avoid the subject and end the conversation.

Pastor: So, if I am hearing correctly... Tom, you seem to feel like Alice nags and complains a lot. While you, Alice, seem to feel like Tom finds ways to avoid dealing with things.

(both respond affirmatively)

Pastor: As I listened to the two of you talk, I wondered if each of you understands the role you play, even when you don't start the argument? Each of you is in a position where you can either make things better or worse, the choice is yours. So... what one thing would each of you like to do differently?

Alice: I'm not sure, but I do know I am tired of the way we are living.

Tom: So am I.

Survey E – Pastoral Adaptation of EFCT

Alice: ...Tom takes the bus into the city, so he gets up very early and leaves the house before anyone else is awake. If the traffic is good, he usually gets home around 6:30 in the evening. The first thing he does when he gets home is ask, "What's for dinner?" and then he sits down in front of the television set! Can you imagine that? He has just spent an hour and a half on the bus while I have been caring for his children and cooking supper and the only thing he can think to do is sit down in the family room!

Tom: Do you see what I have to live with? All she does is complain. Her mind is made up, I can do nothing right!

Alice: Well, its not as if you are giving me reasons not to complain! All you do is sit there and wait to be served.

Tom: So here we go again, I'm the bad guy and you (*he looks at Alice*) play the martyr.

Pastor: I can see the two of you are feeling discouraged. I wonder, how does this tiff compare to what happens at home?

Tom: Oh this is nothing! At home it begins almost from the moment I step inside the door and will continue until either I do something or disappear from sight. All I get is "How come you're late?" "Did you remember to do this?" "The toilet's broken..." "We're overdrawn at the bank..." and on and on it goes! When she's not complaining about things around the house, she complains about the neighbors, her mother, and the fact she doesn't think I love her.

Alice: Yeah... that's right, I'm the big bad problem here! Why don't you tell him about your part? Why don't you tell him about the fact you forgot my birthday and you were out of town on business on our wedding anniversary? And what about the fact that we never talk anymore! The only time I ever see you are the two hours between when you get home and when you go to bed. And then you are generally more interested in reading the mail or watching TV than talking to me! On top of that, I have a newborn I have to feed and diaper in the middle

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of the night and a toddler that doesn't want to nap in the afternoon! And I am doing it all on my own! *(she sobs)*

(Tom looks uncomfortable)

I might as well be a single mother, that way I wouldn't feel any need to make a place for you in my life. *(Alice continues to cry)*

(Pastor waits a couple of minutes before speaking. During this time Tom makes no attempt to respond to his wife)

Pastor: I am beginning to get a sense of the way you two relate to each other. Tom, it's like Alice is trying to get your attention and the harder she tries the quieter you get, meanwhile the quieter you get, the harder she tries to get your attention.

(both nod their heads in agreement)

Pastor: I wonder what gets in the way of the two of you stopping this pattern?

Tom: I resent feeling like I am being told what I should be doing. Besides, I'm afraid that if I do what she is asking, it will tell her it is okay to nag.

Pastor: Has your strategy worked? Has it reduced the number of times Alice asks for your help?

Tom: No... it has probably increased it.

Pastor: What about you Alice? What gets in the way of you stopping this pattern?

Alice: *(crying)* I know I'm afraid that if I say nothing that Tom will just disappear and I will be left all alone.

Pastor: It seems to me that neither of you really want things to be the way they are right now. The first step to helping your marriage will be to find a way for the two of you to stop doing what you are doing. Would you be willing to spend the rest of this session thinking about ways you can break this pattern you have described?

(both nod their heads in agreement)

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- Wright, H. N. & Oliver G. J. (1994). *How to change your spouse (without ruining your marriage)*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications.

Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Tyndale University College (formerly Ontario Bible College). Bachelor of Theology (Pastoral Studies), April 1978.

University of Waterloo. Bachelor of Arts (History), May 1980.

Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Master of Theological Studies (Pastoral Counseling) May 1993.

Comprehensive Paper: *Saint John Chrysostom's theology of marriage and family in the light of family systems theory: Co-relation or contradiction?*

Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Master of Theology in Pastoral Counseling (with Distinction) May 1995. **Thesis:** *Rituals of engagement and disclosure: The assessment of male batterers in clinical and pastoral perspective.*

Professional Certifications

Ordained Pastor, Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec.

Clinical Member, American/Ontario Associations for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Approved Supervisor, American/Ontario Associations for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Specialist (PCE), Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education.

Ministry, Clinical & Teaching Experience

Ministry Experience: Pastor, Milton Baptist Church, Milton, Ontario (June 1980-October 1985); Pastor, Wheatley Baptist Church, Wheatley, Ontario, (Oct. 1985-Sept. 1989); Interim Pastor, Priory Park Baptist Church, Guelph, Ontario, (April 1990-July 1991); Interim Pastor, Gospel Baptist Church (English congregation), Cambridge, Ontario, (Sept. 1991-June 1992); Interim Pastor, Heart Lake Baptist Church, Brampton, Ontario, (Jan to Sept. 1998).

Clinical Training and Experience: Clinical Intern, Kitchener Interfaith Counseling Centre (Sept 1991 to Sept. 1995; January 1997 to June 1999); Private Practice (Sept 1993 to June 1999); Family Counseling & Support Services (May 1999 to present).

Teaching Experience: Heritage Theological Seminary & Heritage Baptist College, 175 Holiday Inn Drive, Cambridge, Ontario, N3C 3T2. (Adjunct and Associate faculty status, Fall 1995 to present); Providence Seminary, Otterburne, Manitoba (Adjunct faculty status, Fall 2003 to present); Clinical Supervision of student interns enrolled in a variety of counseling and social work programs (Fall 1998 to present).