



Wholeness As Mission: Integrating Pastoral Counseling into The Spiritual Formation of Christian Adolescents

Stefani Hatimurah

Yogyakarta, Post-Graduate Program in Theology, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Indonesia Yogyakarta

E-mail: stefanikupang@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling as a unified framework for adolescent ministry. Employing a library-based, descriptive-analytical approach, the study identifies the conceptual convergence between the church's missional calling and the theory and practice of pastoral counseling as a framework capable of addressing the spiritual and psychological needs of Christian youth. Findings indicate that adolescents require ministry approaches that move beyond cognitive-doctrinal instruction to embrace dialogical, relational, and therapeutic modalities suited to their developmental complexity. The integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling is proposed as a practical and theoretically grounded model for accompanying adolescents in cultivating faith resilience and psychological well-being. The article concludes that churches must adopt a reconstituted youth ministry paradigm one that positions the integration of mission and pastoral counseling as a holistic, contextually responsive strategy for adolescent spiritual transformation.

Keywords: Mission theology; Pastoral counselling; Adolescent ministry; Psychological

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence constitutes a developmental watershed, a formative period in which spiritual identity, meaning-making capacities, and relational competencies are actively constructed and profoundly shape long-term mental health and spiritual maturity. Recent systematic research has confirmed that religious and spiritual dimensions function as protective factors against depression and anxiety among young people aged ten to twenty-four, while spiritually coercive or negatively framed religious experiences are associated with elevated psychological risk within the same cohort (Cotton et al., 2006). These findings underscore the urgency of interventions that creatively integrate spiritual formation with evidence-informed psychotherapeutic techniques (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, the present article advances the integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling as a theoretically robust and practically actionable framework for holistically addressing the formational needs of Christian adolescents.

Conceptually, contemporary mission theology foregrounds the *missional* character of divine action, a mission that permeates every dimension of human existence and summons the ecclesial community to participate in social and individual transformation (Wright, 2010). This missional vision demands the cultivation of a spirituality anchored in theological identity and missional vocation, rather than merely the normalization of religious education. (Bosch, 2011). On the practical side, the pastoral counseling literature emphasizes relational competencies (Doehring, 2015), such as active listening, narrative facilitation, and therapeutically relevant techniques designed to accompany adolescents through identity crises and complex psychosocial pressures (Clinebell & McKeever, 2011). The synthesis of these two perspectives, mission theology as identity-forming telos and pastoral counseling as the relational and therapeutic means, opens a generative space for constructing a contextually sensitive model of adolescent spiritual formation oriented toward the missional purposes of the Christian faith.

The research problem animating this study is twofold and practically urgent. First, the contemporary digital and secular landscape has intensified adolescents' craving for meaning while simultaneously deepening their identity confusion. Although churches routinely identify youth as a target of mission, programmatic implementation that meaningfully integrates clinical counseling competencies with missional intentionality is frequently fragmented or poorly developed (McFeeters et al., 2022). Second, while a growing body of correlational research establishes positive associations between religiosity, spirituality, and mental health, few studies have tested integrative intervention models, a programs that systematically combine missional principles with evidence-based pastoral counseling techniques (Aggarwal et al., 2023). This gap calls for both academic articulation and practical design of a specifically missiological pastoral intervention model tailored to adolescent populations.

The significance of this study operates on two levels. Theoretically, the integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling enriches missiological discourse, which has historically operated at the level of ecclesiology and missional strategy with comparatively limited engagement with the pastoral counseling of specific age groups (Barrett, 1998). Practically, the proposed model offers a working framework for churches in the design of pastoral care ministries, the training of youth mentors, and the development of spiritually formative ministry modules. This framework holds direct relevance for pastoral practitioners, Christian counselors, and ecclesial policy-makers responsible for discipleship programming and adolescent well-being (French, 2023).

The literature review situates this study within two primary fields of inquiry. In mission theology, seminal works by Bosch and Wright establish paradigms of mission that are incarnational, integral, and eschatological in scope (Bosch, 2011). In pastoral counseling, Clinebell and Doehring offer practical models, ranging from growth and liberation approaches to narrative and relational care, that emphasize therapeutic competence in creating safe spaces for narratives of suffering and meaning-making (Clinebell & McKeever, 2011). Empirical research on adolescent spirituality and faith-based practice affirms the value of providing spiritually attentive spaces and holistic mentoring, yet consistently notes the scarcity of structured interventions that explicitly combine clinical counseling training with missional formation (McFeeters et al., 2022). The following table synthesizes the research gaps identified through this literature review.

Prior Study Focus	Contributions	Research Gap
Longitudinal reviews and interventions on religiosity and mental	Demonstrates that spiritual well-being can be protective against depression, while negative spiritual responses	Few robust interventions exist targeting adolescents, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)

Prior Study Focus	Contributions	Research Gap
health (Aggarwal et al., 2023)	may heighten psychological risk.	
The relationship between religion, spirituality, and adolescent psychological outcomes (Cotton et al., 2006)	Underscores the importance of active and constructive spiritual responses among youth.	Studies are largely correlational; practical pastoral approaches and clinical contexts for adolescents remain underexplored.
Faith-based youth work practices (McFeeters et al., 2022)	Directs attention to frontline practices in adolescent ministry.	Findings need to be translated into more structured, youth-specific intervention frameworks.
Missional pastoral theology (Smit, 2015)	Offers a contextually sensitive and practically relevant pastoral framework.	Has not yet been applied systematically to adolescent pastoral ministry.

Table 1. Research Gap Analysis: Prior Studies in Adolescent Spirituality and Pastoral Intervention

Based on this literature review, the following research gaps serve as the primary reference points for this study. The first and most significant gap is the near-absence of research models that explicitly integrate the principles of Christian mission with pastoral counseling techniques. This deficiency stems from both conceptual and methodological factors. Conceptually, missiology has traditionally operated at the macro level, engaging questions of theology, ecclesiology, and evangelistic strategy with its primary energies devoted to missional orientation, the articulation of vocational identity, and the transformation of communities (Bosch, 2011). Pastoral counseling, by contrast, has developed as a practice-driven discipline that foregrounds therapeutic relationships, intervention techniques, and the concrete psychosocial dynamics of individuals and groups (Doehring, 2015). This difference in orientation has produced a significant epistemic gap: missiology operates within a normative and theological register, while counseling demands an operational, measurable approach encompassing intervention protocols, therapeutic guidelines, and outcome indicators.

Bridging this gap requires a methodological approach capable of translating between theory and practice to rendering theological concepts such as Christian mission, incarnation, and diakonia into learning objectives, change indicators, and counseling techniques that are practically implementable and empirically assessable (Barrett, 1998). The distinctive contribution of this article lies in the development of an integrated conceptual-practical model that grounds adolescent spiritual formation in a Christian missional framework, translates theological categories into measurable spiritual formation objectives, and incorporates selected pastoral counseling techniques into a module amenable to empirical testing. This model is proposed not merely as a theoretical synthesis but as a framework designed to be operationalized in the training of church practitioners as they carry out the Great Commission mandate of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19–20).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library-based research methodology with a descriptive-analytical approach. This method was selected because the integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling necessitates deep conceptual engagement with a broad body of academic literature. Primary sources include peer-reviewed and academically credentialed works in social-religious research methodology, practical theology, and pastoral science. To ensure the reliability of the data, selected literature satisfies established academic criteria such as publication

through recognized academic presses, verifiable scholarly credentialing, and citation networks of demonstrated scholarly standing. Analysis proceeds through content analysis techniques by extracting salient thematic threads from the literature, comparing arguments across authors, and identifying points of conceptual convergence and divergence. Findings are presented narratively through systematically organized descriptive exposition, enabling readers to apprehend clearly the integrative framework linking mission theology and pastoral counseling (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through a descriptive-analytical approach and content analysis, the study identifies several key thematic convergences, most notably, the synergy between the concept of “Christian mission” and the dynamics of spiritual strengthening through pastoral counseling. The findings demonstrate that this integrative framework not only enriches theoretical foundations but also provides measurable, implementable guidelines for adolescent ministry. Taken together, the results open new corridors of dialogue between mission theology and pastoral counseling, while affirming the urgent need for more empirically grounded and sustainably designed research models.

Identification of Primary Sources: Mission Theology and Pastoral Counseling Theory

The critical examination of primary literature in mission theology and pastoral counselling constitutes a vital methodological step in constructing the conceptual framework of this study. Primary sources function not merely as a theoretical base but as a mapping of paradigms, contextual assumptions, and methodologies available for critical comparison. For this study, sources were drawn from three major geographical traditions in mission theology (Europe, North America, and Asia) and from three distinct counselling perspectives (Christian integrative, general psychological, and classical psychoanalytic). This breadth ensures that the resulting conceptual integration is comprehensive rather than parochial, accounting for global contextual diversity and a full disciplinary spectrum.

Within the European tradition, Gaylan Kent Mathiesen’s *A Theology of Mission: Challenges and Opportunities in Northeast Asia* makes a substantial contribution to missiology by arguing that *missio Dei* must be understood not simply as divine “sending” but as *participatio missionis Dei* means humanity’s active participation in God’s ongoing work in the world (Mathiesen, 2020). Mathiesen gives particular attention to Northeast Asia’s layered contexts of Confucianism, Buddhism, and political complexity, arguing that these realities demand a mission theology that is more contextual, dialogical, and open to religious plurality. This perspective resonates with contemporary European missiological approaches that reconceive mission not as ecclesiastical expansion but as socially and spiritually transformative engagement across cultural boundaries (Kim, 2012).

From the North American context, Edmund Kee-Fook Chia’s *Asian Christianity and Theology: Inculturation, Interreligious Dialogue, Integral Liberation* contends that Asian theology must be grounded in the principles of inculturation and interreligious dialogue, particularly in the religiously plural landscape of the contemporary world. Chia emphasizes *integral liberation*, a holistic understanding of salvation encompassing spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions (Chia, 2021). Notably, while Chia writes from an Asian perspective, his institutional location within Western academia produces a hybrid sensibility that bridges American theological traditions and Asian contextual sensitivity, reflecting the dialectic between local particularity and the universalizing impulse of *missio Dei* in contemporary global theology (Bevans, 1985).

Ken Christoph Miyamoto's *God's Mission in Asia* argues that Asian mission theology must begin from the concrete lived experience of Asian peoples, especially in confronting poverty, injustice, and religious pluralism. Miyamoto foregrounds the concept of "this worldly holiness", a holiness enacted within the realities of the world rather than retreating into privatized spirituality (Miyamoto, 2007). Mission in Asia, as Miyamoto frames it, is intrinsically contextual, justice-oriented, and expressive of solidarity. This paradigm diverges sharply from normative theocentric models of Western mission, insisting that in the Asian context, missional engagement cannot be extricated from social struggle and religious diversity (Sugirtharajah, 2011).

In the domain of pastoral counselling, the first primary source is Siang-Yang Tan and Brad D. Strawn's *A Christian Approach to Counselling and Psychotherapy*. This work presents an integrative approach bringing modern psychotherapy into dialogue with Christian spirituality. Tan and Strawn maintain that the integration of faith and psychology may be either implicit or explicit, with both forms necessarily engaging the role of the Holy Spirit in the healing process (Tan, 2022). This approach is consonant with pastoral principles in which counselling is oriented not merely toward mental health but toward spiritual growth, making this text a critical foundation for any pastoral counselling model that aspires to integration with a missional framework. The second primary source is Siang-Yang Tan's *Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective* (2nd ed., 2022), which surveys the major schools of contemporary counselling-psychoanalytic, behavioural, cognitive, narrative, and mindfulness-based, and subjects each to rigorous evaluation from a Christian perspective. Tan argues that each theoretical tradition carries both strengths and limitations, requiring that the Christian counsellor exercise discernment in selecting approaches congruent with each client's needs (Tan, 2011). The text demonstrates that Christian counselling neither dismisses scientific methodology nor uncritically adopts it, but rather seeks to integrate psychological insight within a solid theological foundation. The third primary source, Gerrit Brillenburg Wurth's classic *Christian Counselling: In the Light of Modern Psychology* (1962), traces the early encounter between modern psychology and Christian counselling. Wurth argues that the insights of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis illuminate important dimensions of human psychological life, though they must be critically appropriated through the lens of Christian faith (Wurth, 1962). He maintains that Christian counselling cannot afford to ignore the findings of psychology, but must situate them within the framework of the *imago Dei*, the image of God that undergirds Christian anthropology (Petrušek, 2017). Despite its vintage, this work retains its relevance as a historical foundation for the development of contemporary pastoral counselling.

Taken together, this survey of primary sources reveals that both mission theology and pastoral counselling are animated by a shared deep grammar: the transformation of human persons. Mission theology emphasizes transformation within the social and religious landscapes of history; pastoral counselling emphasizes transformation of individuals through psycho-spiritual accompaniment. Their integration makes possible the emergence of a "missionally informed pastoral counselling" approaches. A model capable of genuinely transforming the spirituality of Christian adolescents who inhabit the tension-laden intersection of faith identity, social pressure, and psychological need.

Category	Author and Work	Research Focus	Methodological Approach	Relevance to This Study
Mission Theology	Gaylan Kent Mathiesen, A Theology of Mission:	Secularization, cultural pluralism, and	Contextual and historical-theological analysis	Provides a cross-cultural missional framework,

Category	Author and Work	Research Focus	Methodological Approach	Relevance to This Study
	Challenges and Opportunities in Northeast Asia (2020)	the challenges of contemporary mission theology		particularly for transposing European mission theology into Asian contexts.
	Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, Asian Christianity and Theology: Inculturation, Interreligious Dialogue, Integral Liberation (2022)	Asian theology through an American academic lens, emphasizing inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and integral liberation	Intercultural and interreligious theological method	Furnishes an intercultural theological framework relevant for Christian adolescents navigating pluralistic social environments.
	Ken Christoph Miyamoto, God's Mission in Asia (2007)	The <i>missio Dei</i> within Asian historical and spiritual contexts	Contextual, historical-relational theology	Offers a contextual and relational paradigm of mission, critical for grounding Asian adolescent spirituality in local experience.
Pastoral Counselling	Siang-Yang Tan & Brad D. Strawn, A Christian Approach to Counselling and Psychotherapy (2022)	Integration of Christian faith with contemporary psychotherapeutic techniques, emphasizing spiritual formation and grace	Integration of clinical counselling and spiritual formation	Serves as a foundational text for integrating pastoral counselling with mission theology in the formation of adolescent spirituality.
	Siang-Yang Tan, Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective (2nd ed., 2022)	A comprehensive review of secular psychotherapy from a Christian perspective, bridging psychology and spirituality	Holistic care model (mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions)	Provides a comprehensive approach to adolescent mental health within a Christian faith framework.
	Gerrit Brillenburg Wurth, Christian Counseling: In the Light of Modern Psychology (1962)	An early attempt to integrate modern psychology particularly psychoanalysis with the principles of Christian counselling	Theological synthesis with early modern psychology	Establishes the historical groundwork for contemporary pastoral counselling integration.

Table 2. Comparative Identification of Primary Sources: Mission Theology and Pastoral Counselling

The identification of primary sources across these two fields reveals a broad spectrum of thought that is internally differentiated yet ultimately convergent. In mission theology, Mathiesen underscores that missional

development in Northeast Asia is inseparable from the dynamics of secularization and cultural pluralism. This European perspective is instructive because it illustrates how mission is understood not as ecclesiastical expansion but as a theological response to the challenges of modernity. Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, writing from the vantage point of American academia, emphasizes inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and integral liberation in Asian theology, reflecting a globally embedded understanding of mission in which cross-cultural integration becomes the key to forming an adolescent spirituality that is open to plurality. Ken Christoph Miyamoto, representing an Asian perspective, insists on contextual spirituality. Mission in Asia must be understood as integral to the historical and cultural dynamics lived out in local communities, ensuring that adolescent spirituality is not uprooted from its cultural soil.

In the counselling domain, Tan and Strawn offer a robust integration model bringing contemporary psychology and Christian spiritual formation into a generative relationship. Their insistence on grace and transformation with two theologically indispensable categories that highlights the dual function of counselling as both restorative and formative for adolescents. Tan's revisionary work elaborates how general psychological perspectives are enriched by Christian faith, yielding a holistic care model that encompasses the mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of adolescent life. Wurth's contribution, though foundational and chronologically prior, demonstrates that the integration of pastoral counselling and psychology is not a novel project but a tradition with its own intellectual genealogy extending across several decades. The identification of these primary sources confirms that an integration of mission theology and pastoral counselling offers a theoretically robust platform on which to construct a synthetic and contextually sensitive model for adolescent spiritual formation.

Comparative Analysis of Mission Theology and Pastoral Counseling Theory

A comparative reading of the leading figures in mission theology reveals a spectrum of approaches that, while internally differentiated, are mutually illuminating. Gaylan Kent Mathiesen emphasizes how secularization and cultural pluralism in Northeast Asia challenge the vitality of ecclesial mission, writing that mission theology must engage secular realities with theological clarity (Mathiesen, 2020). Chia, writing from within a North American academic context, views Asia not as a passive recipient of mission but as a theologically generative space enriched by interreligious dialogue and integral liberation. He contends that Asian theology finds its identity in interreligious dialogue and integral liberation (Chia, 2021). Miyamoto, for his part, insists that the spirituality of mission must not be severed from Asia's historical and cultural dynamics, asserting that God's mission in Asia is always incarnated within the cultural and historical realities of its peoples (Miyamoto, 2007). These three figures exhibit distinct emphases: Mathiesen foregrounds external challenges, Chia advocates intercultural dialogue, and Miyamoto emphasized contextual spirituality.

Examined closely, these three scholars reflect divergent epistemological orientations. Mathiesen proceeds from an analysis of modernity rooted in the European context, with a marked tendency to frame mission as a theological response to secularization. Chia adopts an intercultural theological framework that embraces pluralism, insisting that liberation is not only social but also theological, thereby shaping Christian witness in Asia (Chia, 2021). Miyamoto advances a more relational contextual approach, attending to the everyday life of Asian Christian communities, noting that Asian churches embody mission as a lived spirituality rather than as an extension of Western frameworks (Miyamoto, 2007). These distinctions are consequential for constructing a mission theology model that can be integrated with pastoral counselling for adolescents. Adolescents who live amid global plurality

require a framework that simultaneously holds together the insights of secularization analysis, intercultural dialogue, and contextual local spirituality.

In the pastoral counselling domain, a comparative analysis of Tan and Strawn, Tan's solo work, and Wurth reveals a trajectory of significant intellectual development. Tan and Strawn prioritize the integration of Christian faith with modern psychotherapy, underscoring that Christian psychotherapy must be rooted in grace and oriented toward transformation (Tan, 2022). Their concentration on grace and transformation with two foundational theological concepts, is particularly significant for the spiritual restoration of Christian adolescents. Tan's complementary work extends this dialogue by bridging general psychology with a perspective of faith, affirming that holistic care integrates the psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the person (Tan, 2011). Wurth, though operating within an earlier historical horizon, demonstrates the initial effort to synthesize psychoanalysis with Christian conviction, writing that Christian counselling must take seriously the insights of modern psychology while remaining faithful to biblical truth (Wurth, 1962).

The methodological differences among these three counselling figures are equally instructive. Wurth emphasizes the integration of classical psychoanalytic insights with theological convictions, while Tan and Strawn advance a more current integrative approach foregrounding spiritual formation within the counselling process, asserting that spiritual formation is not peripheral but central to that process (Tan, 2022). Tan, in turn, develops a holistic care model that prioritizes the balance of mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, proposing that psychotherapy should serve both healing and growth within a Christian worldview (Tan, 2011). These distinctions carry weight in the adolescent context, as Christian youth confront not only spiritual crises but also psychological and emotional turmoil and questions of self-identity. Integrating these perspectives offers a strong and nuanced foundation for contextually sensitive pastoral counselling ministry.

When compared across disciplinary lines, both mission theology and pastoral counselling exhibit a shared trajectory: a movement away from exclusivist paradigms toward integrative ones. In mission theology, the exclusivist colonial orientation of ecclesiastical expansion has given way to dialogical and contextual models of mission. Similarly, in pastoral counselling, the integration of faith and psychology has evolved from classical psychoanalytic models toward increasingly transformative pastoral approaches. This convergent trajectory reflects a growing academic recognition that the challenges facing Christian adolescents cannot be adequately addressed by any single discipline in isolation. An interdisciplinary integration is required if missional and counselling ministries are to engage the full range of adolescents' spiritual, emotional, cultural, and social realities.

The Integration of Mission Theology and Pastoral Counseling

The integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling occupies a strategic position in contemporary practical theology. Mission theology accents the *missio Dei* means God's own mission as the basis for the church's engagement in the world, while pastoral counseling centers on the care of God's people, a vital dimension of congregational life. The two disciplines are commonly treated as separate endeavors, yet in the context of holistic ministry they are profoundly inseparable. Mission is not confined to evangelism and ecclesiastical growth; it encompasses personal transformation and inner healing as concretely expressed through pastoral accompaniment (Bosch, 2011). Their integration thus yields a genuinely integral perspective, one that connects salvation, healing, and the renewal of human life within a single coherent framework.

The deep connection between mission and pastoral counseling can be traced to the practice of the early church. From its origins, pastoral practice has been rooted in the care of God's people, and the dimension of missional sending has never been separated from personal accompaniment. Over the centuries, mission came to be understood not merely as geographic expansion but as existential solidarity with human suffering. As Bevans affirms, Christian mission always carries the character of prophetic dialogue a transformative encounter with the world (Bevans, 1985). This dimension underscores that pastoral counseling is itself a concrete expression of mission through pastoral accompaniment, the church enacts a prophetically healing dialogue in the world.

From a pastoral perspective, counseling is rooted in a Christocentric principle, the presence of Christ as healer of souls and as one who lifts human burdens. Tan argues that Christian counseling is not simply a form of psychotherapy; it is a ministry that integrates faith, spirituality, and the methods of modern psychology (Tan, 2022). This view resonates with a missiological paradigm that understands mission as God's engagement with human history, including the processes of inner healing and relational restoration. Pastoral counseling may thus be read as an expression of mission, a concretization of God's saving work in individual lives. In the global context, the integration of mission and pastoral counseling takes contextually distinct forms. In Europe, mission theology tends to foreground historical and intercultural dimensions. In North America, the accent falls on interreligious dialogue and integral liberation. In Asia, missional paradigms emphasize inculturation and engagement with religious pluralism (Chia, 2021). These regional variations illustrate that mission cannot be conceived in the abstract but is always tethered to the specific cultural and social contexts in which the church is situated. Any integration with pastoral counseling must remain attentive to this contextual dynamism. Similarly, the pastoral counseling discipline has increasingly incorporated dimensions of Christian spirituality and faith, not as a mere adaptation of general psychology but as a genuine theological reflection acknowledging the role of the Holy Spirit in the healing process (McMinn, 2012). In this sense, pastoral counseling becomes a vehicle of mission that making visible the personalized workings of God's love in individual lives and restores relationships between persons and God, neighbor, self, and creation.

This integration demands an epistemological framework capable of bridging biblically grounded mission theology with pastoral counseling's frequent reliance on contemporary psychology. Lartey argues that pastoral theology must resist the temptation of a false dichotomy between faith and science, and instead develop a contextual approach that holds them together (Lartey, 2003). Within such a framework, mission is understood not only as outward sending but as inward transformation through pastoral ministry. Pastoral counseling thus becomes the *locus* in which mission finds its *praxical* embodiment within the life of the congregation. The integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling also carries concrete implications for the development of new ministry models, for instance in contexts of trauma, existential crisis, and social suffering, pastoral counseling can function as an expression of the healing mission the church brings to the world. Bosch terms this *transforming mission* an understanding of mission as the comprehensive transformation of human life (Bosch, 2011).

The Theological Application of Mission within the Counseling Context

The concept of mission in the Christian tradition is consistently linked to the *missio Dei*. This paradigm insists that mission extends beyond verbal proclamation to encompass the comprehensive renewal of human life. Within the framework of pastoral counseling, mission may be understood as God's redemptive action restoring the human soul through compassionate accompaniment. Bosch articulates this as *participatio missionis Dei* by touching

the spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of life. This means that pastoral counseling is not a mere practical discipline but an integral expression of God's comprehensive mission. One of the most significant dimensions of mission theology for counseling is the concept of inculturation. Contextually engaged mission must be rooted in local culture without surrendering Christian identity (Adiatma et al., 2022). This principle translates directly into pastoral counseling practice, where effective accompaniment requires sensitivity to the cultural background, values, symbols, and meaning systems alive in the client's community.

Beyond inculturation, Christian mission is also intimately connected to the concept of integral liberation, the conviction that salvation is not merely spiritual but encompasses social and psychological emancipation as well. Interreligious dialogue constitutes another significant dimension of contemporary mission with direct relevance for pastoral counseling. Bevans and Schroeder term this "the prophetic dialogue", a form of mission that bears witness to faith while simultaneously opening space to hear and understand the other (Bevans, 1985). Pastoral counseling conducted within multigenerational and pluralistic communities can draw on this paradigm, understanding its work not as mere problem resolution but as a ministry of spiritual identity transformation, particularly for adolescents, who are uniquely vulnerable to spiritual disorientation during their formative years.

From a pastoral perspective, mission carries direct implications for the restoration of human relationships with God, with others, with self, and with creation. Biblically grounded Christian counseling assists clients not only at the psychological level but also at the spiritual. This approach echoes the missional vision of restoring relationships fractured by sin. In this sense, pastoral counseling may be understood as a missional instrument through which the peace of God (*shalom*) is made present in individual lives. Here, counseling transcends its therapeutic function to become a tangible expression of God's saving work. Yet the integration of missional concepts into counseling demands careful theological reflection. Lartey cautions that pastoral ministry must not lapse into a universalism that obscures Christian identity (Lartey, 2003). Rather, pastoral counseling must remain deeply rooted in the Gospel while remaining genuinely open to psychological methodology and contextual insight.

Practical Integration: A Missionally Grounded Pastoral Counseling Model

The practical integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling calls for a conceptual model capable of holding together the theological and psychological dimensions in genuine balance. This model may be designated "missiological counseling" a framework that understands pastoral counseling as an integral expression of the *missio Dei*. Bosch affirms that mission is inherently holistic, touching the spiritual, social, and personal dimensions of human life (Bosch, 2011). This model presupposes that every counseling encounter within the contexts of the church and the broader community is a concrete expression of participation in God's saving work. The practical application of missiological counseling begins with the recognition that pastoral counseling does not merely assist individuals; it also forms a missionally oriented faith community. Tan and Strawn emphasize that healthy Christian counseling must be oriented toward spiritual transformation, not merely the resolution of psychological problems (Tan, 2022). Within a missional framework, this means that counseling helps Christian adolescents encounter genuine faith growth, life renewal, and strengthened Christian identity amid cultural plurality.

The practical contours of a missiological counseling model may be articulated through three sequential phases. The first is "incarnational presence", in which the counselor embodies the love of God through empathy and genuinely attentive listening. The second is "transformative dialogue", in which the counseling process leads the client toward faith reflection and personal renewal. The third is "missional empowerment", in which the

outcomes of counseling extend beyond liberation from psychological distress to equipping clients for faithful witness in everyday life. McMinn similarly argues that effective Christian counseling consistently moves toward the strengthening of faith and the transformation of life witness (McMinn, 2012). Missiological counseling carries significant implications for the spiritual formation of Christian adolescents. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to identity crises, social pressure, and moral temptation. Pastoral counseling anchored in a missional vision can help them find a coherent life direction in the light of the Gospel. Mathiesen highlights that Christian mission in Northeast Asia faces the formidable challenge of secularization, which steadily erodes the faith of younger generations (Mathiesen, 2020). Missiological counseling programs could equip churches with relevant, research-informed accompaniment strategies that address adolescents' psychological needs while simultaneously reinforcing their faith resilience in the face of secularist currents by making such programs a vehicle of both spiritual formation and missional sending for the rising generation.

The integration of mission theology and pastoral counselling implies a paradigm shift in ecclesial ministry, from a mission that is proclamation-oriented to one that is pastorally grounded and therapeutically informed. Theoretically, this integration expands the horizon of missiology into the domain of pastoral psychology, so that mission is no longer conceived solely as *missio ad gentes* (mission to the nations) but also as *missio ad vulneratos* (mission to the wounded). Practically, this model calls on churches to build the capacity of pastoral servants who can present the Gospel therapeutically through dialogue, empathy, and the emotional restoration of Christian adolescents. This approach impels churches to reinterpret mission as a space of healing encounter, one that addresses the psychological and spiritual wounds of youth. Ministry to adolescents thus produces not merely cognitive conversion but spiritual, emotional, and character transformation, but the formation of a robustly Christian identity capable of flourishing in a complex world.

CONCLUSION

The church's ministry to adolescents in the contemporary world demands a close and deliberate integration of mission theology and pastoral counseling. Adolescents require not only doctrinal instruction but also emotional and spiritual accompaniment to navigate identity crises, peer pressure, and value confusion. The missiological counseling model proves uniquely capable of presenting the Gospel in its fullness, as good news that is not merely proclaimed but actually experienced through processes of healing, restoration, and character formation to transform their spiritual lives. The church is called to develop a ministry paradigm that holds together missional proclamation and pastoral care for the growth of an adolescent faith that is resilient, grounded, and fully engaged with the complexity of the world.

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